



Last spring, seven “tuitioning” towns voted to supplement GSA’s tuition annually by \$1,000 per student over the state-set tuition. In September, GSA Board Chair Sally Mills made a second request of \$700 supplemental tuition per student annually, for a total of \$1,700 annually over and above the state-set tuition. *GSA does not anticipate making any additional tuition requests for the foreseeable future.*

Here are nine frequently asked questions about GSA’s request, with links to more detailed explanations.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1 - What determines the tuition that a town must pay GSA?**

Each year, Maine’s Department of Education sets the per-student tuition that towns must pay GSA, but towns may choose to pay GSA *up to 15% more than the state-set tuition* when GSA’s tuition costs exceed what the state has set. For 2022-23 we are requesting an additional 13.9%. See [What Determines Tuition?](#)

### **2 - Why is GSA asking towns for more tuition than the Department of Education requires them to pay?**

Our request is based on a projected enrollment of 303 town-tuitioned students (most, but not all, from our surrounding “tuitioning” towns) and an expected state-set tuition of \$12,729 per student. We expect our actual cost per student will be \$14,251. Without supplemental tuition the Academy will run an estimated deficit of \$660,825 or \$2,180 per day student. Our request for \$1,700 equals 13.9% over the expected state-set tuition in 2023. See [Request for Supplemental Tuition from Sally Mills](#).

### **3 - How much does it cost to educate a GSA student compared to other area high schools?**

In 2020-21, the per-student cost to educate a GSA day student was \$14,721. By comparison, the average cost per student at the other five area high schools (Bucksport, Deer Isle-Stonington, Ellsworth, MDI, and Sumner) was \$20,233. See [Costs Comparisons](#).

### **4 - What percentage of students in our towns choose to attend GSA?**

On average, 72% of our towns’ 8<sup>th</sup> graders choose to attend GSA. That percentage has not changed significantly in at least 5 years. See [Local Enrollment Overview](#) and [Enrollment Data by Towns](#).

### **5 - Can I see a “big picture” of GSA’s total revenues and operating expenses for the past two years?**

Yes. Here are [four pie charts](#) (2020 and 2021) that illustrate money-in and money-out.

### **6 - Has GSA tried to reduce operating costs?**

Between 2019 and 2021, GSA reduced operating expenses by more than \$500,000. This year’s budget expects to reduce costs by an additional \$100,000. See [Reduced Expenses](#).

### **7 - How will the approval of additional tuition impact GSA’s overall financial picture?**

The additional \$1,700 we are requesting is essential to our financial stability and viability, but it is not sufficient to cover all costs. The average cost per high school student in Hancock County in 2021 was \$20,233. GSA’s cost per student is well below that, but still not covered by the additional tuition we are requesting. Since the law caps the amount towns can pay in tuition, we will continue robust fundraising efforts through our Advancement Office. For an overview of the programs and initiatives that tuition dollars pay for, see [GSA Program](#).

### **8 - How does GSA raise revenue apart from tuition?**

GSA has two main sources of additional revenue: the GSA Endowment generates annual income, and our Advancement Office fundraises all year long, soliciting direct donations to the GSA Fund, holding fundraising events, and raising money for capital projects, the endowment, and scholarship gifts to help our graduates attend college. Through these efforts, GSA raises hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to support our students and programs not covered by tuition, but, because the state-set tuition is low, it is still not enough to cover the current gap in funding. We have also secured grants, for example, to support Boatbuilding classes and to improve our Student Advisory Program. See [Why Give to GSA?](#)

### **9 - Doesn't GSA's boarding program provide additional revenue?**

The boarding program (International Program) started in 2006 with 7 students and grew to nearly 50 students by 2016. Over those ten years the program generated millions of dollars used to support programs and initiatives benefiting *all* GSA students. *No public tuition dollars were ever used to support the boarding program.* However, as with schools everywhere, international student enrollment has declined precipitously in recent years. The boarding program must pay all its own costs, if we are to keep it, but it is unlikely to generate the significant surplus revenue it once did. See [GSA Boarding Program](#).