

**BLUE HILL PENINSULA SECONDARY EDUCATION
FINANCIAL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DRAFT 9/30/2020**

Mission Statement:

To foster a better understanding of, respect for and dedication to the support of the cost of the secondary education offered by George Stevens Academy. To strengthen the planning necessary to integrate tuition requirements with the sending town budgeting and approval process.

I. Major Goals:

- a) Share financial information regarding the cost of the GSA education program.
- b) Support and strengthen the relationship between the sending towns and GSA in order to better communicate the need for supplemental tuition above the MAT.
- c) Assist in identifying facility needs and maintenance for the GSA to enhance its programs.
- d) Articulate long term goals and objectives of GSA with the community leaders from the Blue Hill Peninsula.

II. Respective Roles In The Future Success of the Advisory Committee:

The success of the Financial Planning Advisory Committee will depend upon the commitment that GSA and the sending towns, through representatives on the committee, make to continue an open, transparent dialogue with each other. GSA and the towns need to have a spirit of partnership and of working together to enhance and adequately fund secondary education in our region. As a significant source of funding has come from and will continue to come from the taxpayers of

sending towns, there needs to be broad support from the communities. The Advisory Committee can serve an important function for both GSA and the sending towns whom they represent. The Committee can assist in communicating the concerns and interests of the towns to GSA while also communicating the mission, value and needs of GSA to the towns.

The GSA Board of Trustees and the Head of School should look upon the Financial Planning Advisory Committee as a valuable resource composed of community elected officials from town School Boards, or other qualified representative volunteers, who are dedicated to building and funding a superior secondary education program. The members of the Committee should look upon their service on the Committee as a valuable opportunity to be a resource to GSA in order to ensure a continuation of GSA's mission and the value it presents to the various sending towns. While the discussions of ideas and opinions within the work of this committee will not always agree with the objectives of GSA, the Advisory Committee will serve as an important entity to discuss the issues attempt to reach compromises where possible for unified communication with the towns.

III. GSA Board of Trustees and the Financial Planning Advisory Committee:

First, what do they have in common? Both the GSA Board and the Advisory Committee are volunteers committed to the achieving the best secondary education program possible for the Blue Hill Peninsula.

Second, how are they different? The GSA Board of Trustees is the governing body with overall responsibility for the corporation and fiduciary duties to the school. The Board is responsible for hiring, firing and evaluating the Head of School. The Board establishes the school's mission, values, and strategic plan. The Board is responsible for managing the finances, maintenance of facilities, establishing admission policies and establishing advancement programs. Trustees assume specific tasks supporting the GSA mission but, in general, are not involved in the day to day implementation of the educational program.

By contrast, the Financial Planning Advisory Committee will provide support and guidance to both the GSA Board of Trustees, the Head of School and the town

School Boards. Its primary purpose is to provide advice and insight. It will not have fiscal oversight nor responsibility for the financial condition of the school. Nor will the Committee be authorized to make final decisions for GSA or sending towns. The Financial Planning Advisory Committee will be formed jointly by the GSA Board and the sending towns to work on specific issues, namely a better understanding of the financial requirements for the secondary education on the Blue Hill Peninsula.

The Financial Planning Advisory Committee will provide structure for the involvement of qualified community members who can offer valuable guidance to both the sending towns and GSA in the area of financial understanding of the costs of secondary education and the future requirements for secondary education in the region. The advice and insight offered by community leaders will have the ability to have a powerful impact on GSA's outreach and support from sending towns. The Advisory Committee will enhance GSA's visibility and provide a standing organization, with regularly scheduled meetings, to share financial information.

IV. Steps for Forming the Advisory Committee:

- a) Establish the purpose – the first priority will to develop partnership collaboration and communications.
- b) Appoint committee members – the criteria for appointment will include experience in or dedication to education and town governance. It will be important to choose wisely the individuals who can best serve.
- c) Develop structure – begin with organizational meetings that develop a sense of teamwork and ownership. Establish basic operating procedures such as selecting officers, meeting schedules, terms of service, meeting structure, source of information, and reporting to town selectmen, school boards, and GSA Board.
- d) Provide orientation – prepare a thorough review of the history of GSA and its current financial condition. Set up a tour of the school and

meetings with the senior staff and faculty. Review the educational program and curriculum of GSA.

- e) Review limits of authority – brief committee members about the governing structure of GSA, the role of town school boards, process for town budgeting and other legal issues regarding the Maine Department of Education, town governance and town academies.
- f) Empower the committee – develop a clear scope of work. Facilitate the conversation about the cost of GSA education, the history of the GSA residential program, the condition of the facilities, comparison of GSA to other secondary education programs in Ellsworth, Deer Isle and Bucksport etc. Identify areas which require better communications with town representatives and citizens at large. Discuss plans for education goals and future demographic trends in the region. In short, expand the agenda so that the members will become energized and excited about their combined work ahead.
- g) Choose a chair and/or co-chairperson for the Advisory Committee that has the vision and leadership skills to make this a very successful committee.