



Funding Education in Our Towns

How does GSA’s request for supplemental tuition compare to the funding of all public schools in our towns? The table below sets forth: (1) the total 2021-22 education budgets for all publicly-funded schools in each town, (2) the amount over the state minimum towns allocated in the 2020-21 school budgets for their elementary schools,* and (3) the amount over the state minimum our ask of \$1,700 supplemental tuition per student will be for each town based upon student enrollment at GSA as of October 1, 2021.

This should in no way be taken as a criticism of the funding for our elementary schools, or to imply this expense should be lower. It is meant to show that good education costs more than the minimums set by the state and that towns have traditionally responded to that greater need; and it places GSA’s request for supplemental tuition in the context of overall education spending in our towns.

**This public information comes from the superintendent offices. Appropriations for 2021-22 will become available on 2/15/22. The percentages are calculated from estimated 2020-21 allocations divided by approved 2021-22 budgets.*

Town	Approved 2021-22 Education Budget	2020-21 Allocated Above Public Elementary School State Set Minimum (EPS)		Amount Above Town Academy State Set Minimum (MAT) Requested by GSA. (Total request will be 14% above the MAT))
		\$ Amount	Estimated %	
Blue Hill	\$6,217,790	\$ 1,989,693	32%	\$149,600 (88 students)
Brooklin	\$2,002,134	\$ 1,441,536	72%	\$32,300 (19 students)
Brooksville	\$2,069,440	\$ 1,158,886	56%	\$59,500 (35 students)
Castine	\$1,482,656	\$ 756,155	51%	\$30,600 (18 students)
Penobscot	\$1,952,614	\$ 741,993	38%	\$37,400 (22 students)
Sedgwick	\$2,761,224	\$ 1,518,673	55%	\$76,500 (45 students)
Surry	\$2,974,516	\$ 951,845	32%	\$79,900 (47 students)

** Please note: 1) local enrollment is fluid as families move into and out of the area. These numbers are based upon October 1, 2021 enrollment and may change slightly during the year; 2) GSA also enrolls local students from other towns in our area, and so our budgeted enrollment is higher than the total of the numbers listed in the last column; and 3) our budgeted enrollment at the start of the year is used for final approval of the Budget..*

Education Funding in Maine

How public schools are funded

1. The state sets a minimum amount, determined by the Essential Programs and Services formula, that communities **must** spend on public education.

2. Communities may choose to spend more than the state-set minimum. Nearly every community in Maine spends more than the state-set minimum, because the minimum is not enough to fund the quality of schools most communities want.
3. There is no limit over the state-set minimum that communities can appropriate.
4. The state provides, in some cases, a subsidy to a community.

This means that communities may spend beyond the state-set minimum as much as they choose on their children's public education.

How town academies are funded

For town academies like GSA, funding works differently.

1. The state sets the tuition that towns must pay. Confusingly, this is called the *Maximum Allowable Tuition*, or *MAT*, even though, as noted in the next bullet, towns are allowed to pay more if they chose.
2. The state allows towns to pay up to 15% more than the state-set tuition if they choose to do so, *but towns are not allowed to pay more than 15% above the state-set tuition*.
3. Towns also pay a state-set amount to help with facilities expenses, 6% of the yearly tuition number, known as the IVF.
4. Schools like GSA can also raise private funds to supplement tuition paid by tuitioning towns.