



The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Testimony from Jason Judd, Ed.D., Executive Director, Educate Maine

In Support Of

L.D. # 2118: “An Act to Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics Using the School Funding Formula Criteria”

February 13, 2024

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Jason Judd, Executive Director of Educate Maine, a business-led education advocacy organization. I also write today as a 2000 graduate of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of L.D. #2118.

We should all be proud of the school that Maine founded in 1995. MSSM is one of the top high schools in the country. In 2019, U.S. News and World Report ranked MSSM as the second best high school in the United States. The school and its students frequently receive both state and national awards celebrating their academic and co-curricular successes. Almost 100% of MSSM students attend postsecondary education institutions across the globe. MSSM alumni have become a significant part of the Maine economy serving in state and local government roles, leading nonprofits, and working at many of Maine’s largest and smallest employers in all 16 counties. Your investment in the school since 1995 has resulted in thousands of alumni completing their undergraduate and graduate degrees and successfully joining the Maine workforce often in high paying and leadership roles.

I am proud to be one of the alumni who is able to give back to our state thanks to the investment you made in me. In 1998, I was able to join MSSM as a junior. In two years, I was able to take advanced coursework in mathematics, science, and humanities. I learned leadership skills, participated in a range of co-curricular activities, and completed internships at two hospitals. MSSM was able to offer coursework and experiences that my local high school was not. As a result of my attendance at MSSM, I felt well-prepared for postsecondary education. I completed an undergraduate degree at the University of Maine at Farmington, a master’s degree at the University of Southern Maine, and a doctorate from Northeastern University. I owe my success to MSSM.

Maine students need to have the same opportunities that I was given. This bill will help make that happen. I grew up in central Maine and needed the maximum financial aid available to be able to attend MSSM. This aid allowed me to attend the school. Without it, I would not have

been able to attend MSSM. This bill provides much needed additional financial aid funding for students across Maine to be able to attend MSSM. We need to make sure any student from Maine can continue to attend the school regardless of their financial means.

As the Executive Director of Educate Maine, I am also proud to support this bill on behalf of our board of directors. Our business and education leaders strongly support MSSM. Our organization focuses on supporting the future workforce of Maine. The future of the Maine economy depends on the talent that we have in our state. We must prioritize developing young leaders who can join all parts of our economy especially in STEM occupations. We know that STEM jobs across the country are growing at a rate twice that of non-STEM jobs. Investing in MSSM needs to be a key strategy in supporting our future workforce in Maine. This bill makes that investment in MSSM.

I encourage all of you to support LD 2118. The school changed my life and helped me become the education advocate that I am today. Please help make sure future students have the same opportunities that I did. Thank you for your time.

Jason Judd, Ed.D.
Educate Maine