



Overview and Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the Berkshire Compact for Education?

- The Berkshire Compact for Education is a group of regional civic, education, and business leaders who seek to ensure the well-being of each individual and the strength of our economy and community by raising the educational access, aspirations, and attainment of *all* Berkshire County residents (mission statement).

When was the Berkshire Compact for Education formed?

- The Compact was formed in 2005 by MCLA in concert with a highly engaged coalition of community partners including the K12 schools, college leaders, and local businesses/organizations. In 2014, the Compact transitioned to Dr. Jake Eberwein who is currently leading a renewal and strategic/collective impact planning and implementation process.

What is the current theory of action?

- The Compact for Education's **Theory of Action** is that if we increase the number of residents who hold a qualified certificate, associate's degree, bachelor's degree or higher, then we will sustain and grow the regional economy and improve individual indicators of well-being. This is supported by key data points that suggest:
 - The Berkshires (30%) lags behind the state (37%) in residents with a BA or higher.
 - Degrees/educational attainment increases earnings (decreases unemployment).
 - 50% of a city's economic success is linked to educational attainment.
 - 70% of jobs in MA will require a college degree or credential.

What can the Compact claim as significant impact?

- The Compact has raised awareness, advanced access, raised local expectations, connected people and programs, inspired alignment of effort, and led to new programming that continues to advance the charge. The Compact also supported the launch of the currently active Berkshire Education Task Force.

What specific activities serve as evidence of impact?

- Berkshires Goes to College (Grade 6 visits) - 1200 public Grade 6 students representing 19 schools visited one of the county's four colleges. This program is sponsored by the Berkshire United Way.
- Berkshire County Grade 3 visits - 450 Grade 3 students representing nine schools visited either Berkshire Community College (200 students) or Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (250 students).
- Career fairs - 900 Grade 8 students representing seven schools participated in the MCLA Career Fair. This program is sponsored by Guardian Life.
- Reach Out for Education - Episodes filmed and aired on PCTV (channel 17) and throughout the county.
- STEM activities (fairs, programming, library, etc.)
- Passport for Education distributed and used by students and educators across the Berkshires.
- Dual Enrollment - Almost 200 students participating in programs sponsored by MCLA and BCC.
- Degree Completion, new programs/degrees, certificate programs, and new industry-to-education connections.

What is the Compact currently working on?

- The Compact is currently organized into three subcommittees, supported by a steering/advisory committee. The full network assembles twice a year to review progress and refine goals. The subcommittees include:
 - Early Childhood Impact Council (Birth to Grade 3)
 - **Goal:** Focus on birth to Grade 3 so that children are socially, physically, emotionally and cognitively ready for kindergarten and demonstrate reading proficiency by end of Grade 3.
 - **Activities:** Support/strengthen families to better support their children.
 - **Partners:** Early Childhood Providers, Berkshire United Way
 - **Contact:** Doug McNally: d.mcnally@mcla.edu & Karen Vogel: karen.vogel@berkshireunitedway.org
 - Grades 3-12:
 - **Goal:** Ensure that ALL students have a trusted adult to help guide them to success. In doing so, we will guarantee that students graduate from high school with skills, knowledge, dispositions and aspirations to successfully enter post-secondary education and the workforce.
 - **Activities:** Establish a mentor program for Grade 8 students who need additional support.
 - **Partners:** Regional Employment Board, public schools, colleges, BUW, family centers
 - **Contact:** Bill Ballen: williamballen270@hotmail.com & Molly Meczywor: mmeczywor@napsk12.org
 - Workforce Development:
 - **Goal:** Build school-to-work pathways to stem the outward migration of talent, and support workforce development/training programs aligned with emerging needs and industries while positioning new and incumbent workers.
 - **Activities:** Provide a trained and connected workforce to meet the county's needs by advancing internships.
 - **Partners:** Colleges, employers, Berkshire Regional Employment Board, Businesses
 - **Contact:** Charles Kaminski ckaminsk@berkshirecc.edu & Barbara Chaput barbara.chaput@mcla.edu

What's new and hot within the Compact?

We are currently working on addressing a local gap in K-8 schools in the area of career development and exploration curriculum. Our goal is to research and develop universal solutions that help all Berkshire County students connect career options with educational pathways and aspirations. We see this as a set of universal experiences beginning in elementary school and advancing through high school, in the already established connecting activities in Grades 9-12, and in college. Additionally, students at the greatest risk will be provided with additional, intensive supports. Finally, the Compact subcommittees are advancing new advocacy roles on local and state-level policy decisions such as early childhood access/finances and career readiness programs.

How is the Compact funded?

A very modest budget is supported by grants through the Berkshire United Way, Guardian Life, and the MCLA Foundation.

What are people saying about the Compact?

"The Berkshire Compact is a powerful network that connects organizations and initiatives... in doing so, we are collectively supporting the aspirations and outcomes for our children, and securing the future of our region."

How can someone get involved?

We welcome and encourage all participation in the full network or subcommittees. For more information, contact:

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