



## Report to Town Boards and Committees

January 2023

*Shared with members of school boards, select boards, superintendents, the Budget Review Committee (BRC), and the budget and finance committees of Blue Hill, Brooksville, Brooklin, Castine, Penobscot, Sedgwick, and Surry, and anyone else who requests an emailed monthly version. As with all our earlier reports to School Boards, it will be posted on our website.*

### ***News from Sally Mills, Chair of the GSA Board of Trustees***

- Head of School Search. In early December, Tim Seeley announced he will retire as Head of School (HOS) effective June 30, 2023. We thank him for his years of dedicated service. The Board is now hard at work forming the HOS search committee and developing timelines and plans for this important process. The committee will be chaired by Deb Ludlow '77, past GSA Trustee of Brooksville, and will include community members, faculty, staff, and trustees. We will keep you updated as this evolves. We are committed to creating a process that engages the perspectives and wisdom of the greater community.

### ***Campus News***

- On December 7, for the first time in three years, we held our Winter Concert for all the elementary school children in our seven sending towns. It was wonderful to have the gym filled with future students. In addition to the concert band, jazz band, and two jazz combos, the GSA Pan (steel drum) class and the afternoon steel drum group for elementary students performed. The groups debuted three of our new pans, hand-crafted by GSA alumnus Luke Abrahamson '00. A public concert was also held later that evening attended by several hundred community members.
- Student community service continues to grow rapidly. We are finding that our students are connecting in meaningful ways with the Blue Hill Peninsula community, and local organizations are reaching out to GSA for help and support. Students have completed about 650 hours of service across the peninsula, working in our local libraries, volunteering on Fire and Rescue Squads, hauling firewood with the Castine Wood Bank,

mentoring and tutoring younger students, and more. Other projects include a sophomore advisory group that goes to BHCS twice a month to read with their elementary buddies, members of our boys' and girls' basketball teams leading a free basketball clinic for 35 elementary students on December 10, and students offering after-school peer tutoring.

- Before Christmas, the GSA Student Council also fundraised and purchased gifts for families in need in coordination with H.O.M.E. Inc. of Orland. This work was capped off by a visit from Susan Yaruta Young, who was thrilled to gather the beautifully wrapped gifts for 13 homeless or underhoused young persons ages 7 months to 17 years.
- GSA's Math Team, coached by math teacher Isaac Vaccaro, is off to a great season. Last year, the GSA team won all five meets in the Down East League, and so far this year we hold a close second to Washington Academy. Math Team is an opportunity to see a lot of mathematics that students may not encounter in their regular math classes, including probability, linear algebra, and some of the hardest geometry and combinatorial problems around. Advanced Placement AP Calculus AB & BC, and AP statistics courses offer more ways students can challenge themselves in an academic area they are passionate about, and one of our recent team members and graduates, Jack Gray '22 of Brooksville, is now pursuing this interest at MIT. Go, Jack! Math Team is open to all GSA students, as well as ambitious eighth graders on the peninsula, so please contact us if you know of an interested student from your elementary school. We currently have fifteen members, six girls and nine boys, representing grades nine through twelve.
- On November 28, we rebooted our after-school study space with peer tutoring and adult academic support. We will offer this study space in the GSA Library from 2:30 to 4:00 Mondays through Thursdays. As an outgrowth of her ISIP project last year, Dell Davis-Batt will be organizing peer tutors, and we plan to expand the peer tutoring to study halls in the spring.
- This semester we have had four BHCS students in our Algebra 2 Honors class, so they can get the math level they need. We are working with the principal at BHCS to explore expanding opportunities for math classes at GSA next year.
- The professional growth of teachers at GSA continues to be of great importance. For the past two faculty meetings, led by Assistant Head of School Rebecca Gratz, teachers have been working in small groups presenting and reflecting upon their assessments, rubrics, and student work. The goal is to encourage professional, collegial conversations about learning and teaching, specifically focusing on the alignment between instructional outcomes and assessments as demonstrations of learning. The conversations have been lively and meaningful, and teachers have enjoyed collaborating in cross-disciplinary groups.
- In early February, GSA will launch a new website through Finalsity, a leading educational web host that recently took ownership of the previous web host, Blackboard. The new site will be simpler, and more streamlined, more mobile friendly, and more attractive.

### ***Finances***

- The first quarterly “budget to actual” report has been shared with the Budget Review Committee and the next report will be submitted in January. Next year’s budget development is underway.
- We have reached out to select boards, school boards, and budget/finance committees in all seven towns to offer additional meetings, if needed, regarding the supplemental tuition request. Thank you to everyone who has already responded. We continue to attend school board meetings in every town, every month.

### ***Facilities Updates***

- As our Vision 2022 states, we are working to make our campus *“a safe, attractive, functional, and cost-efficient facility that supports our current programming well and has the flexibility to adapt to changing needs in the future.”* GSA’s Facilities Committee meets monthly to evaluate and address urgent campus issues, and to plan for short and long term needs, ensuring that related budgeting, fundraising, programming and strategic planning all dovetail in the service of student experience. Members of this committee are trustees Robyn Sealander (chair), Alden Blodgett, and Terry Moulton (Finance Committee chair); GSA staff Tim Seeley HOS, Brock Muir (Director of Finance and Operations), and Chris Kowalski (Director of Maintenance); and community members Bruce Stahnke, Eden Cowart, Wilson King and Bill Webb.

### ***From the Boarding Program***

- The dorm hosted a get-together for our students from Afghanistan and Ukraine and the community members who helped make it possible for them to attend GSA.
- Some of our boarding students attend local congregations with townspeople.
- Three of our boarding students have been locally employed.
- During the past year, boarding students have taken trips to Boothbay Harbor (for opening of school orientation), MDI, Acadia National Park, Schoodic Point, Belfast, Bangor, Portland and other sites and scenes.
- Several local students are especially close to the boarding students, and spend a good deal of time in the dorm, including a home-schooled girl who is a frequent visitor and guest at the dorm and has joined in several outings. Her family has also taken some dorm students on local trips and outings including a trip to the Boothbay Botanical Gardens.
- A boarding student from Spain went fishing in the fall with a family.
- A boarding student will be helping prepare community dinners at the Congregational Church on Mondays.
- The International Team has organized events that bring dorm and local students together, along with members of our communities, including: a backyard barbeque for over 50 students in September; a Halloween party and trick-or-treat stop at the dorm; a

“friendsgiving” supper at the Bay School for 45 students and guests; a holiday party, Yankee swap, and latkes at the dorm, including a local student sharing the Jewish tradition of Hanukkah.

If you haven’t already, please take a look at the December online edition of GSA Matters [here](#).

*Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for your service to the well-being of our shared peninsula community. We want to hear from you, and invite you to reach out by phone (207-374-2808), email [t.seeley@georgestevens.org](mailto:t.seeley@georgestevens.org), or in person.*