

Eric Howard, EdD
Old Orchard Beach
LD 2118

To The Committee on Educational and Cultural Affairs
Clerk: Cheryl Chapman,

I am writing in favor of LD2118, as amended, which would increase the funding for the Maine School of Science & Mathematics by \$750,000 for general operations and \$250,000 for student financial aid for 2025 and 2026.

My family's first experience with MSSM was when my oldest attended the MSSM summer camp after sixth grade. He came home after a week and was in love with the school. The summer after seventh grade, he returned for two weeks and again returned with a smiling face. The following spring he applied for admission. He had a wonderful four years in Limestone, and since graduating from Stevens Institute of Technology Graham has been writing software for airplanes (FedEx, Cessna & the Air Force) His sibling Cecilia was at MSSM for two years and was awarded a Mitchell Scholarship to help underwrite studies at Johns Hopkins. Cecilia is currently getting a doctorate in biogeochemistry and hopes to return to Maine in 2025 when done.

The MSSM program made it possible for each of them to have strong friendships with others in their "tribe". They obtained great scholarships for college. Because of those savings and in recognition of the value of the program to my children and to the others in Maine, last year the Howard family made a five-figure gift to the MSSM Foundation to support extracurricular programming for current and future generations of MSSM students.

MSSM programs offer life-changing experiences for Maine children through the MSSM summer programs as well as the regular school, and I hope that you will adopt LD2118.