

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# Maine Educational Loan Authority (MELA)

*2008  
Annual Report*





April 24, 2009

Governor John E. Baldacci  
State of Maine  
Office of the Governor  
1 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0001

Dear Governor Baldacci:

Pursuant to 20-A M.R.S.A., Chapter 417-A, Section 11427, enclosed is a copy of the Maine Educational Loan Authority's (MELA) annual report for the fiscal year January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008. MELA's annual report includes the following sections: introduction and background information; program administration (loan origination and servicing); application volume and distribution; loan volume; borrower distribution; summary; charts and graphs to illustrate the narrative contained within the report; and basic financial statements with management discussion and analysis.

MELA was established in 1988 to assist Maine students and their families in achieving their higher education goals by providing a supplemental or alternative student loan program. MELA's supplemental student loan programs currently consist of The Maine Loan<sup>®</sup> and The Maine Medical Loan<sup>sm</sup>. The MELA Private Consolidation Loan<sup>sm</sup> was suspended in late 2008 due to the capital market credit crisis. The Maine Loan, MELA's primary student loan product, exists to bridge the gap between the full cost of undergraduate and graduate higher education and other traditional financial aid resources such as scholarships, grants, and the Federal Family Education Loan Programs. The Maine Medical Loan was created in 1998 to assist Maine students pursuing a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree. MELA expanded the scope of its medical loan in 2002 to include other degrees such as dentistry, chiropractic, and veterinary medicine. This loan program is available to eligible medical students to borrow funds up to the full cost of a medical degree less other financial aid.

Maine's public and private institutions of higher education continue to be the greatest beneficiaries of MELA loans. MELA's loan volume in 2008 was approximately \$32,510,000 in originations, which is a nearly 10% increase when compared with the approximate \$29,600,000 originated in fiscal year 2007. Given the escalating costs of higher education coupled with the declining purchasing power of federal and state grants, students have increasingly relied on supplemental or alternative loans in order to finance their college education. With this in mind, MELA anticipates serving a growing number of Maine students and families with their educational financing needs in the years ahead.

MELA had planned to do a bond issue in the spring of 2008, but was unable to do so due to the turbulence in the capital markets. In order to fund 2008-2009 academic year student loan disbursements, MELA secured a \$20,000,000 tax-exempt line of credit through TD Bank, N.A. This interim financing provided MELA with the opportunity to continue offering its alternative student loan program as an important safety net for many Maine students and their families in meeting the full cost of higher education.

Governor John E. Baldacci  
April 24, 2009  
Page Two

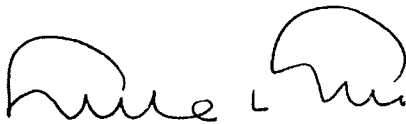
Historically, MELA has funded the originations of its student loans through debt issuances in the form of Auction Rate Securities (ARS) in the capital markets. The ARS markets have been closed down due to the volatility in the capital markets and movement of investors to safer investments. MELA needs to refund the Authority's existing debt into a new structure that is a more attractive mode of debt to investors and at the same time issue new student loan revenue bonds to continue to fund future originations. With this in mind, MELA is contemplating the issuance and sale of fixed rate student loan revenue and refunding bonds in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$250,000,000 this spring. MELA is thankful to have received your support and that of the Legislature this session in the form of increased moral obligation backing of the Authority's debt. This increase in support from the State of Maine will assist MELA with a successful financing. In these unprecedented times in the capital markets, MELA is committed to securing future funding to ensure the continuity of its alternative student loan programs for Maine students and families needing economical supplemental educational financing.

Baker Newman and Noyes LLC, an independent certified public accounting firm, recently completed MELA's financial audit for the 2008 fiscal year. In reviewing the financial statements, it is clear that MELA is in a sound financial position and that the funds MELA has acquired with proceeds from tax-exempt bonds or obligations are being solely utilized for its alternative student loan program.

To summarize, MELA looks forward to continuing to provide financial assistance to Maine students and their families as they work hard to achieve their higher education goals. By providing the overall lowest cost alternative educational loan programs available in Maine, MELA is a key partner with the State of Maine in making a college education more accessible and affordable for its residents.

Your continued interest in and support of MELA is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shirley M. Erickson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shirley M. Erickson, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

cc: President of the Senate  
Speaker of the House  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
Members of the Maine Educational Loan Authority

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# Maine Educational Loan Authority (MELA) Authority Members

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Christopher Bell, Chair  
Director of Financial Aid  
University of Maine at Presque Isle

Anne Connors, Vice Chair  
Director of Financial Aid  
Kennebec Valley Community College

David Mahoney, Secretary/Treasurer  
Associate Director of Student Financial Services  
Bates College

Bruce N. Schatz, CPA  
Consultant

Elizabeth Doane  
Guidance Counselor  
Yarmouth High School

David Lemoine  
Treasurer  
State of Maine  
Ex-Officio

## **STAFF**

Shirley M. Erickson, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, MELA

# MELA 2008 Program Highlights

## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Maine Educational Loan Authority (MELA) is a quasi-governmental agency that was created and established by Maine legislation in April of 1988 (20-A M.R.S.A., Section 11414). MELA functions as an administratively independent authority within the current organizational structure of State government, and receives no appropriation from the Legislature for its operation. MELA is governed by a seven-member board appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Legislature, except for the State Treasurer who serves as an ex-officio member.

MELA was established to assist students and their families in achieving their higher education goals by providing a supplemental or alternative student loan program. Alternative student loans exist to bridge the gap between the full cost of a higher education and traditional financial aid resources. MELA's alternative student loan programs currently consist of The Maine Loan<sup>®</sup> and The Maine Medical Loan<sup>SM</sup>. The MELA Private Consolidation Loan<sup>SM</sup> program was suspended in late 2008 due to the capital market credit crisis. The Maine Loan allows borrowers to borrow up to the full cost of an undergraduate or graduate education less other financial aid. This loan is available to Maine residents attending approved schools in the United States and Canada, and out-of-state students attending approved schools in Maine. In 1998 MELA introduced The Maine Medical Loan, designed to assist Maine students pursuing a Doctor of Medicine or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Degree. On June 1, 2002 MELA expanded its medical loan program to include these additional degrees: Doctor of Chiropractic (DC), Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD), Doctor of Optometry (OD), Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM), Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) and Doctor of Dental Surgery or Doctor of Dental Science (DDS). The Maine Medical Loan allows borrowers to borrow up to the full cost of a medical program of study less other financial aid. This loan is available to Maine residents attending approved medical schools in the United States and Canada, and out-of-state students attending the University of New England's College of Osteopathic Medicine, Maine's only medical school.

The Maine Loan and The Maine Medical Loan are available to students and their parents based on the credit-worthiness of the applicant(s). MELA's loan programs have many attractive features including a low variable interest rate that is adjusted annually (currently 6.99% for The Maine Loan and The Maine Medical Loan), the option to defer principal while in school, a low guarantee fee, no aggregate borrowing limit, a wide range of flexible repayment terms up to twenty-five years, and the ability to apply online.

All MELA loans have historically been funded with the proceeds of tax-exempt bonds, and no State monies are allocated to fund the program. MELA secured its initial funds through a \$35 million tax-exempt bond issue in July of 1988. In May of 1992, MELA refunded its initial offering and issued \$60 million worth of tax-exempt bonds. An additional \$12.5 million, \$10 million, \$14 million, and \$10 million of tax-exempt bonds were issued in June of 1996, July of 1997, January of 1999, and September 2000, respectively. In November of 2002 MELA issued \$26.9 million worth of tax-exempt bonds, including \$16.9 million in refunding debt and \$10 million in new money. MELA issued an additional \$30 million worth of tax-exempt bonds in 2005 and an additional \$50 million was issued in 2007. The wide spread turbulence in the capital markets adversely impacted MELA's ability to issue a bond in 2008. MELA has historically funded the origination of its student loans through debt issuances in the capital markets in the form of Auction Rate Securities (ARS). The ARS markets have closed down due to the volatility of the capital markets and movement of investors to safer investments.

In order to fund 2008-2009 academic year disbursements, MELA secured interim financing in the form of a \$20 million tax-exempt line of credit with TD Bank, N.A. This interim financing required changes to the terms of MELA's loan programs, with the most significant change being the elimination of full principal and interest deferment for The Maine Loan borrowers. Principal payments continue to be deferred while the student is enrolled at least half-time, but interest payments are now required while the student is in school. This change is a nationwide shift in the student loan industry and is in the best interest of the student to reduce the overall cost of repaying their loans.

Given the closing of ARS markets due to the on-going turbulence in the capital markets, MELA's future financings will no longer be ARS but will be fixed rate or an alternative structure.

MELA has disbursed alternative student loans totaling over \$227.8 million (Table 1) since the Authority was established in 1988.

## **II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION: LOAN ORIGINATION AND SERVICING**

The Maine Educational Loan Authority (MELA) currently has four primary contractual relationships for the administration of its programs and services. MELA contracts with Maine Education Services (MES) for personnel, administrative and marketing services. MES, an independent, private non-profit corporation located in Portland, Maine, provides opportunities and resources for people to achieve higher education. MELA also contracts with the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) for the servicing of loans derived prior to 1996. PHEAA, an agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, located in Harrisburg, manages state grant, guaranty, servicing, and financial aid processing systems. In addition, MELA contracts with Nelnet Loan Services, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Nelnet, Inc. (Nelnet) for servicing of all MELA loans since 1996. Nelnet, a publicly traded corporation based in Lincoln, Nebraska with an office in Portland, Maine, is an integrated educational finance organization offering services in student loan generation and servicing, secondary market services, and guarantor servicing support. Firstmark Services, LLC, assumed loan servicing responsibilities from Nelnet under a subcontract arrangement in 2005. Firstmark, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Nelnet, is located in Woodbury, Minnesota and specializes in the servicing of alternative loans.

MES performs customer service and all responsibilities associated with the loan origination process including inquiry, application, approval or denial, and disbursement stages. In addition, MES manages all aspects of the existing loan servicing contracts including compliance with due diligence strategies, fulfillment of monetary contractual obligations, and monitoring the quality of customer service. MES provides administrative oversight to or directly performs the duties required of MELA in connection with the existing tax-exempt bonds and the issuance of new bonds. General financial advisory and support services are also provided to MELA by MES.

MELA recognizes that its borrowers are its most valuable asset. MELA's goal is to provide the best supplemental loan program in the country, and quality customer service is one of the most important components of any loan program. Monitoring the level of customer service provided to its borrowers has been of the utmost importance to MELA.

MELA proudly boasts a very low cumulative default rate of 2.36%, as a percentage of loans in repayment. The MELA default rate has been historically low.

Customers continue to have access to their loan information by calling the toll free number 1-800-922-6352 or via MELA's web site at [www.mela.net](http://www.mela.net).



### **III. APPLICATION VOLUME AND DISTRIBUTION**

MELA processed 4,647 loan applications for the 2008 calendar year (Table 2). The application materials are mailed to current and prospective borrowers each spring. It is important that students and their families are provided with application materials as early as possible so that they can have maximum latitude in determining their funding resources. Since 1996, borrowers have been able to apply for loans directly online via the Internet. An increasing number of borrowers are utilizing the online application process. MELA's loan approval rate has ranged between 59%-65% for applications received (Table 2), with an average approval rate of 62% for the most recent five year period. For 2008 the approval rate was 59%.

### **IV. LOAN VOLUME**

MELA's loan volume increased from the previous year with disbursements of \$34 million for 2008 compared with \$31.9 million for 2007 (Table 3), excluding the MELA Private Consolidation Loan volume. During 2008, MELA made 5,351 loan disbursements resulting in an average disbursement size of \$6,363.

Maine schools continue to be the biggest beneficiary of MELA loans with sixty-four percent (64%) of all MELA funds disbursed in 2008 (Table 3).

