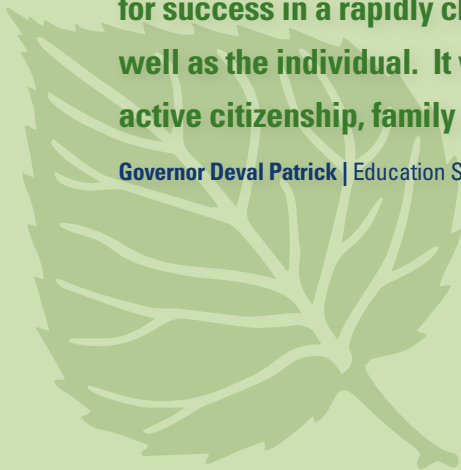




## Collaboration, Opportunity, and Achievement

**“A 21st century education system will require us to work in unprecedented ways to meet all the educational and developmental needs of our students to prepare them for success in a rapidly changing world. This system will need to serve society as well as the individual. It will need to prepare our students for meaningful work, active citizenship, family leadership and lifelong learning.”**

**Governor Deval Patrick** | Education Summit 2011: Closing the Achievement Gap, November 9, 2011





Dear Friend,

We established the Berkshire Compact for Education to focus upon what this community must do educationally to transition successfully to this new century and to this new economy. We are convinced that our success is rooted in a strong educational continuum that encourages and rewards innovation, raises aspirations, ensures access, values lifelong learning, and takes advantage of the power of technology.

Now, several years into this regional collaboration, Compact stakeholders remain firm in our conviction and our commitment. As we reflect on our progress since the Compact first came together, we see that we have accomplished more together than we could have imagined. Through innovative programming, and collaborative outreach, the Compact convened partners to support Berkshire County residents as they aspire toward a future that includes 16 or more years of education and training.

Despite challenging economic times, we have increased opportunities for Berkshire County residents to pursue a college education by improving access to higher education and helping to remove barriers. Working together, we have supported the region's economy by creating more career awareness opportunities and matching educational programs with workforce needs. The Passport to College provides a framework for our work, laying out the milestones on students' paths toward realizing their aspirations. With new partners such as the Berkshire Readiness Center and the Berkshire STEM Pipeline Network the collaboration continues to grow.

Knowing that we cannot achieve our goals without reaching young people at a very early age, the Berkshire Compact and the Berkshire Readiness Center have deepened our partnership with the early childhood education community and built programs to support children, families, and early childhood educators.

Our ability to respond to changing needs and conditions in the region keeps our work relevant. As we look ahead, a critical area that needs our attention is the affordability of education in a changing economy and helping families plan ahead.

This report highlights the accomplishments of this countywide collaboration, examines educational trends that influence our work, and points us toward the shared future of collaboration, opportunity, and achievement we all envision.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Sincerely,

Mary K. Grant, Ph.D  
President, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Andrew Mick  
Chair, Berkshire Compact for Education



## Executive Summary

Under the umbrella of the Berkshire Compact for Education, a group of civic, education and business leaders have effectively worked to identify educational needs and turn these goals into action. The Compact's members and partners have enthusiastically come together to develop innovative ways to improve access to higher education, raise the aspirations of all Berkshire County residents to pursue 16 or more years of education and training, and to build connections between the needs of the workplace and the local education system. During a time in which the economic climate has made college affordability an increasing challenge, significant progress has been made in achieving these goals for both traditional students and adult learners.

Initially formed as the Berkshire Compact for *Higher* Education, we are now known as the Berkshire Compact for Education as our reach begins at the early childhood level. We have learned that the path toward a successful education begins at birth and that early language development is a strong indicator of later success in school. The Berkshire Compact has forged partnerships with the Berkshire United Way, early childhood providers and local libraries to reach children and their families. We are collaborating with the Berkshire United Way's Pittsfield Promise in their efforts to raise the reading proficiency level of third graders in Berkshire County and see this as a model that can be expanded countywide.

The Berkshire Compact's work is strengthened through coordination with the Berkshire Readiness Center and the Berkshire STEM Pipeline. With the introduction of the Berkshire Readiness Center, we have an enhanced countywide approach to delivering professional development to educators and acknowledging their work through recognition awards. The STEM Pipeline promotes education and careers in the growing areas of science, technology, engineering and math.

The progress that has been made can be measured by looking at results of programs and initiatives under the Compact's umbrella and by looking at broader educational trends. Compact programs are helping Berkshire County residents aspire toward postsecondary education. Centralized educational facilities, alternative education options and programs meeting the needs of adult learners are expanding access to education.

As we continue to develop programs that engage young people and inspire them to set their goals high, we are reaching students at all levels. The milestones that lead students through school and onto postsecondary education are laid out in the Compact's *Passport to College* and *Passport to Educational Success*, which are being widely distributed and publicized as a way to reach out to students and their families.

As we have promoted the benefits of higher education and brought leaders together to create a path toward higher education, we have also seen evidence that countywide educational trends have improved in several areas. On average across the county, 10th grade MCAS scores have increased substantially. Additionally, during this time period average annual dropout rates in Berkshire County have decreased. Low-income students are pursuing postsecondary education at an increasingly higher rate. We will continue to work to increase the percentage of Berkshire County third grade students who are demonstrating grade-appropriate progress on English Language Arts assessments.

