



TIMOTHY J. SEELEY  
Head of School

September 30, 2020

Dear Chairman Markley and School Board Chairs:

First, thank you for all you do for the education of the young people in our towns. The responsibility to provide a quality K-12 education is an enormous one. GSA has been in partnership with Blue Hill since 1898 (back to 1803 if you include our connection to Blue Hill Academy), and, with the rest of our towns, beginning in the 1950's, to provide the high school part of that mandate. I look forward to continuing my part in that relationship. We have challenges before us, but I am very confident we can find solutions together so we can continue to provide students with a first-rate high school experience.

As GSA can no longer subsidize the cost of education for our local students to the degree we have in the past, without funding from our towns that more fully covers the cost of their children's education, GSA will become a dramatically different school, a lesser school. Without additional funds, balancing our budget will require program cuts that go to the very heart of a student's experience at the Academy. We will become a school that does not serve all students well, one with greatly diminished opportunities: fewer classes, fewer programs, less well-supported students, less connections to our communities, an even more rapidly deteriorating campus. Besides the negative impact that will have on current students, that will be a disincentive for families to move here, and even stay here.

There is not a way to run the school less expensively, as much as we all wish that were the case. Our costs are completely in line with the costs at other high schools in Maine our size (200 – 400 students). We have already cut and consolidated in every way possible, even beyond what is prudent and sustainable.

As I write this, I am sitting at a desk I have set up outside the GSA library, so I can keep an eye on things here at the start of the school year, and make sure we are on top of everything. It also lets me be a ready resource to teachers and students. Each day I see cheerful students, respectfully honoring our new rules, excited to be back on campus. Being here for part of each day is an excellent way to remember that the quality of the student's experience has to be at the heart of all we do—it is the whole point of the enterprise. Every decision must be directed to that goal, and no other.

I think something got lost in last year's discussions about funding, something essential— do students get a good education at GSA, do we do a good job with the public money with which we are entrusted? I believe that answer is yes, and my goal is for GSA to be an exemplary high school, one that leverages the advantages of being a town academy to the maximum benefit of our students, one our towns proudly call their children's high school. We cannot get there without sustainable finances, without a tuition more in line with what it costs to have such a high school.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Timothy J. Seeley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Timothy J. Seeley  
Head of School