Sixty-four percent (64%) of MELA funds disbursed for this calendar year went to private schools (Table 4). This trend has shifted from the 70% range to the mid 60% range over the past five years.

Table 5 reflects the cumulative percentage of funds disbursed between all public and private schools from 1988 to 2008. This breakdown, showing 38% of funds being used for public schools and 62% of funds for private schools is largely a reflection of the cost of attendance being higher for private institutions as compared to public institutions.

The Maine Medical Loan disbursements were \$1,527,211, \$840,633, \$1,435,038 and \$1,457,797 for 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005 respectively. The University of New England is the primary school beneficiary of this program.

### **V. BORROWER DISTRIBUTION**

In the 2008 calendar year, as in the past, the majority of MELA disbursements (64%) have been made to Maine schools (Table 6). This calendar year shows that disbursements to private schools both inside Maine (Table 7) and outside Maine (Table 8) remained relatively consistent from the prior year.

### **VI. SUMMARY**

For the past twenty years, the Maine Educational Loan Authority (MELA) has provided over \$227.8 million dollars in student loan disbursements through The Maine Loan, The Maine Medical Loan, and until recently, the MELA Private Consolidation Loan programs. By offering the overall lowest cost alternative educational loan program available, MELA has assisted thousands of Maine students to achieve their goal of a higher education. As the State of Maine continues to work to increase the percentage of its residents possessing college degrees, MELA's student loan program will remain an important financial aid resource for Maine students and their families. MELA looks forward to continuing to partner with the State of Maine and the higher education community to ensure that a college education is both accessible and affordable for Maine residents.

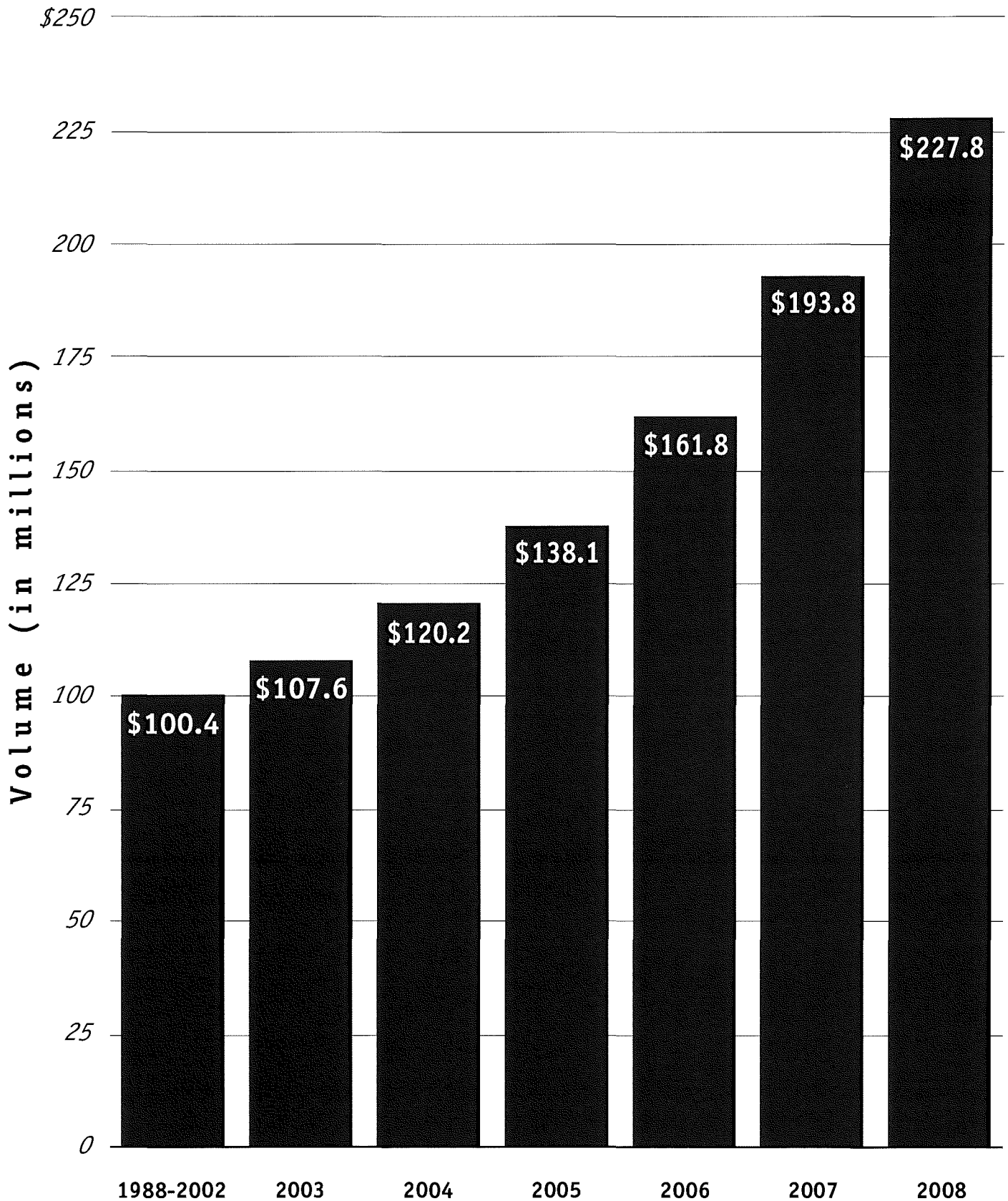
## MELA Charts and Graphs

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- Table 1** MELA Total Loan Volume by Loan Period (1988-2008)
- Table 2** MELA Application Volume by Loan Period (1998-2008)
- Table 3** Percentage of MELA Funds Disbursed to In-State/Out-of-State Schools (1998-2008)
- Table 4** Percentage of MELA Funds Disbursed to Public/Private Schools (1998-2008)
- Table 5** Cumulative Percentage of MELA Funds Disbursed to Public/Private Schools (1988-2008)
- Table 6** Percentage of MELA Disbursements to In-State/Out-of-State Schools (1998-2008)
- Table 7** Percentage of MELA Disbursements to Public/Private Maine Schools (1998-2008)
- Table 8** Percentage of MELA Disbursements to Public/Private Out-of-State Schools (1998-2008)

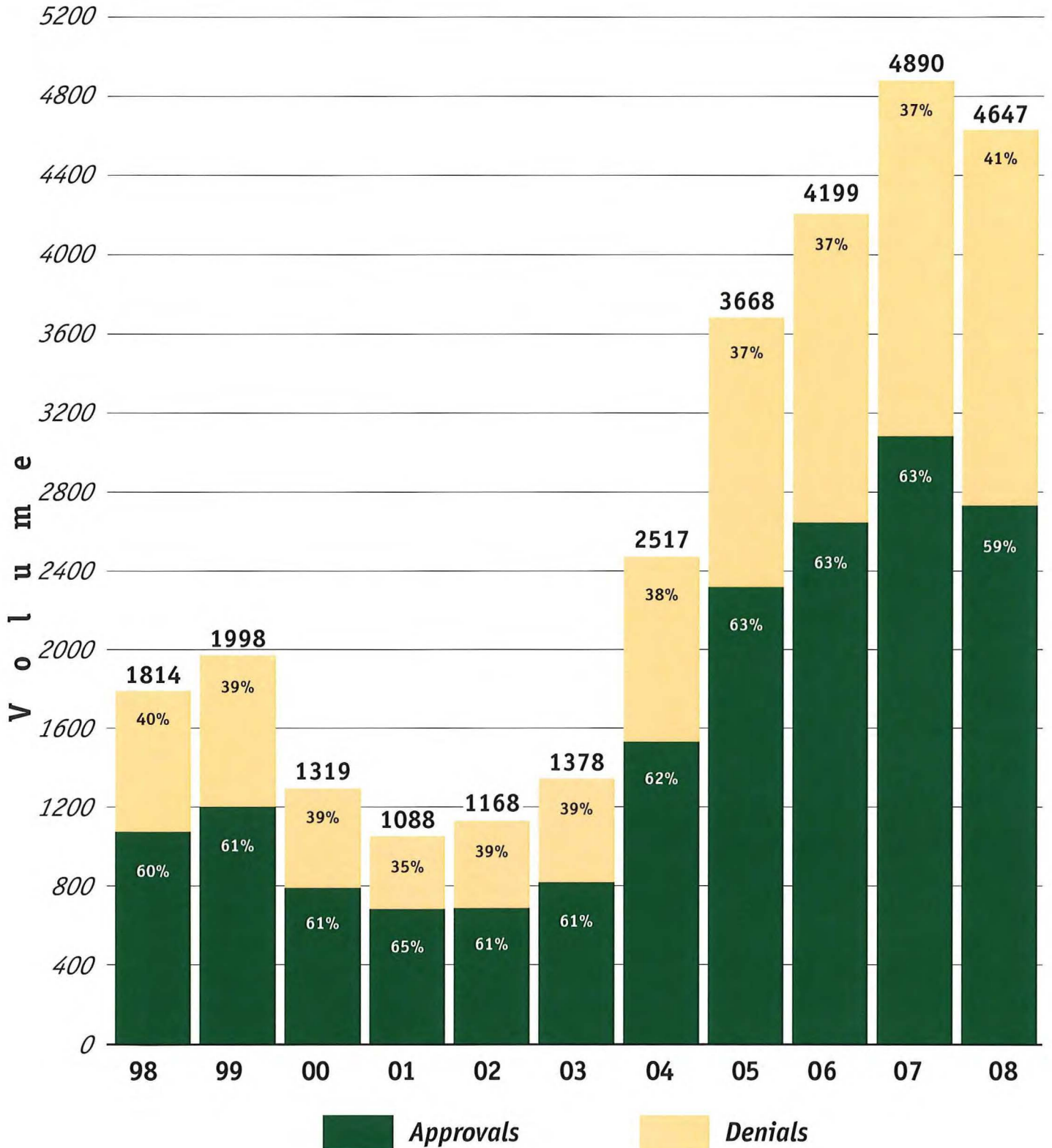
# MELA Total Loan Volume (1988-2008)

