



Report to Town Boards and Committees

November 2022

Shared with members of school boards, select boards, superintendents, the Budget Review Committee (BRC), and the budget and finance committees of Blue Hill, Brooksville, Brooklin, Castine, Penobscot, Sedgwick, and Surry, and anyone else who requests an emailed monthly version. As with all our earlier reports to School Boards, it will be posted on our website.

News from the GSA Board of Trustees

- A public meeting was held 10/25/22 to share [GSA Vision 2022](#) and the [summary budget](#) (see below under *Finances*.)
- The next steps for the vision, which is a multi-year proposition and covers every aspect of the Academy, is to turn its elements into action plans with timetables. This will take time to do well. As these plans are finalized, we will be sharing them broadly.

Campus News

- GSA has completed another successful sports season. 35% of our students participated on a team. 56% of the seniors were named to the Academic All Conference team, and the volleyball team received the Sportsmanship Award. The Boys' Cross Country Team won the Class C State Championship. The Girls' Cross Country Team also competed in the state meet with senior Thea Crowley placing third and advancing to the New England meet. Boys' soccer made it to the Class C North quarterfinal round, and the volleyball team made it to the Class C State quarterfinals. The Golf Team also competed in the state meet where the team tied for sixth-place, and Laela Heino medaled, finishing No. 9 in the girls' competition.
- Eleven GSA students participated in workshops at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts during September.
- Over the weekend of October 21-23, the GSA Players put on *The Crucible*. It was staged outside, at the Hinckley House property, with the production moving through locations on the lawn and in the woods. Fourteen students and three staff members took part as either cast or crew. The costumes and props were created in-house. The cast built mini-bridges over the tiny river and mud zone areas, so that the audience could move through five different sets representing the five scenes of the play (four meadows and the big bridge on the walking path, following the setting sun).

- Dan Kane and Megan Flenniken joined their classes for a day at Acadia National Park, *Experiential Education and Outdoor Leadership*, and *Maine Environment*, respectively, to hike the Great Head Trail in Acadia. They stopped for lunch on Sand Beach and then the EEOL class helped teach the Maine Environment class how to use a compass.

Finances

- GSA trustees voted to approve a balanced 2023 Budget on 10/20/22. This vote came following a series of meetings and in-depth communications over the past several months with the inaugural town-appointed Budget Review Committee (BRC), including a public BRC meeting on 10/5/22. Quarterly financial updates will be shared with BRC throughout the year, and the formal budget cycle process will begin again in the spring.
- Town-appointed Budget Review Committee (BRC) members have been reporting back to their town governing bodies following each town's own process. GSA representatives will be attending school board meetings in all seven towns each month to be available for questions and feedback related to these reports and any other issues. Meetings with town select boards and budget/finance committees will be planned for early winter, or sooner, or more often, at the request of any town or group.
- Tuition represents 65% of this year's GSA budget and thus local and boarding enrollment are key priorities and drivers of financial stability. Directors of local and boarding enrollment have presented to the GSA Board their specific action plans for strengthening enrollment, with planned progress reports throughout the year. The request for \$1,700 per student supplemental tuition, the same amount as last year, is being submitted to the seven local School Boards.
- Currently, our day enrollment is running behind what we budgeted for. We are in the midst of analyzing the impact on the budget, what steps we can take to increase enrollment this year, other ways to increase revenue this year, and what it will take to end the year in the black, as planned. We will know more about all this once the DOE releases the MAT information for this year, which normally takes place in December.

Facilities updates

- As noted in last month's report, the supplemental tuition has enabled us to begin to address several long-standing facilities problems. The Academy Building (the main schoolhouse) received a replacement roof during October. The McIntyre Building will likewise get a new roof this fall. We will be repainting the lines in the student parking lot (at their request, actually), and reopening the senior lounge. We are gathering information and getting estimates on other work needed in the Academy Building, and also on structural work to be done in the gym and attached wings.
- Like probably every school in Maine, and certainly in our area, we have tested our water for PFAS. We are still waiting on the results. Some of you may know the Blue Hill Consolidated School's wells tested positive for PFAS. According to the water treatment professionals GSA hires, water filters we already have in place, while not designed to trap PFAS, *do* in fact reduce them. Even though we are close to BHCS, because of the nature of underground water, we may not have the same PFAS levels in our wells. We won't know until we test.

- GSA has continued to use our well water while we await our test results. We have increased the number of bottled water dispensers students can use to fill their own bottles if they wish. Poland Springs has confirmed that their 5-gallon jugs contain no PFAS.

Recent Student Highlights

- Nora Spratt (Castine) and Azaiah Nansen (Blue Hill) received the College Board's National Rural and Small Town Award for outstanding academic performance in high school.
- Austin Chandler (Surry) and Noël Da (boarding student) were designated "Commended Students" within the National Merit Scholarship Program based on their exemplary results on the PSAT last year.
- Several students were honored at the state level as musicians: Tony Esposito (Surry) for Jazz Band, drums (third place drummer in the state); Andy Hipsky (Blue Hill), for Honors Jazz Band, guitar (second place guitarist in the state); and Austin Chandler (Surry), for Jazz Combo, bass (first place bass player in the state!).
- Sean Casey (Surry) was presented with the SkillsUSA National Statesman Award, and was recognized at the national conference.

Coming events, open to the public

- The annual Holiday Concert will perform on Wednesday, December 7, at 10 am for local elementary students, and at 6 pm for the general public. Admission is free, and student art from visual arts classes will be on display.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for your service to the well-being of our shared peninsula community. We want to hear from you, and invite you to reach out via phone (207-374-2808), email t.seeley@georgesteve.org, or in person.