



GEORGE STEVENS ACADEMY
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News from GSA

November 2023

Shared by GSA's Head of School 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, current parents and faculty, and anyone else who requests an emailed monthly version.

As I write, GSA has a locked campus for the second day. Like everyone, the loss of lives in Lewiston is on my mind, as is wishing I would never have to help students through the aftermath of such tragedy again. I've been proud of the way GSA faculty, staff, and students have supported one another this week as they try to make sense of the senseless.

Board of Trustees

- I'm sure most of you are well aware of the extraordinary gift that will provide a solution for our roof problems. Alumnus Curtis Jaffray has volunteered labor from his contracting company and has secured a \$50,000 donation for materials and other needs presented by the project. This will allow us to keep our east wing open with no loss of classrooms, cafeteria, or kitchen. Plans are to demolish the west wing next summer, thereby creating an improved and more welcoming entrance and bus stop—something long anticipated in the school's master plan. Curtis' work will allow the safe removal of snow, as has been completed in the past winters. This also "buys time" for the school to organize a long awaited capital campaign to begin work on that aforementioned master plan.
- In other historic news, the board voted last week to discontinue its residential program at the conclusion of this school year. This was a long and arduous decision, but a need to focus on local enrollment and on our facilities had much to do with the outcome. To preserve and further GSA's commitment to cultural and ethnic diversity, a homestay program is being considered. Please reach out to Director of Admission Bob Slayton

(b.slayton@georgesteve.org) if you have interest in becoming a host family.

Finance

- The Board has adopted its 2023-24 budget which includes a \$20,000 surplus. While this does not provide for the reserve we will always aim for, we do have board funds that we can access in an emergency. The surplus was hard fought, and I am glad we could end in this place. The budget is lean but responsibly funds the staff and programs the community expected.

Advancement

- We are preparing our annual appeal for the GSA Fund, which supports virtually every aspect of school life. Although letters have not yet been mailed, the Fund is already exceeding amounts raised by this time last year. Our gratitude to such supportive community members is immeasurable; financial support of our town academy really does make a difference here.

Enrollment

- We currently have 257 day and boarding students enrolled for 2023-24; we welcome 3 new students this week from Penobscot, Brooklin, and Orland.
- Our admission team, along with faculty and student representatives, is now visiting peninsula schools to meet with eighth grade students interested in GSA.
- We will host a Middle School Family Night on November 14 at 6:00. This event will provide an opportunity to meet teachers, tour the campus, visit classes, and gain more understanding of all that GSA can offer. We will appreciate all you can do to share this event in your community.

Campus News

- We are concluding our fall sports season, with a number of successes. Our girls varsity volleyball team went to the semi-finals but lost against Calais. Our boys varsity soccer team is headed to the semi-finals against Bucksport. Both cross country teams finished third in the Northern Regionals and have qualified for the state championship.
- Our students are preparing for the first of two Student Led Conferences on November 8 and 9. They will present work samples and academic goals while discussing what they have learned about themselves as students.

- Our fall play *The Lion in Winter* will be performed in our mini-theater on November 3 and 4 with 35 seats each night. Please call the school at 374-2808 if you would like tickets. Donations are gladly accepted, but there is no ticket charge.

I hope to see you at one of our events!

Warmly,
Shelley

Shelley Borrer Jackson
Interim Head of School