*Table 1*



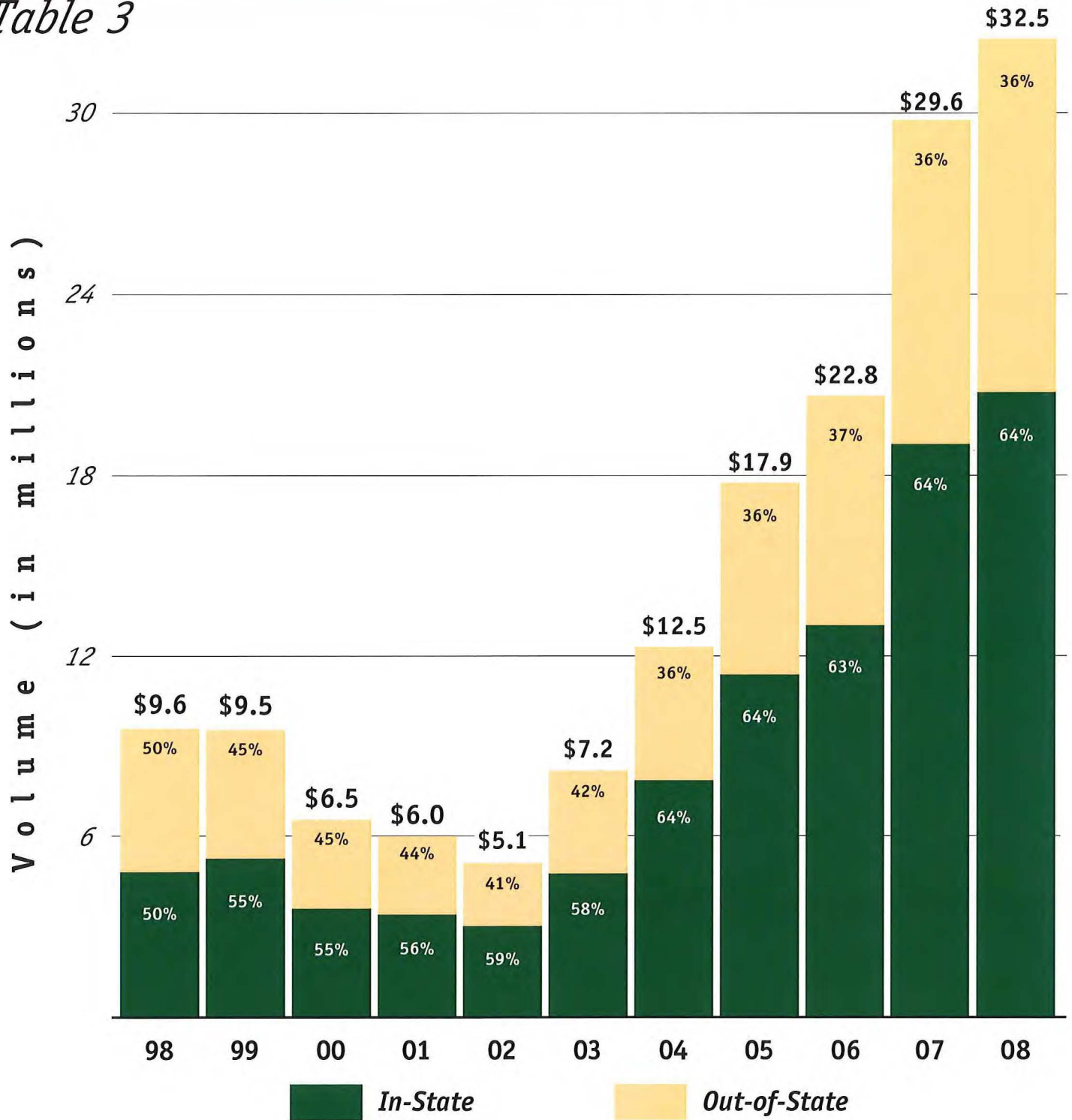
# MELA Application Volume By Loan Period (1998-2008)

Table 2



# Percentage of MELA Funds Disbursed To In-State/Out-of-State Schools (1998-2008)

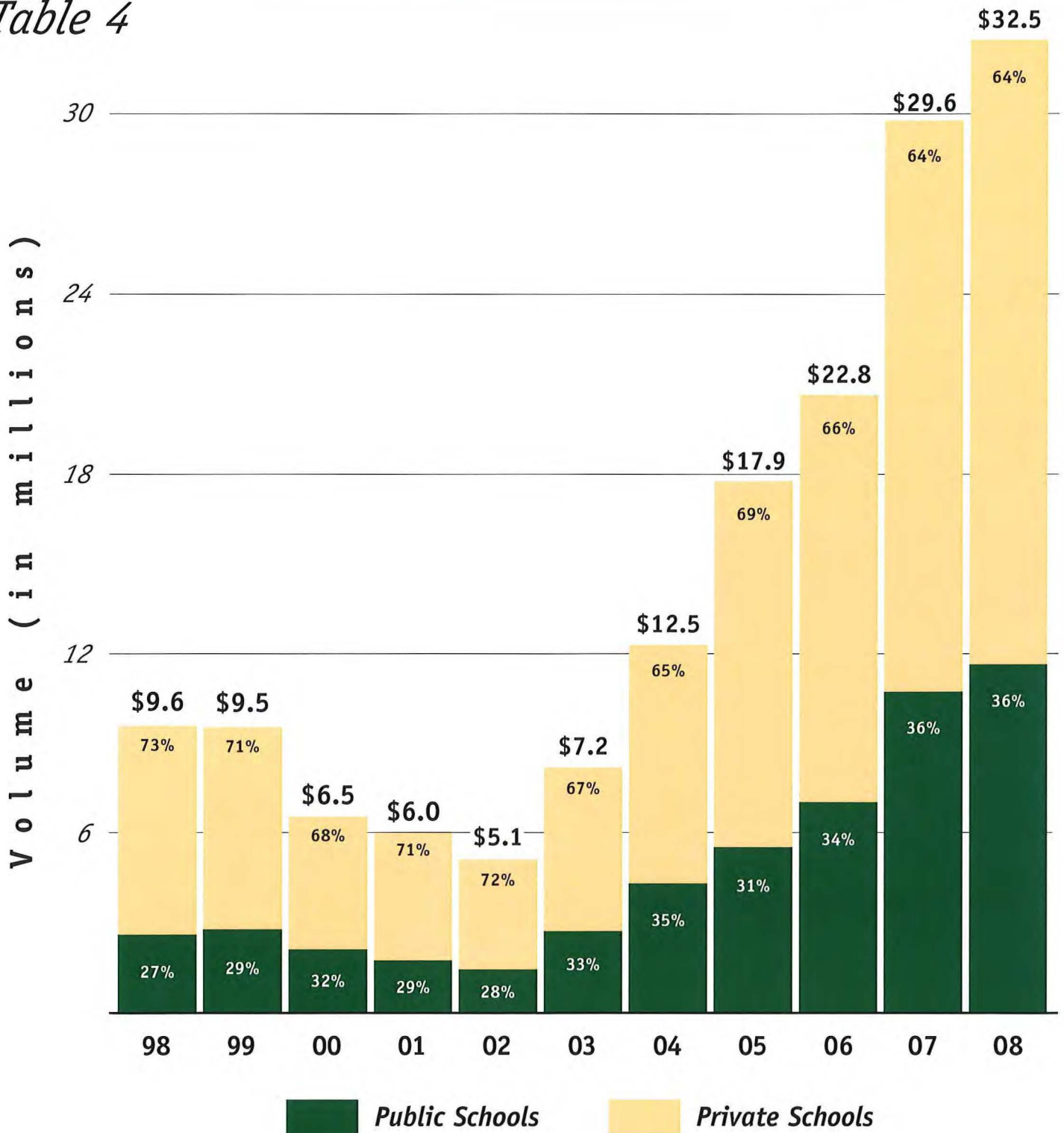
Table 3



Note: The decreased volume in 2002 is attributed to The Maine Loan being disbursed in two disbursements beginning June 1, 2002, with many second disbursements occurring in January 2003. Total loan origination volume for 2002 was \$7.0 million. MELA Private Consolidation volume of \$928,047 in 2006, \$2,356,830 in 2007, and \$1,537,963 in 2008 is excluded.

# Percentage of MELO Funds Disbursed To Public/Private Schools (1998-2008)

Table 4

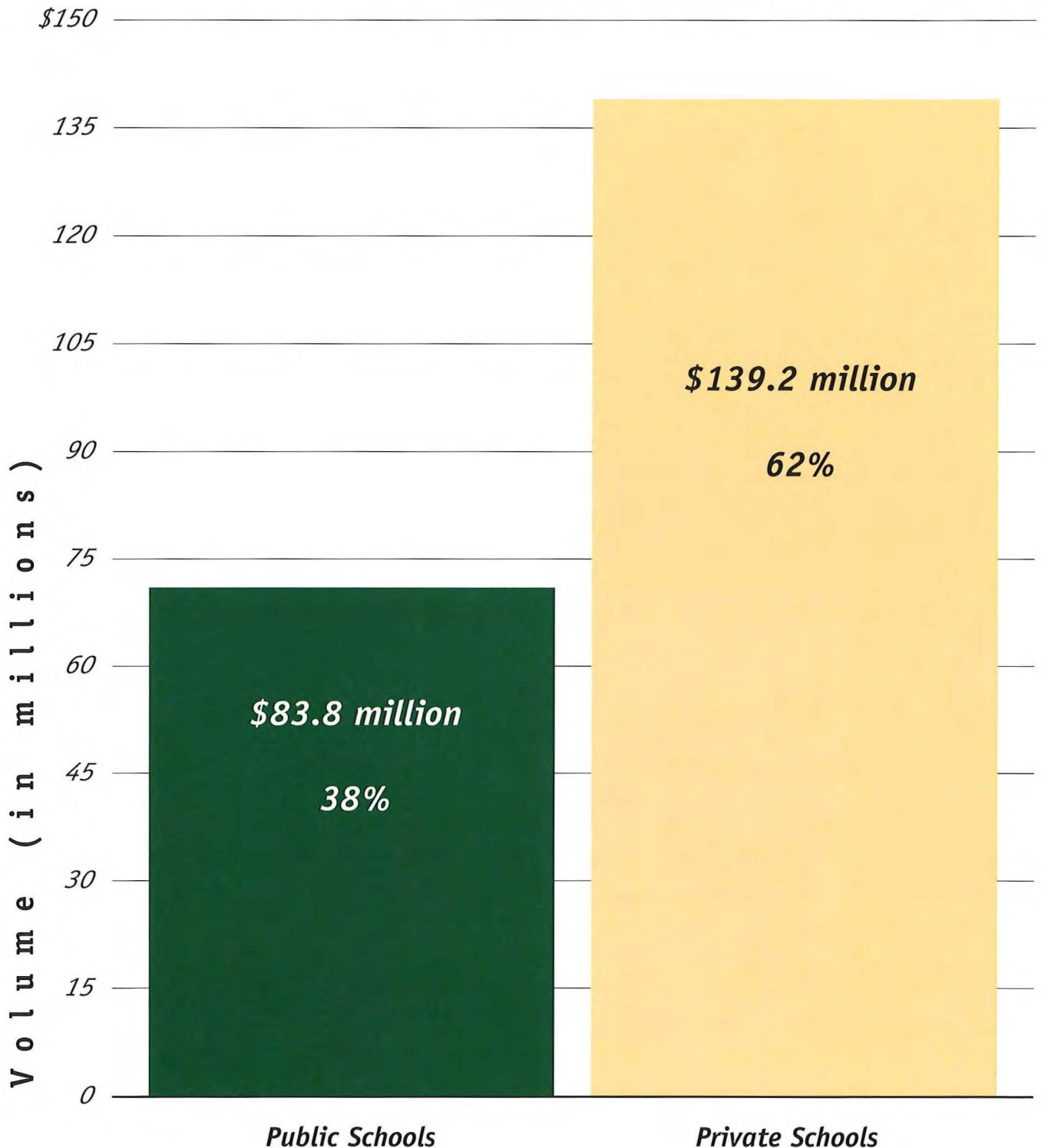


Note: The decreased volume in 2002 is attributed to The Maine Loan being disbursed in two disbursements beginning June 1, 2002, with many second disbursements occurring in January 2003. Total loan origination volume for 2002 was \$7.0 million. MELO Private Consolidation volume of \$928,047 in 2006, \$2,356,830 in 2007, and \$1,537,963 in 2008 is excluded.