The collaborative efforts of Compact partners have removed barriers, improved access and led to positive educational outcomes. We continue to add new members, engage the community and adapt to changing times. Moving forward, our work will focus on reaching students at an early age, educating families about resources for affording college, improving early literacy rates and continuing to support an accessible path toward postsecondary education.

# Introduction

The Berkshire Compact for Education was formed as a countywide effort to support every Berkshire resident in pursuing higher education and to instill a culture of lifelong learning. The Compact's members remain focused on their original purpose to: 1) improve access to postsecondary education and raise the aspirations of all Berkshire County residents to pursue 16 or more years of education and training; and 2) build connections between the needs of the workplace and the local education system so that young people graduate from high school and college with the skills needed to succeed in 21st century careers.

- **The Compact's *Passport to College* and *Passport to Educational Success* lay out the important educational milestones from early childhood education through high school graduation.** The milestones on the two Passports, such as achieving proficient or higher scores on standardized tests, visiting college campuses in third and sixth grade, attending summer camps on college campuses, starting to build a portfolio and taking dual enrollment courses all enable students to continue their journey toward college. There also are milestones to engage families in their child's educational success. Parents can encourage early literacy and access resources about college financing when their children are young.
- **Through enhanced coordination between educators and the business community, students gained a better understanding of career options.** The Compact has broadened its representation from the business community and implemented many new ways to connect employers and educators. Students gain exposure to the workplace through programs such as science and career fairs, STEM initiatives, *Reach Out for Education* episodes on Pittsfield Community Television (PCTV), the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce Youth Leadership Program and internships, summer jobs and job shadowing experiences overseen by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board.
- **As a direct result of the Compact's work, access to education has expanded greatly.** New educational options now are available, including centralized education facilities, undergraduate and graduate programs geared toward working adults, and more hybrid programs that combine classroom time with online work.

This report examines the accomplishments and progress that have been made in the past seven years as a direct result of Compact partners identifying needs, investing time and resources, and taking action. We can be proud that our collaborative efforts have led to positive results and can look ahead to what remains to be done to build upon our success.





## Current Conditions

The Compact has remained strong and relevant because its members have engaged with collaborators, developed targeted action plans and responded to changing needs. The economic environment has undergone major changes since the Compact was formed. The average unemployment rate has risen and financial market volatility during this seven-year period affected college savings accounts for many families. The issue of how to finance a college education has become even more critical.

Along with these economic conditions, college costs continue to rise. In 2011-12, the **average** tuition and fees nationwide for a college education, excluding room and board, ranged from \$2,962 for a two-year public institution to \$8,244 for in-state tuition for a four-year public institution to \$28,500 for a private four-year institution. (*Trends in College Pricing 2011*, collegeboard.org) Tuition and fees at public institutions fluctuate in relation to the amount of state aid provided. Higher state aid correlates with lower tuition and fees, while lower state aid correlates with higher tuition and fees.

A college education continues to be a key contributor to economic well being, as an investment in higher education leads to increased lifetime earnings. Unemployment rates

for individuals with a bachelor's degree are about half of what they are for high school graduates. A bachelor's degree recipient can expect to earn about 66 percent more during a 40-year working career than a high school graduate earns over the same period. The benefits of a college education also are passed on to future generations. Students from higher income families and students whose parents have four-year college degrees are more likely than others to complete their bachelor's degrees within six years once they start college. (*Education Pays 2010*, collegeboard.org)

The economic environment and trends in college pricing make the Compact's work more relevant than ever, as families need help in navigating the resources available to them to help make a college education affordable. Public higher education is recognized as a very good value compared to the rising costs of a private education. The Compact's challenge in the coming years is to convey the message that education results in lifelong benefits, that higher education is affordable, and that all Berkshire County residents can have access to 16 or more years of education and training.

# Impact of Compact Programs

A spirit of collaboration and creativity has inspired the development of effective programs and initiatives. The Berkshire Compact has made significant progress and has achieved more through a collaborative model than individual organizations could have achieved alone. Our programs and outreach efforts reach students at all levels in support of a successful path toward education and lifelong learning.

## Raising Aspirations

- The **Berkshire County Goes to College** program was launched in 2008 to raise the aspirations of sixth grade students to attend college. This annual program, funded by the Berkshire United Way, now serves all of Berkshire County's public schools. Each year, between 1,100 and 1,300 sixth graders visit Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), Berkshire Community College (BCC), Williams College or Bard College at Simon's Rock, and the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education encourages other regions in the state to replicate the program. In a recent student survey, 85 percent of respondents said "yes" or "maybe" regarding whether the visits helped them to make their decision to attend college. Comments on the survey included "I liked being able to see what life would be like at college," and, "There were a lot of fun activities and a lot of options to choose from. It helped me decide what I want to accomplish in the future." In a recent survey among school counselors, 94 percent indicated that the Berkshire County Goes to College program helps to raise awareness among students about the importance of planning for a college education in their future.
- The first **Third Grade College Visit Program** was piloted at MCLA in 2007 for students from Greylock Elementary School, expanding the Compact's reach to younger students. The program has expanded to include North County schools each year. BCC began offering third grade visits for selected Pittsfield schools. In total, more than 800 third graders have visited college campuses. In a recent survey, 93 percent of third grade students said that the visits helped them decide if they want to attend college. Some of their comments regarding how college could help them included, "I could get a better life; I could learn how to get a job; would help me decide what I want to be."
- BCC's **Positive Options** program helps students complete their high school education in an alternative setting. Positive Options serves students with academic potential who have fallen behind



