



## Funding Education in Our Towns

How does GSA’s request for more tuition compare to the funding of the public schools in our towns? The table below shows (1) the total education budgets for all publicly-funded schools in each town, (2) the amount over the state minimum towns put in the 2021-22 school budgets for their elementary schools,\* and (3) the amount over the state minimum our ask of \$1700 supplemental tuition per student would have totaled in each town.

This should in no way be taken as a criticism of the funding for our elementary schools, or to imply those numbers should be lower. It is meant to show that good education costs more than the minimums set by the state, and towns respond to that greater need, and to set GSA’s ask in the context of overall education spending in our towns.

*\*This information comes from the 2021-22 town warrants*

Town	Total town contribution to Education Budget for all schools in a town	Amount and percentage above public elementary school state-set minimum These range from 16% to 42% over the minimum	Amount above town academy state-set minimum asked by GSA. This equals 14% over the minimum
Blue Hill	\$5,529,227	\$1,441,829 = 26% above	\$153,000 (90 students)
Brooklin	\$1,707,311	\$627,786 = 37% above	\$59,500 (31 students)
Brooksville	\$1,854,894	\$779,986 = 42% above	\$52,700 (35 students)
Castine	\$1,133,426	\$414,560 = 37% above	\$30,600 (18 students)
Penobscot	\$1,648,952	\$528,607 = 32% above	\$37,400 (22 students)
Sedgwick	\$2,344,731	\$902,844 = 39% above	\$71,400 (42 students)
Surry	\$3,556,784	\$683,700 = 19% above	\$79,000 (47 students)

*\* Please note that 1) local enrollment is fluid as families move into and out of the area. These numbers were accurate when they were given to us, but may change slightly during the year; 2) GSA also gets 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 always a best guess at where local enrollment will end up.*

### 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.