# Cumulative Percentage of MELA Funds Public/Private Schools (1988-2008)

*Table 5*

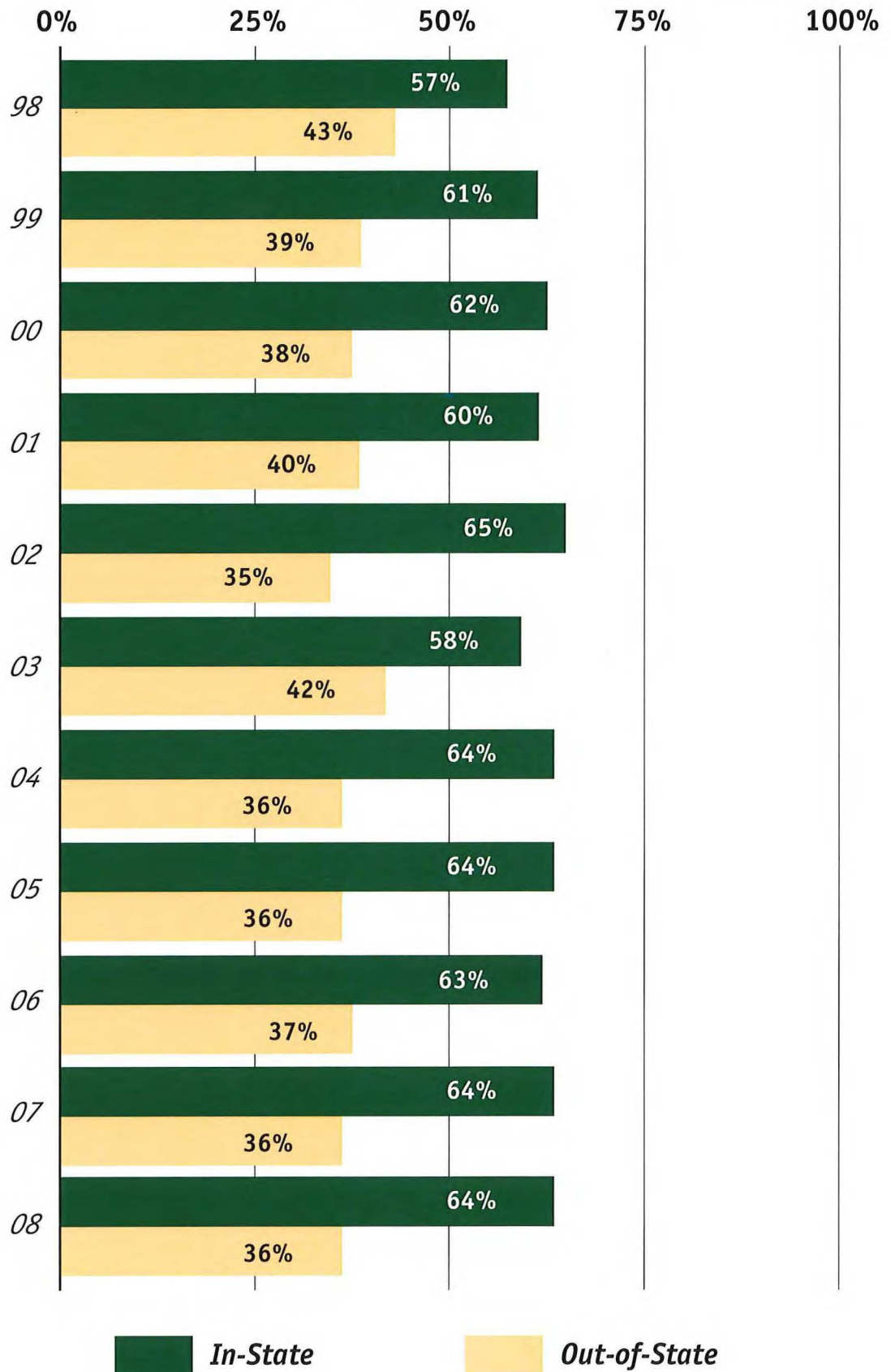
*Total = \$223 million*



Note: MELA Private Consolidation Loan volume of \$928,047 in 2006, \$2,356,830 in 2007, and \$1,537,963 in 2008 is excluded.

# Percentage of MELE Disbursements to In-State/Out-of-State Schools (1998-2008)

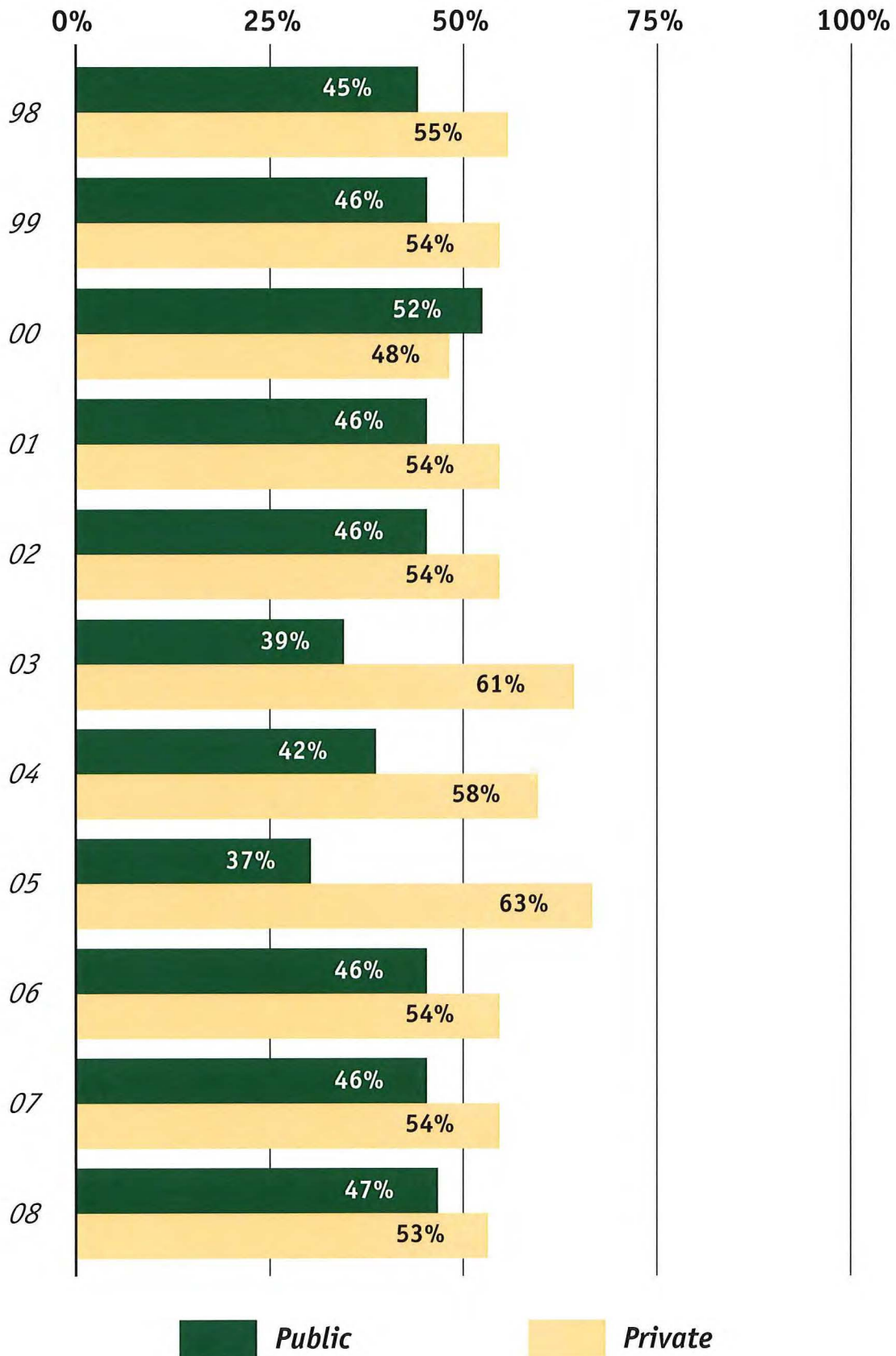
Table 6





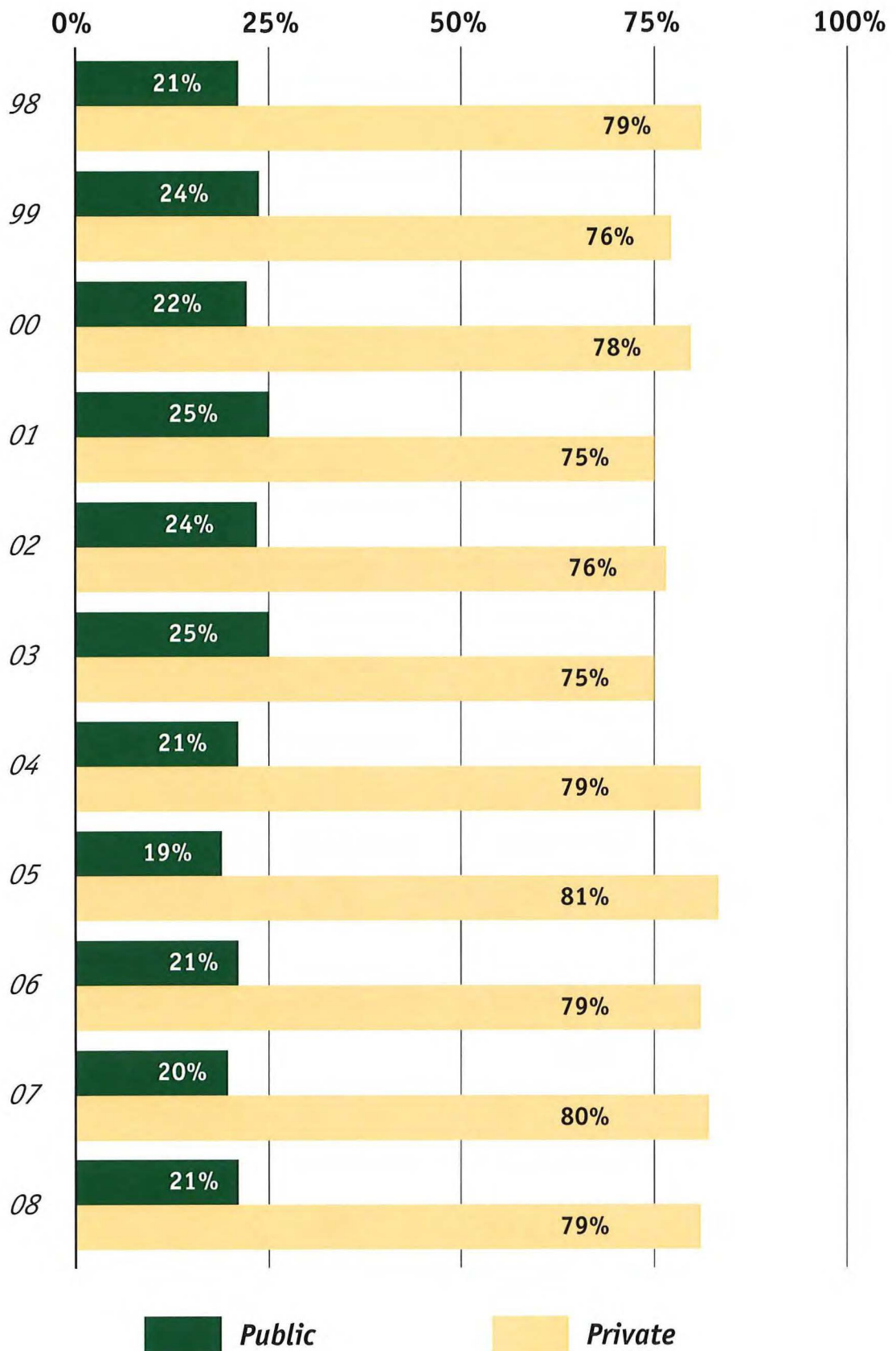
# Percentage of MELE Disbursements to Public/Private Maine Schools (1998-2008)

Table 7



# Percentage of MELA Disbursements to Public/Private Out-of-State Schools (1998-2008)

Table 8



**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT**

Members of the Authority  
Maine Educational Loan Authority

We have audited the accompanying basic financial statements of the Maine Educational Loan Authority, a component unit of the State of Maine, as of and for the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007, as listed in the accompanying table of contents. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Authority's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the basic financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Maine Educational Loan Authority as of December 31, 2008 and 2007, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

The Management's Discussion and Analysis on pages 2 – 7 is not a required part of the basic financial statements, but is supplementary information required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The supplementary information is the responsibility of the Authority's management. We have applied certain limited procedures that consisted principally of inquiries of management regarding the methods of measurement and presentation of the supplementary information. However, we did not audit the information and express no opinion on it.

