



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Harold Alfond Foundation Makes a \$1 Million Grant to Maine Math and Science Alliance
“STEM Workforce Ready Maine 2030” Will Expand Computer Science Education in Maine**

Augusta, Dec 9, 2021 — The Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance (MMSA), a non-profit dedicated to inspiring and fostering critical thinking, problem solving, and civic engagement through STEM education, has received a \$1 million grant from the Harold Alfond Foundation to expand computer science (CS) education in Maine. The “STEM Workforce Ready Maine 2030” Project will create a network of teacher leaders across Maine who are committed to integrating computer science learning in rural PreK-8 classrooms. This 3-year grant will allow MMSA to partner with rural educators in creating engaging and effective lessons to inspire Maine’s STEM workforce of 2030: today’s rural elementary and middle school students.

“Maine has recently seen an influx of high-paying, career opportunities in our state. What we are NOT seeing, however, is a workforce prepared for these jobs. A critical component in building the capacity to meet these STEM workforce needs is creating networks of capable, confident, and inspired PreK-12 teachers and teacher leaders. The future of CS education is not some distant thought - it is now.” said Ruth Kermish-Allen, executive director of MMSA. “The rapid evolution of technology has created a significant challenge for under-resourced rural schools, making it difficult to support teachers in introducing new content such as CS. CS education, and the professional learning that supports it, must be continuously evolving in partnership with learners, educators, and representatives from local businesses in order to stay rigorous and relevant.”

The network STEM Workforce Ready Maine 2030 will create, and will be supported by, a group of diverse stakeholders including teachers, administrators, business leaders, and researchers. The project aims to train 100 rural educators and give 10,000 rural students access to foundational STEM educational experiences. This exciting project aims to lay the groundwork for truly scalable computer science education reform in Maine’s classrooms.

“We at the Harold Alfond Foundation recognize the importance of cultivating all students’ interest in the fundamentals of STEM as early as possible,” said Greg Powell, chairman of the board of trustees for the Harold Alfond Foundation. “Through this grant, we hope to set in motion a virtuous cycle of teachers training teachers how to make computer science and STEM exciting and accessible for students throughout Maine.”

About Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance:

The Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance (MMSA) was established to oversee and coordinate a comprehensive effort to improve science and mathematics education in Maine

under a five-year grant from the National Science Foundation Statewide Systemic Initiative (SSI) program. The SSI grant ignited the spark that over time has grown into the well-established work of MMSA in educator professional development for the State of Maine and beyond. Today the MMSA continues to support STEM education in Maine through its diverse portfolio of grant-funded projects in STEM education and advocacy. For more information on MMSA please visit mmsa.org or contact Dr. Ruth Kermish-Allen at 207-691-2504 or email at rkermishallen@mmsa.org

About the Harold Alfond Foundation:

The Harold Alfond Foundation honors and promotes the values of its founder through transformative investments for the benefit of Maine in education, health care, and youth and community development. To learn more about the Foundation, please visit www.haroldalfondfoundation.org.

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