

Rebecca Conable  
Blue Hill  
LD 2118

Good afternoon,

I am a resident of Blue Hill, and the mother of a first year (freshman) and third year (junior) at Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM). I am writing in support of LD 2118 and hope that you will please pass this vital bill to fund MSSM appropriately. Funding and attention naturally flow to the many kids struggling in school, but attention and support are also critical for students who need more of a challenge. MSSM is available to every kid in the state- the crown jewel of Maine's public school system. MSSM plugs the gap for accelerated learners across the state by offering upper level classes that are not feasible at most schools. Increasing funding to MSSM is the right thing to do.

Both of my kids went to our local public school prior to MSSM. Like many places in Maine, our local high school options are limited. The closest option is the least rigorous, and the most challenging option is an hour away. Ten hours a week on a bus, week in, week out, is a stiff price to pay for high school.

My oldest was the strongest student in their small class of strong students. The opportunity to be truly challenged for the first time has been eye opening for him. As a junior, he is taking Calculus- a course that is not offered in most Maine high schools. Exceptional teachers and exceptional students, high expectations for both academic achievement and personal behavior, and a culture of kindness and support make MSSM a wonderful place to grow.

My younger child was relentlessly bullied in our local school for being smart. He learned to keep his head down, his mouth shut, and to bring a book to lunch. At MSSM, he is thriving. He can let his curiosity show again. He gets to have the experience, for the first time, of being able to participate fully in class without fear of retaliation. He isn't isolated and stigmatized for being "smart"- because he's with other engaged, high achieving kids- no longer the outlier, just a kid in the middle of the pack. Having this public magnet option is a game changer for kids like him across the state.

Please support this wonderful experiment by passing LD 2118 and increasing the funding that MSSM needs to continue to serve the families of Maine.