Our audits were made for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements taken as a whole. The supplementary information in Schedule 1 is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.



Limited Liability Company

Portland, Maine  
April 23, 2009

**MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY**  
**MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

December 31, 2008 and 2007

As financial management of the Maine Educational Loan Authority (the "Authority"), we offer readers of these financial statements this narrative overview and analysis of the financial activities of the Authority for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007. This discussion and analysis is designed to assist the reader in focusing on the significant financial issues and activities of the Authority and to identify any significant changes in financial position. We encourage readers to consider the information presented here in conjunction with the basic financial statements as a whole.

**Overview of the Authority**

The Authority was created in 1988 by an Act of the Maine Legislature and is a public body corporate and politic constituting a public instrumentality of the State of Maine. The Authority was established to grant educational loans primarily using funds acquired through the issuance of long-term bonds payable. For financial reporting purposes the Authority is considered a component unit of the State of Maine, however, the Authority receives no appropriations from the State legislature. The Authority periodically receives allocations of the State's tax-exempt bond cap.

**Overview of the Financial Statements**

This discussion and analysis is intended to serve as an introduction to the Authority's financial statements, which is comprised of the basic financial statements and the notes to the financial statements. Since the Authority is comprised of a single enterprise fund, no fund level financial statements are shown.

**Basic Financial Statements**

The basic financial statements are designed to provide readers with a broad overview of the Authority's finances, in a manner similar to a private-sector business.

The statements of net assets present information on all of the Authority's assets and liabilities, with the difference between the two reported as net assets. Over time, increases or decreases in net assets may serve as a useful indicator of whether the financial position of the Authority is improving or deteriorating. Net assets increase when revenues exceed expenses. Increases to net assets without a corresponding increase to liabilities, result in increased net assets, which indicates an improved financial position.

The statements of revenues, expenses, and changes in net assets present information showing how the Authority's net assets changed during the fiscal year. This statement reports all revenues and expenses, and reconciles beginning and end of year net asset balances.

**Notes to the Financial Statements**

The notes to the financial statements provide additional information that is essential to a full understanding of the data provided in the basic financial statements.

## Financial Highlights – 2008

- Operating income for the Authority was \$615,034 for fiscal year 2008, an increase of \$140,447 from the prior year, due mainly to a decrease in broker dealer fees, a decrease in excess arbitrage to be remitted to the Federal government and an increased spread between interest income and financing expense.
- Net assets increased in 2008 solely as a result of operating income. The term “net assets” refers to the difference between assets and liabilities. At the close of fiscal year 2008, the Authority had net assets of \$4,310,642, an increase of 16.6% from the prior year.
- The Authority’s debt outstanding of \$160,615,000 increased \$12,500,000 as a result of the advances on a \$20 million line of credit issued in 2008.
- Loans originated during the year totaled approximately \$34,958,000 up 10% from the \$31,905,000 originated in fiscal year 2006.

## Financial Analysis – 2008

Net assets may serve, over time, as a useful indicator of a government’s financial position. In the case of the Authority, assets exceeded liabilities by \$4,310,642 at the close of the most recent fiscal year. This represents an increase of \$615,034 (16.6%) from the previous year. The unrestricted net assets were \$414,828 compared to restricted net assets of \$3,895,814. By far, the largest portion of the Authority’s net assets reflects its investment in educational loans plus bond proceeds remaining in trust investments less any related debt used to acquire those assets.

The Authority’s financial position and operations for the past two years are summarized below based on information included in the financial statements.

<u>Net Assets</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>Percentage Change</u>
Cash and investments	\$ 31,190,316	\$ 45,334,376	(31.2)%
Educational loans, net	129,102,952	102,962,452	25.4
Other assets	<u>8,746,326</u>	<u>7,006,668</u>	<u>24.8</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 169,039,594</u>	<u>\$ 155,303,496</u>	<u>8.8%</u>
Deferred revenue	\$ 2,137,567	\$ 1,767,237	21.0%
Arbitrage earnings rebatable	1,978,988	1,789,055	10.6
Bonds payable, net	147,467,474	147,366,619	0.1
Line of credit	12,500,000	–	100.0
Other liabilities	<u>644,923</u>	<u>684,977</u>	<u>(5.8)</u>
Total liabilities	<u>\$ 164,728,952</u>	<u>\$ 151,607,888</u>	<u>8.7%</u>
Restricted net assets	\$ 3,895,814	\$ 3,068,767	27.0%
Unrestricted net assets	<u>414,828</u>	<u>626,841</u>	<u>(33.8)</u>
Total net assets	<u>\$ 4,310,642</u>	<u>\$ 3,695,608</u>	<u>16.6%</u>

The decrease in the Authority’s cash and investments at December 31, 2008 from the balance at December 31, 2007 was mainly attributed to disbursements for the origination of educational loans in excess of loan repayments. The Authority’s investment portfolio at December 31, 2008 and 2007 is comprised of repurchase agreements. The Authority’s investments are carried at fair value and unrealized gains and losses due to fluctuations in market values, if any, are recognized in the statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net assets.

The Authority's educational loans, net, increased \$26,140,500 in 2008. The Authority's total loans originated and disbursed in 2008, including origination fees, was \$34,958,058 compared to the \$32,246,333 originated in 2007. The receipt of educational loan principal payments totaling \$10,393,707 increased from the 2007 level of \$9,556,161 due to an increase in loans in repayment status. The Authority's allowance for loan losses of \$2,451,694 at December 31, 2008, increased from 1.6% to 1.9% of total loans outstanding, due primarily to the increase in the provision for losses on educational loans. During 2008, the Authority provided \$899,897 to the allowance for loan losses compared to \$677,790 in 2007.

Bonds payable, net, increased \$100,855 during 2008 as a result of the accretion of bond discount. For additional information refer to the Long-Term Debt Activity section of the Management's Discussion and Analysis.

The Authority's financial position continued to improve as net assets increased 16.6% in 2008. The Authority continued to maintain a positive spread of income from investments and educational loans over bond interest and operating expenses.

<u>Changes in Net Assets</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>Percentage Change</u>
Interest on educational loans	\$7,702,293	\$6,020,649	27.9%
Interest on investments	1,101,653	2,475,211	(55.5)
Other revenue	<u>648,587</u>	<u>585,489</u>	<u>10.8</u>
Total operating revenue	9,452,533	9,081,349	4.1
Financing expenses	5,760,392	5,657,606	1.8
Servicing expense	1,343,083	1,144,188	17.4
Bond administration expense	376,405	514,518	(26.8)
Excess arbitrage	189,933	292,285	(35.0)
Provision for loan losses	899,897	677,790	32.8
Contributions and scholarships	15,000	10,000	50.0
Other operating expenses	<u>252,789</u>	<u>310,375</u>	<u>(18.6)</u>
Total operating expense	<u>8,837,499</u>	<u>8,606,762</u>	<u>2.7</u>
Change in net assets	615,034	474,587	29.6
Net assets at beginning of year	<u>3,695,608</u>	<u>3,221,021</u>	<u>14.7</u>
Net assets at end of year	<u>\$4,310,642</u>	<u>\$3,695,608</u>	<u>16.6%</u>

Operating revenues are generated principally from interest earned on educational loans and interest generated from the investment of bond proceeds. In 2008, the Authority's operating revenue totaled \$9,452,533. Of this amount, 81.5% was from interest on educational loans and 11.7% was from interest on investments, compared to 66.3% and 27.3%, respectively, in 2007. Interest on educational loans increased and interest on investments decreased during 2008, mainly due to higher balances of loans and a lower balance of investments outstanding during the year.

Operating expenses of the Authority consist primarily of interest expense on debt incurred to fund the origination of educational loans. The total operating expense for 2008 and 2007 was \$8,837,499 and \$8,606,762, respectively, of which \$5,760,392 (65.2%) and \$5,657,606 (65.7%) was attributable to debt related financing costs. Total operating expenses increased \$230,737 (2.7%) from 2007 to 2008 mainly as a result of higher balances on MELA's educational loans outstanding. Additionally, operating expenses were further increased by an increase in the provision for loan losses.

## Long-Term Debt Activity

The Authority is authorized to issue student loan revenue bonds to originate alternative educational loans. As of December 31, 2008, the Authority had \$147,467,474 in bonds payable, an increase of 0.1%. The Authority was issued a \$20,000,000 tax-exempt line of credit on August 8, 2008 and had \$12,500,000 in outstanding advances as of December 31, 2008. No long-term debt was issued or retired in 2008.

## Financial Highlights – 2007

- Operating income for the Authority was \$474,587 for fiscal year 2007, an increase of \$272,376 from the prior year, due mainly to the increased spread between interest income and financing expense.
- Net assets increased in 2007 solely as a result of operating income. The term “net assets” refers to the difference between assets and liabilities. At the close of fiscal year 2007, the Authority had net assets of \$3,695,608, an increase of 14.7% from the prior year.
- The Authority’s debt outstanding of \$148,115,000 increased as a result of the issuance of the Series 2007 bond issue totaling \$50,000,000.
- Loans originated during the year totaled approximately \$31,904,000 up 33% from the \$23,967,000 originated in fiscal year 2006.

## Financial Analysis – 2007

Net assets may serve, over time, as a useful indicator of a government’s financial position. In the case of the Authority, assets exceeded liabilities by \$3,695,608 at the close of the most recent fiscal year. This represents an increase of \$474,587 (14.7%) from the previous year. The unrestricted net assets were \$626,841 compared to restricted net assets of \$3,068,767. By far, the largest portion of the Authority’s net assets reflects its investment in educational loans plus bond proceeds remaining in trust investments less any related debt used to acquire those assets.

The Authority’s financial position and operations for the past two years are summarized below based on information included in the financial statements.

<u>Net Assets</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>Percentage Change</u>
Cash and investments	\$ 45,334,376	\$ 20,020,215	126.4%
Educational loans, net	102,962,452	79,351,066	29.8
Other assets	<u>7,006,668</u>	<u>4,823,818</u>	<u>45.3</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 155,303,496</u>	<u>\$ 104,195,099</u>	<u>49.1%</u>
Deferred revenue	\$ 1,767,237	\$ 1,355,260	30.4%
Arbitrage earnings rebatable	1,789,055	1,676,501	6.7
Bonds payable, net	147,366,619	97,456,479	51.2
Other liabilities	<u>684,977</u>	<u>485,838</u>	<u>41.0</u>
Total liabilities	<u>\$ 151,607,888</u>	<u>\$ 100,974,078</u>	<u>50.1%</u>
Restricted net assets	\$ 3,068,767	\$ 2,332,127	31.6%
Unrestricted net assets	<u>626,841</u>	<u>888,894</u>	<u>(29.5)</u>
Total net assets	<u>\$ 3,695,608</u>	<u>\$ 3,221,021</u>	<u>14.7%</u>

The increase in the Authority's cash and investments at December 31, 2007 from the balance at December 31, 2006 was mainly attributed to the net proceeds from the Series 2007 bond issue less disbursements for the origination of educational loans in excess of loan repayments. The Authority's investment portfolio at December 31, 2007 and 2006 is comprised of repurchase agreements. The Authority's investments are carried at fair value and unrealized gains and losses due to fluctuations in market values, if any, are recognized in the statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net assets.

