



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 ten 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 \$12,071 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 2018-19 (the last year for which the DOE provides numbers), the per student cost to educate a GSA day student was \$13,959. By comparison, the average cost per student at the other four area high schools (Bucksport, Deer Isle-Stonington, Ellsworth, and MDI) was \$18,726. 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 2019 (the last year for which there is data) was \$18,726. 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](#).

### 10 - Can you summarize how GSA came to request \$1,700 above the state-set tuition, and how this additional amount will affect increases in town tuitioning in years to come?

- Last year, tuitioning towns voted to pay GSA \$1,000 in tuition over and above the \$12,071 “state-set” 2021-22 tuition. The total 2021-22 tuition paid to GSA was therefore \$13,071.
- This year, GSA has again asked tuitioning towns to supplement state-set tuition by an additional \$700. The total 2022-23 tuition paid to GSA would therefore be the state-set tuition of \$12,192 plus \$1700 town-set supplemental tuition, that is, \$13,892.
- If towns approve our request, the total tuition paid to GSA beyond 2022-23 will be the state-set tuition plus the \$1700 town-set supplemental tuition. (Note: state-set tuition has increased an average of 1.2% annually over the past three years.)
- *GSA does not expect to ask for any further supplemental tuition from the towns in the foreseeable future. Therefore, after 2022-23, the only increase in the total tuition paid to GSA by tuitioning towns will result from increases in the state-set tuition.*

### Example of How GSA's Tuition Ask Will Play Out in Future Years

*\*The amount of the state-set tuition (the MAT) is unknown in advance; this chart uses a 1% increase as an example.*

School Year	State-Set Tuition	State-Set Tuition Increase	Dollar Increase State-Set Tuition	Town-Set Supplemental Tuition	Total GSA Tuition	Dollar Increase GSA Tuition
2020-21	\$11,952	0.03%		0	\$11,952	
2021-22	\$12,071	1%	\$120	\$1,000	\$13,071	\$1,120
2022-23	\$12,192	1%	\$121	\$1,700	\$13,892	\$821
2023-24	\$12,314	1%	\$122	\$1,700	\$14,014	\$122
2024-25	\$12,437	1%	\$123	\$1,700	\$14,137	\$123
2025-26	\$12,561	1%	\$124	\$1,700	\$14,261	\$124
2026-27	\$12,687	1%	\$126	\$1,700	\$14,387	\$126