The Authority's educational loans, net, increased \$23,611,386 in 2007. The Authority's total loans originated and disbursed in 2007, including origination fees, was \$31,904,739 compared to the \$23,967,109 originated in 2006. The receipt of educational loan principal payments totaling \$9,556,161 increased from the 2006 level of \$8,111,646 due to an increase in loans in repayment status. The Authority's allowance for loan losses of \$1,697,000 at December 31, 2007, decreased from 2.2% to 1.6% of total loans outstanding, due primarily to the increase in total loans outstanding and an increase in loans charged off. Beginning in 2007, once a loan reaches 180 days past due it is automatically charged off to coincide with the definition of a defaulted loan under the terms of the Authority's bond indentures. During 2007, the Authority provided \$677,790 to the allowance for loan losses compared to \$420,596 in 2006.

Bonds payable, net, increased \$49,910,140 during 2007 as a result of the issuance of the Series 2007 bond issue. For additional information refer to the Long-Term Debt Activity section of the Management's Discussion and Analysis.

The Authority's financial position continued to improve as net assets increased 14.7% in 2007. The Authority continued to maintain a positive spread of income from investments and educational loans over bond interest and operating expenses.

<u>Changes in Net Assets</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>Percentage Change</u>
Interest on educational loans	\$6,020,649	\$4,587,612	31.2%
Interest on investments	2,475,211	1,332,741	85.7
Other revenue	<u>585,489</u>	<u>491,111</u>	<u>19.2</u>
Total operating revenue	9,081,349	6,411,464	41.6
Financing expenses	5,657,606	3,719,679	52.1
Servicing expense	1,144,188	967,150	18.3
Bond administration expense	514,518	393,176	30.9
Excess arbitrage	292,285	423,482	(31.0)
Provision for loan losses	677,790	420,596	61.1
Contributions and scholarships	10,000	5,000	100.0
Other operating expenses	<u>310,375</u>	<u>280,170</u>	<u>10.8</u>
Total operating expense	<u>8,606,762</u>	<u>6,209,253</u>	<u>38.6</u>
Change in net assets	474,587	202,211	134.7
Net assets at beginning of year	<u>3,221,021</u>	<u>3,018,810</u>	<u>6.7</u>
Net assets at end of year	<u>\$3,695,608</u>	<u>\$3,221,021</u>	<u>14.7%</u>



Operating revenues are generated principally from interest earned on educational loans and interest generated from the investment of bond proceeds. In 2007, the Authority's operating revenue totaled \$9,081,349. Of this amount, 66.3% was from interest on educational loans and 27.3% was from interest on investments, compared to 71.6% and 20.8%, respectively, in 2006. Interest on educational loans and interest on investments increased during 2007, mainly due to higher balances of loans and investments outstanding during the year.

Operating expenses of the Authority consist primarily of interest expense on debt incurred to fund the origination of educational loans. The total operating expense for 2007 and 2006 was \$8,606,762 and \$6,209,253, respectively, of which \$5,657,606 (65.7%) and \$3,719,679 (59.9%) was attributable to debt related financing costs. Total operating expenses increased \$2,397,509 (38.6%) from 2006 to 2007 mainly as a result of higher balances on MELA's bonds outstanding due to the issuance of the Series 2007 bond issue. Additionally, operating expenses were further increased by an increase in the provision for loan losses.

### **Long-Term Debt Activity**

The Authority is authorized to issue student loan revenue bonds to originate alternative educational loans. As of December 31, 2007, the Authority had \$147,366,619 in bonds payable, an increase of 51.2%. The Authority issued \$50,000,000 in tax-exempt student loan revenue bonds on February 13, 2007 and no long-term debt was retired in 2007.

### **Requests for Information**

This financial report is designed to provide a general overview of the Authority's finances for all those with an interest in its finances. Questions concerning any of the information provided in this report or request for additional information should be addressed to the Executive Director, Maine Educational Loan Authority, 131 Presumpscot Street, Portland, Maine 04103.

**MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY**

STATEMENTS OF NET ASSETS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>		
Current assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents (notes 2, 4 and 6)	\$ 11,002,702	\$ 13,019,213
Educational loans, net (notes 3, 4, 6 and 7)	9,634,291	11,815,252
Interest receivable	795,553	626,060
Prepaid expenses	127,934	216,433
Accounts receivable	—	6,213
Total current assets	21,560,480	25,683,171
Noncurrent assets:		
Investments (notes 2, 4 and 6)	20,187,614	32,315,163
Educational loans, net (notes 3, 4, 6 and 7)	119,468,661	91,147,200
Interest receivable	4,888,310	3,647,232
Guarantee fees receivable	1,709,855	1,400,946
Unamortized issuance costs	995,058	869,611
Prepaid expenses	227,528	237,640
Fixed assets, less accumulated depreciation of \$962 and \$517 in 2008 and 2007, respectively	2,088	2,533
Total noncurrent assets	147,479,114	129,620,325
Total assets	\$ 169,039,594	\$ 155,303,496
<u>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</u>		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable (note 5)	\$ 177,788	\$ 196,845
Accrued interest payable	467,135	488,132
Arbitrage earnings rebatable (note 6)	29,687	—
Deferred revenue	481,589	541,598
Bonds payable, net (notes 4 and 6)	11,561,271	—
Total current liabilities	12,717,470	1,226,575
Noncurrent liabilities:		
Line of credit (note 4)	12,500,000	—
Deferred revenue	1,655,978	1,225,639
Arbitrage earnings rebatable (note 6)	1,949,301	1,789,055
Bonds payable, net (notes 4 and 6)	135,906,203	147,366,619
Total noncurrent liabilities	152,011,482	150,381,313
Total liabilities	164,728,952	151,607,888
Commitments and contingencies (notes 5, 7 and 8)		
Net assets:		
Restricted net assets	3,895,814	3,068,767
Unrestricted net assets	414,828	626,841
Total net assets	4,310,642	3,695,608
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 169,039,594	\$ 155,303,496

See accompanying notes, as they are an integral part of the financial statements.

## MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY

### STATEMENTS OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

Years Ended December 31, 2008 and 2007

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Operating revenues:		
Interest on educational loans	\$7,702,293	\$6,020,649
Interest on investments	1,101,653	2,475,211
Guarantee fee income	606,689	517,169
Other revenue	<u>41,898</u>	<u>68,320</u>
Total operating revenues	9,452,533	9,081,349
Operating expenses:		
Financing expenses – interest	5,760,392	5,657,606
Servicing expenses (note 5)	1,343,083	1,144,188
Bond administration expenses	376,405	514,518
Provision for losses on educational loans (note 3)	899,897	677,790
Professional fees	71,302	100,486
Excess arbitrage to be remitted to the Federal government (note 6)	189,933	292,285
Salaries and related benefits	97,015	96,316
Contributions and scholarships	15,000	10,000
Other operating expenses (note 5)	<u>84,472</u>	<u>113,573</u>
Total operating expenses	<u>8,837,499</u>	<u>8,606,762</u>
Operating income	615,034	474,587
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>3,695,608</u>	<u>3,221,021</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$4,310,642</u>	<u>\$3,695,608</u>

See accompanying notes, as they are an integral part of the financial statements.

**MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY**

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS**

Years Ended December 31, 2008 and 2007

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Interest received on educational loans	\$ 3,692,474	\$ 3,110,113
Principal payments received on educational loans	10,393,707	9,556,161
Educational loans originated	(34,958,058)	(32,246,333)
Fees received from borrowers	668,110	391,214
Payments for operating expenses	<u>(1,859,267)</u>	<u>(2,028,233)</u>
Net cash used by operating activities	(22,063,034)	(21,217,078)
Cash flows from non-capital financing activities:		
Interest payments on bonds and line of credit	(5,583,381)	(5,364,378)
Proceeds from sale of bonds	-	49,810,000
Advances on line of credit	12,500,000	-
Issuance costs paid	<u>(222,500)</u>	<u>(284,983)</u>
Net cash provided (used) by non-capital financing activities	6,694,119	44,160,639
Cash flows from capital and related financing activities:		
Purchase of fixed assets	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,131)</u>
Net cash used by capital and related financing activities	-	(1,131)
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Sale of investments	24,737,000	39,760,669
Purchase of investments	(12,609,451)	(61,132,000)
Interest received on investments	<u>1,224,855</u>	<u>2,371,731</u>
Net cash provided (used) by investing activities	<u>13,352,404</u>	<u>(18,999,600)</u>
Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents	(2,016,511)	3,942,830
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>13,019,213</u>	<u>9,076,383</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	<u>\$ 11,002,702</u>	<u>\$ 13,019,213</u>

**MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY**

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS  
(CONTINUED)**

Years Ended December 31, 2008 and 2007

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Reconciliation of operating income to net cash used		
by operating activities:		
Operating income	\$ 615,034	\$ 474,587
Adjustments to reconcile operating income to		
net cash used by operating activities:		
Provision for losses on educational loans	899,897	677,790
Interest income on investments	(1,101,653)	(2,475,211)
Interest on bonds payable	5,760,292	5,657,606
Depreciation expense	445	403
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Educational loans, net	(27,040,397)	(24,289,176)
Interest receivable on educational loans	(1,533,773)	(1,311,532)
Prepaid expenses	98,611	(21,347)
Accounts receivable	6,213	45,722
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(19,057)	37,481
Guaranteed fees receivable and deferred revenue	61,421	(125,955)
Arbitrage earnings rebatable	<u>189,933</u>	<u>112,554</u>
	<u>\$(22,063,034)</u>	<u>\$(21,217,078)</u>

See accompanying notes, as they are an integral part of the financial statements.

# MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

### 1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

#### Organization

The Maine Educational Loan Authority (MELA or the "Authority") was created by the Maine Educational Loan Authority Act, Title 20-A, Chapter 417-A, of the Maine Revised Statutes, as amended, as a public body corporate and politic constituting a public instrumentality of the State of Maine. The Authority was established to grant educational loans primarily using funds acquired through the issuance of long-term bonds payable.

For financial reporting purposes under Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 14, *The Financial Reporting Entity*, and No. 39, *Determining Whether Certain Organizations are Component Units*, the Authority is considered a component unit of the State of Maine. As such, the financial position, results of operations and cash flows of the Authority are included in the State of Maine's basic financial statements.

#### Basis of Accounting

The accounts of the Authority are maintained in accordance with the principles of "fund accounting." These principles require that resources for various purposes be classified for accounting and reporting purposes into funds that are in accordance with activities or objectives specified. The Authority only has one fund. The financial statements are prepared on the accrual method of accounting and accordingly recognize revenues as earned and expenses as incurred.

As permitted by Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 20, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Proprietary Funds and Other Governmental Entities that Use Proprietary Fund Accounting*, the Authority has elected not to comply with the Financial Accounting Standards Board Statements and Interpretations issued after November 30, 1989.

#### Restriction on Net Assets

The restricted net assets of the Authority are restricted by the bond indentures. Financial activities and resulting account balances that fall outside of the bond indentures are presented in the statements of net assets as unrestricted net assets. The Authority's restricted net assets are restricted for the acquisition and origination of educational loans, payment of debt service and payment of program operating expenses.

#### Educational Loans

Educational loans are stated at their unpaid principal balance plus net deferred origination costs. Educational loans consist primarily of student loans, which are made to postsecondary students attending eligible educational institutions, and parental loans made to parents of dependent undergraduate students, graduate and professional students and independent undergraduate students attending eligible educational institutions.

# MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

### 1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (Continued)

Educational loans granted with the funds acquired from the educational loan revenue bonds issued prior to the 1996 series are guaranteed by The Education Resources Institute, Inc. (TERI). The loans granted with the proceeds of the 1996 and subsequent series bonds are not guaranteed, but MELA retained 5% of the principal amount as a guarantee fee for loans issued prior to June 1, 2002, and 3% of the principal amount from June 1, 2002 through May 31, 2004. From June 1, 2004 through May 31, 2005, MELA retained 0%, 3% or 7% of the principal amount based on the borrower's credit risk as determined by the borrower's credit score and debt to income ratio. Beginning June 1, 2005 the guarantee fees assessed were 0%, 3% or 6% of the principal amount based on the borrower's credit risk as determined by the borrower's credit score and debt to income ratio and were added to the loan principal once the loan enters repayment. On July 28, 2008, the Authority moved the guarantee fee to a 4% up front fee being charged on all loans. The guarantee fees outstanding for loans that have not entered repayment at December 31, 2008 and 2007 totaled \$1,709,855 and \$1,400,946, respectively.

Fees and costs related to the origination of student loans, including the guarantee fees, are deferred. The amounts deferred are amortized and recognized into income over the average life of the loans using a method which approximates the level yield. The average life of the loans is estimated to be ten years.

Interest on educational loans is recognized as revenue in the period earned and servicing costs are charged directly to expense as incurred.

#### Allowance for Loan Losses

Substantially all educational loans are not subject to a guarantee from a third party. Therefore, management of MELA has established an allowance for loan losses to provide for probable losses. The amount of the allowance, which is established through a provision for losses on educational loans charged to expense, is based on management's estimation of the probable losses within the portfolio. In estimating the adequacy of the allowance for loan losses, management considers such factors as the nature and volume of the portfolio, delinquency trends, specific problem loans and current economic conditions that may affect the borrowers' ability to repay. Actual results could differ from those estimates. Past due loans greater than 180 days are automatically charged off.

#### Discount and Issuance Costs on Bonds and Line of Credit

Bond discount is amortized by the effective interest method over the life of the bonds. Bond and line of credit issuance costs are being amortized by the straight-line method over the life of the bonds and line of credit. Amortization of bond discount and bond issuance costs are accelerated for early repayment of bonds. Unamortized bond discount and issuance costs related to refunded bonds are deferred and amortized over the life of the original or refunded bonds, whichever is shorter.

#### Cash Equivalents

For purposes of the statements of cash flows, cash equivalents include funds held in an institutional money market fund account.

# MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

### 1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (Continued)

#### Investments

Investment securities consist of repurchase agreements. Investments are carried at fair value in accordance with GASB Statement No. 31, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Certain Investments and for External Investment Pools*. The cost of the repurchase agreements approximates their fair value as MELA can withdraw funds at par over the life of the repurchase agreements according to the related bond indentures.

#### Depreciation

Capital assets of MELA consist of equipment and related software. Capital assets are defined by MELA as assets with an initial individual cost of one thousand dollars or more and are depreciated under the straight-line method over the respective estimated useful lives of the assets.

#### Income Taxes

As a public entity and body politic of the State of Maine, MELA is a tax-exempt organization and, accordingly, no provision for income taxes has been made in the accompanying financial statements.

#### Reclassifications

Certain 2007 amounts have been reclassified to conform to the 2008 presentation.

### 2. Cash, Cash Equivalents and Investments

In accordance with the terms of its bond indentures, MELA may invest in, subject to various restrictions, direct obligations of the United States; high grade obligations of any state, public agency, political subdivision, political agencies or authorities; deposit accounts; repurchase agreements; guaranteed investment contracts; or any other investment approved by the bond indentures. The majority of investments and cash and cash equivalents are restricted for the repayment of bond obligations, and to satisfy certain reserve requirements specified by the bond indentures.

*Interest Rate Risk.* Interest rate risk is the risk that changes in interest rates of investments in debt instruments will adversely affect the fair value of an investment. As a means of limiting its exposure to fair value losses arising from rising interest rates, the Authority invests primarily in repurchase agreements whose maturity and interest rate adjustment dates are closely matched with future bond maturities and loan disbursements. Further, the repurchase agreements contain provisions that allow the Authority to withdraw funds at par over the life of the agreements.



MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

2. Cash, Cash Equivalents and Investments (Continued)

*Credit Risk.* Credit risk is the risk that an issuer or other counterparty to an investment will not fulfill its obligations. This credit risk is measured by the credit quality ratings of investments as described by nationally recognized statistical rating organizations. The Authority limits its credit risk by investing in investment securities with high credit quality and repurchase agreements backed by high credit quality banks. The Authority's investments and investment agreements purchased with proceeds from the various bond indentures are approved by MELA's bond insurer. In addition, the repurchase agreements can be terminated, without penalty, if the counterparty falls below a Moody's credit rating of A3 or below an S&P credit rating of A-.

*Custodial Credit Risk.* Custodial credit risk is the risk that, in the event of the failure of the counterparty, the Authority will not be able to recover the value of its investments or collateral securities that are in the possession of an outside party. The Authority's repurchase agreements require a collateral account to be established in the name of the Authority with a third-party custodian. The Authority limits the custodial credit risk by regularly monitoring the credit quality ratings of the counterparties and the adequacy of the collateral accounts.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents consisted of the following:

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Cash	\$ 5,799,917	\$ 255,306
Money market accounts	<u>5,202,785</u>	<u>12,763,907</u>
	<u>\$11,002,702</u>	<u>\$13,019,213</u>

At December 31, 2008 and 2007, the money market accounts are invested in Dreyfus Treasury Cash Management Fund. The fund invests only in securities issued or guaranteed as to principal and interest by the U.S. government. As of December 31, 2008 and 2007, the fund was rated Aaa by Moody's Investors Service and AAAM by Standard & Poor's. The underlying assets are not held in the name of the Authority.

At December 31, 2008, cash accounts with bank balances of \$5,898,323 were deposited at financial institutions and insured by the FDIC for \$335,767, \$5,119,299 was collateralized by overnight repurchase agreements and the remaining \$443,257 was uninsured. The uninsured cash represents money required to be on deposit at T.D. Bank N.A. as collateral for the line of credit established in 2008. As of December 31, 2008, T.D. Bank N.A. was rated Aa2 by Moody's Investors Service and AA- by Standard & Poor's. The overnight repurchase agreements are collateralized by securities issued by the U.S. Government. The underlying assets are not held in the name of the Authority. At December 31, 2007, cash accounts with bank balances of \$391,468 were deposited at financial institutions and insured by the FDIC for \$114,500, \$229,735 was collateralized by an overnight repurchase agreement and the remaining \$47,233 was uninsured. The overnight repurchase agreement is collateralized by securities issued by the U.S. Government. The underlying assets are not held in the name of the Authority.

MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

2. Cash, Cash Equivalents and Investments (Continued)

Investments

Repurchase agreements are invested as follows:

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
<p>Bayerische Landesbank Girozentrale (Bayerische) issued a repurchase agreement in the name of the corporate trustee for MELA under the indenture of trust relative to the series 1996 bond issue. The repurchase agreement is further secured by U.S. Treasury notes, which are held in the name of MELA, by a third-party custodian under the terms of the Investment Repurchase Agreement dated June 27, 1996. The investment agreement carries a variable interest rate equal to the per annum interest rate borne by the 1996 series bond issue plus 140 basis points. The final repurchase date is scheduled for June 1, 2026. As of December 31, 2008, Bayerische was rated Aa2 by Moody's Investors Service and A by Standard &amp; Poor's.</p>	\$ 1,238,296	\$ 1,263,372
<p>Bayerische Landesbank Girozentrale (Bayerische) issued a repurchase agreement in the name of the corporate trustee for MELA under the indenture of trust relative to the series 1997 bond issue. The repurchase agreement is further secured by U.S. Treasury and U.S. Government-sponsored entities' obligations, which are held in the name of MELA, by a third-party custodian under the terms of the Investment Repurchase Agreement dated July 17, 1997. The investment agreement carries a variable interest rate equal to the per annum interest rate borne by the 1997 series bond issue plus 100 basis points. The final repurchase date is scheduled for June 1, 2027. As of December 31, 2008, Bayerische was rated Aa2 by Moody's Investors Service and A by Standard &amp; Poor's.</p>	995,161	955,093
<p>Westdeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale (Westdeutsche) issued a repurchase agreement in the name of the corporate trustee for MELA under the indenture of trust relative to the series 1999 bond issue. The repurchase agreement is further secured by U.S. Treasury notes, which are held in the name of MELA, by a third-party custodian under the terms of the Investment Repurchase Agreement dated January 26, 1999. The investment agreement carries a variable interest rate equal to the per annum interest rate borne by the 1999 series bond issue plus 118 basis points. The final repurchase date is scheduled for June 1, 2029. As of December 31, 2008, Westdeutsche was rated A2 by Moody's Investors Service and A- by Standard &amp; Poor's.</p>	1,157,040	1,320,458

**MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY**

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

**2. Cash, Cash Equivalents and Investments (Continued)**

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
<p>Bayerische Landesbank Girozentrale (Bayerische) issued a repurchase agreement in the name of the corporate trustee for MELA under the indenture of trust relative to the series 2000 bond issue. The repurchase agreement is further secured by U.S. Treasury and U.S. Government-sponsored entities' obligations, which are held in the name of MELA, by a third-party custodian under the terms of the Investment Repurchase Agreement dated September 19, 2000. The investment agreement carries a variable interest rate equal to the per annum interest rate borne by the 2000 series bond issue plus 126 basis points. The final repurchase date is scheduled for June 1, 2030. As of December 31, 2008, Bayerische was rated Aa2 by Moody's Investors Service and A by Standard &amp; Poor's.</p>	\$ 932,256	\$ 919,295
<p>Bayerische Hypo-Und Vereinsbank AG (Bayerische) issued a repurchase agreement in the name of the corporate trustee for MELA under the indenture of trust relative to the series 2002 bond issue. The repurchase agreement is further secured by U.S. Treasury and U.S. Government-sponsored entities' obligations, which are held in the name of MELA, by a third-party custodian under the terms of the Investment Repurchase Agreement dated November 15, 2002. The investment agreement carries a variable interest rate equal to the one year LIBOR rate, less 0.32% per annum, reset yearly two business days prior to each May 15 to be effective as of May 15. The final repurchase date is scheduled for May 15, 2032. As of December 31, 2008, Bayerische was rated A1 by Moody's Investors Service and A+ by Standard &amp; Poor's.</p>	12,937,819	9,718,945
<p>Societe Generale (Societe) issued a repurchase agreement in the name of the corporate trustee for MELA under the indenture of trust relative to the series 2005 bond issue. The repurchase agreement is further secured by U.S. Treasury and U.S. Government-sponsored entities' obligations, which are held in the name of MELA, by a third-party custodian under the terms of the Investment Repurchase Agreement dated May 20, 2005. The investment agreement carries a variable year LIBOR rate, less 0.30% per annum, reset yearly each May 15, interest rate equal to the one the final repurchase date is scheduled June 1, 2035. As of December 31, 2008, Societe was rated Aa2 by Moody's Investors Service and AA- by Standard &amp; Poor's.</p>	671,042	1,200,000

**MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY**

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

**2. Cash, Cash Equivalents and Investments (Continued)**

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
AIG Matched Funding Corp. (AIG) issued a repurchase agreement in the name of the corporate trustee for MELA under the indenture of trust relative to the series 2007 bond issue. The repurchase agreement is further secured by U. S Treasury and U.S. Government-sponsored entities' obligations, which are held in the name of MELA, by a third-party custodian under the terms of the Investment Repurchase Agreement dated February 21, 2007. The investment agreement carries a variable interest rate equal to the one year LIBOR rate, less 0.44% per annum, reset yearly each May 1, the final repurchase date is scheduled June 1, 2041. As of December 31, 2008, AIG was rated A3 by Moody's Investors Service and A- by Standard & Poor's.	\$ <u>2,256,000</u>	\$ <u>16,938,000</u>
	<u>\$20,187,614</u>	<u>\$32,315,163</u>

**3. Educational Loans**

Educational loans earn interest at variable and set rates. Most of MELA's borrowers are located in the New England states, primarily the State of Maine. Educational loans are unsecured.

Educational loans are classified as being in "interim" status during the period from the date the loan is made until a student ceases to be enrolled at least on a half-time basis plus a grace period of six months. Subsequent to this period, student loans are classified as being in "repayment" status. "Forbearance" status is a period during the life of the loan when repayment is suspended for authorized purposes.

Educational loans at December 31, 2008 and 2007 are summarized as follows:

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
<b>Status:</b>		
Interim status	\$ 60,116,973	\$ 56,246,037
Repayment status	68,112,926	46,736,088
Forbearance status	2,604,446	1,034,723
Deferred costs, net	720,301	642,604
Less: Allowance for loan losses	<u>(2,451,694)</u>	<u>(1,697,000)</u>
 Total educational loans, net	 129,102,952	 102,962,452
 Current Portion	 <u>9,634,291</u>	 <u>11,815,252</u>
 Noncurrent Portion	 <u>\$ 119,468,661</u>	 <u>\$ 91,147,200</u>

**MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY**

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

**3. Educational Loans (Continued)**

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
<b>Guarantee type:</b>		
Loans subject to guarantee	\$ 833,072	\$ 1,157,713
Nonguaranteed loans	130,001,273	102,859,135
Deferred costs, net	720,301	642,604
Less: Allowance for loan losses	<u>(2,451,694)</u>	<u>(1,697,000)</u>
 Total educational loans, net	 129,102,952	 102,962,452
 Current Portion	 <u>9,634,291</u>	 <u>11,815,252</u>
 Noncurrent Portion	 <u>\$ 119,468,661</u>	 <u>\$ 91,147,200</u>

The educational loans are pledged to the repayment of bonds.

Transactions in the allowance for loan losses for the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007 are as follows:

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Balance at January 1	\$1,697,000	\$1,782,500
Loans charged off	(342,827)	(864,282)
Recoveries on loans	<u>197,624</u>	<u>100,992</u>
 Net loans (charged-off) recovered	 (145,203)	 (763,290)
 Provision for losses on educational loans	 <u>899,897</u>	 <u>677,790</u>
 Balance at December 31	 <u>\$2,451,694</u>	 <u>\$1,697,000</u>

At December 31, 2008 and 2007, respectively, loans greater than 90 days delinquent or in claims or forbearance status approximated \$3,056,000 and \$1,374,000.

**4. Bonds Payable and Line of Credit**

During 2008, MELA established a warehouse line of credit to fund student loans with T.D. Bank N.A. for \$20,000,000, which expires on February 8, 2010. The line of credit accrues interest at .45% plus 69% of the sum of the one month LIBOR rate plus 2.0% (3.141% at December 31, 2008). The line of credit is collateralized by a first priority security interest in all loans financed under the line and all deposit accounts established in relation to those loans. The principal balance owed on the line of credit as of December 31, 2008 was \$12,500,000.

**MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY**

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

**4. Bonds Payable and Line of Credit (Continued)**

MELA has issued the following bonds to finance the purchase and origination of educational loans:

<u>Educational Loan Revenue Bonds</u>	<u>Amount Outstanding</u>	
	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
1996 series due in 2026; auction rate securities having variable interest rates, 3.203% at December 31, 2008	\$ 12,500,000	\$ 12,500,000
1997 series due in 2027; auction rate securities having variable interest rates, 3.203% at December 31, 2008	10,000,000	10,000,000
1999 series due in 2029; auction rate securities having variable interest rates, 3.203% at December 31, 2008	14,000,000	14,000,000
2000 series due in 2030; auction rate securities having variable interest rates, 3.203% at December 31, 2008	10,000,000	10,000,000
2002 series, fixed rates due on May 1, 2009 of 3.65%; auction rate securities having variable interest rates, 3.203% at December 31, 2008, due June 2032	21,615,000	21,615,000
2005 series due in 2039; auction rate securities having variable interest rates, 3.203% at December 31, 2008	30,000,000	30,000,000
2007 series due in 2041; auction rate securities having variable interest rates, 4.078% at December 31, 2008	<u>50,000,000</u>	<u>50,000,000</u>
	148,115,000	148,115,000
Less:		
Unaccreted bond discount	617,965	647,876
Unaccreted deferred loss on advance refunding	<u>29,561</u>	<u>100,505</u>
Bonds payable, net	147,467,474	147,366,619
Current portion	<u>11,561,271</u>	<u>—</u>
Non-current portion	<u>\$ 135,906,203</u>	<u>\$ 147,366,619</u>

To date, the bonds and line of credit issued by MELA have been exempt from federal income taxes. MELA issued \$20 million in tax exempt debt in 2008. MELA carried forward a \$50 million allocation of Private Activity Bond Cap from 2007 and received an allocation of Private Activity Bond Cap from the State of Maine in the amount of \$40 million for 2008, resulting in \$70 million of Private Activity Bond Cap being available for 2009. MELA expects to continue to receive allocations of tax-exempt bond cap in the future.

The bonds are not a debt or liability of the State of Maine but are payable solely as provided in the bond indentures. The bonds are secured by cash, cash equivalents, investments and a first lien on the educational loans originated and acquired with the proceeds.

**MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY**

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

**4. Bonds Payable and Line of Credit (Continued)**

The bonds are subject to early redemption at par, in whole or in part, from unused bond proceeds and investment income thereon, to the extent that the funds will not be used to originate eligible loans. The bonds are subject to mandatory redemption under provisions outlined in the bond indentures.

Investments made and educational loans originated with the proceeds of the bonds, and the net revenues thereon are held in trust. As additional security for the bonds, MELA has established reserve funds totaling approximately \$4,051,122 and \$5,924,600 at December 31, 2008 and 2007, respectively, to be used to replenish any deficiency in funds required to pay principal or interest due on the bonds. The reserve funds are invested in repurchase agreements in 2008 and 2007.

The debt service requirements, which are based on the interest rates at December 31, 2008, through 2013 and in five-year increments thereafter to maturity for the Authority, are as follows:

<u>Year(s)</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Total</u>
2009	\$ 11,615,000	\$ 5,003,856	\$ 16,618,856
2010	—	4,809,595	4,809,595
2011	—	4,809,595	4,809,595
2012	—	4,809,595	4,809,595
2013	—	4,809,595	4,809,595
2014 – 2018	—	24,047,975	24,047,975
2019 – 2023	—	24,047,975	24,047,975
2024 – 2028	22,500,000	22,566,588	45,066,588
2029 – 2033	34,000,000	16,825,210	50,825,210
2034 – 2038	—	14,999,500	14,999,500
2039 – 2041	<u>80,000,000</u>	<u>5,577,950</u>	<u>85,577,950</u>
	<u>\$148,115,000</u>	<u>\$132,307,434</u>	<u>\$280,422,434</u>

The actual maturities and interest may differ due to changes in interest rates or other factors.

The following summarizes the bond activity for the Authority for the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007:

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Balance at beginning of year	\$147,366,619	\$ 97,456,479
Issuance	—	49,810,000
Accretion	<u>100,855</u>	<u>100,140</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>\$147,467,474</u>	<u>\$147,366,619</u>

# MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

### 5. Commitments

The Authority is party to an agreement whereby Maine Education Services (MES), provides administrative services for the Authority. The current contract extends through September 30, 2009. The fee for these services is equal to 0.70% per annum of the aggregate principal amount of loans outstanding. The Authority recorded expense of \$847,969 and \$688,597 in 2008 and 2007, respectively, under this arrangement, which is recorded as servicing expenses.

MELA also pays MES a 1% origination fee on all supplemental loan disbursements (1.5% for supplemental consolidation loans), which fee amounted to \$283,123 and \$341,594 in 2008 and 2007, respectively. These origination fees are deferred and amortized over the approximate life of the loans, which is estimated to be 10 years. The Authority is also subject to an agreement whereby MES provides marketing and outreach services. The Authority recorded expense of \$30,000 in 2008 and 2007, for marketing and outreach services, which is recorded in other operating expenses. In addition, MELA pays to MES a management and financial advisory fee of 0.05% in 2008 and 0.25% in 2007, times the par value of each new bond or line of credit issue for services required to facilitate each bond or line of credit offering, and to establish the initial loan and investment portfolios and bond level financial statements, which fee amounted to \$10,000 and \$125,000 in 2008 and 2007, respectively. These fees are included with bond issuance costs and amortized over the life of each respective bond or line of credit issue.

As a result of the various transactions described above, at December 31, 2008 and 2007, the Authority owed MES \$80,471 and \$131,747, respectively, which is included in accounts payable.

### 6. Arbitrage

The bonds issued by MELA are subject to Internal Revenue Service regulations which limit the amount of income which may be earned on certain cash equivalents, investments and educational loans acquired with bond proceeds. Any excess earnings are to be refunded to the Federal government. MELA has estimated that there is an arbitrage liability at December 31, 2008 and 2007 as follows:

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Series 1996	\$ 30,858	\$ 26,009
Series 1997	—	—
Series 1999	315,183	243,574
Series 2000	613,299	492,189
Series 2002	820,824	766,717
Series 2005	—	—
Series 2007	<u>198,824</u>	<u>260,566</u>
	1,978,988	1,789,055
Less current portion	<u>29,687</u>	<u>—</u>
Noncurrent portion	<u>\$1,949,301</u>	<u>\$1,789,055</u>



# MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2008 and 2007

### 7. Loan Commitments

At December 31, 2008 and 2007, MELA had commitments to extend credit for educational loans of approximately \$9,822,000 and \$11,500,000, respectively. Commitments to extend credit are agreements to lend to a borrower as long as there is no violation of any condition established in the commitment agreement. Commitments generally have fixed expiration dates or other termination clauses. MELA uses the same credit policies in making commitments as it does for educational loans receivable.

### 8. Contingencies

On April 7, 2008 The Education Resources Institute, Inc. (TERI) commenced a case under chapter 11 of Title 11 of United States Code (the Bankruptcy Code) in the United States Bankruptcy Court. The chapter 11 filing effectively terminates, on a prospective basis, the Guaranty Agreement between TERI and the Authority dated July 14, 1988. The termination of the Guaranty Agreement does not in itself relieve TERI from its obligation to honor any claims on existing guaranteed loans. As of December 31, 2008, the Authority has TERI guaranteed student loans outstanding totaling \$833,072 (approximately 0.6% of the total loan portfolio). The Authority has not issued any new student loans carrying a TERI guaranty since 1996. Management of the Authority does not believe there is a material risk of loss due to the TERI bankruptcy filing due to the small balance of loans remaining with the guaranty, coupled with the fact that these are relatively seasoned loans with a very low default rate.

### 9. Subsequent Event

Effective April 17, 2009, the State of Maine approved an amendment to 20-A MRSA Section 11424 increasing the amount of bonds that the Authority can have outstanding with a capital reserve fund which will benefit from a "moral obligation" from the State of Maine from \$50,000,000 to \$300,000,000. In addition, the Authority cannot create or establish any new capital reserve funds which will benefit from a "moral obligation" after June 30, 2011.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

## MAINE EDUCATIONAL LOAN AUTHORITY

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended December 31, 2008

<u>Functions/ Programs</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Program Revenues</u>			<u>Capital Grants/ Contributions</u>	<u>Net Revenue (Expenses) and Changes in Net Assets</u>
		<u>Charges for Services</u>	<u>Program Investment Income</u>	<u>Operating Grants and Contributions</u>		<u>Total</u>
Student loan programs	<u>\$(8,837,499)</u>	<u>\$8,350,880</u>	<u>\$1,101,653</u>	<u>\$ —</u>	<u>\$ —</u>	<u>\$ 615,034</u>
		Change in net assets				\$ 615,034
		Net assets, beginning of the year				<u>3,695,608</u>
		Net assets, end of the year				<u>\$4,310,642</u>