**"Educators and community partners in Berkshire County have a long and impressive history of working together to increase educational attainment for all students, and Berkshire County Goes to College is a creative program that increases students' excitement about college and provides them with an important glimpse into their futures."**

Saeyun D. Lee | Policy Director, Massachusetts Executive Office of Education



and are at significant risk of dropping out of high school. Students take BCC courses for college credit, as long as they excel in their high school work. The program's enrollment has grown from eight Drury high school students during the first year it was offered to 34 students from Drury, Wahconah and Pittsfield high schools, and is having a positive impact on graduation rates at these schools.

- **Wee Read Berkshire County** brings together early education partners and public libraries to address the critical issue of early literacy. By distributing free books to young children throughout the Berkshires, we engage families about the importance of reading to young children and its connection to later educational success. As organizations throughout the Berkshires work to improve reading proficiency at the third grade level, Wee Read Berkshire County plays an important role in encouraging families to read with their children. In the initiative's first two years, 2,700 books were distributed during the Week of the Young Child in April. Children also received a customized bookmark outlining the importance of reading, as well as a copy of the Compact's *Passport to Educational Success*.
- **Student Town Meetings** were introduced as a way to engage high school students in researching and discussing topics of current interest. Participation in a student town meeting helps students develop critical thinking and communication skills that are important in high school and college. To date, eight televised student town meetings have been presented, educating participants and the public about topics such as alternative energy, health care reform, the American Dream, the Arab Spring and pressures on youth. These student town meetings were presented in collaboration with MCLA's TV Studio; Pittsfield Community Television (PCTV); Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter Public School (BART); Drury, Lenox, McCann, Monument Mountain, Taconic and Wahconah high schools; and the UNITY Program.



## Facilitating Access

- **Centralized education facilities** have opened in downtown Pittsfield, making educational programming and collaboration between BCC and MCLA more easily accessible to the public. The Intermodal Education Center in downtown Pittsfield provides a convenient location for students to attend BCC and MCLA classes, and also is available for community events. The Center has served 6,400 people since it opened in 2008. More recently, the Education Center at the Silvio O. Conte Federal Building in Pittsfield opened to provide additional downtown access, serving MCLA, BCC and the Berkshire Readiness Center. MCLA and BCC announced a 2+2 articulation agreement in June 2012 that will provide the opportunity for students who obtain an associate degree in business administration from BCC to seamlessly transfer into MCLA's bachelor's degree in business administration program. Business courses will be offered in the downtown Pittsfield facilities or online for better accessibility.
- MCLA's **FAST-TRACK Program** was developed in direct response to the need for an educational option geared to adult learners. The program allows adults who have some work, life and college experience to complete their bachelor's degree in a compressed format and through online and hybrid courses. FAST-TRACK students have access to the same MCLA faculty and resources that serve full-time day students.
- **ACCUPLACER** tests have been implemented to assess a student's college-readiness level in math, English and reading. In addition to using the tests as a placement tool for incoming college students, since 2006, BCC has administered the math **ACCUPLACER** to 4,500 Berkshire County high school juniors to determine if they are prepared for college level math. An "Introduction to Algebra" course was introduced for high school seniors whose junior year **ACCUPLACER** scores indicated a high likelihood that they would need to enroll in developmental math courses before undertaking college-level math. We will assess the effectiveness of this course by tracking selected groups of students during their freshman year of college.
- Approximately 700 students earned college credits while still in high school by participating in **Dual Enrollment Programs** at BCC and MCLA since the Compact was created. These college credits will potentially reduce the cost of their college degree. The **Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Program** provides opportunities for Massachusetts high school students to take college-level courses free of charge, and earn credit simultaneously toward both high school and college. BCC's **Bridge to College** allows eligible high school seniors to take one free course each semester.

*MCLA President Mary Grant and BCC President Ellen Kennedy sign an articulation agreement at Conte Education Center, easing the transition from an associate degree in business at BCC to a bachelor's degree in business at MCLA.*





**“By giving students multiple opportunities to learn about education and career options while they are in school, they are able to set goals earlier and make informed decisions about their future education and career path. The Berkshire Compact for Education inspires students to achieve their goals and become our future leaders.”**

**Brenda L. Burdick** | Senior Manager, Marketing and Public Relations | General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems

## Making Workforce Connections

- The Compact works closely with the Berkshire STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Pipeline Network to increase student interest in STEM education and careers, and to enhance STEM education in schools. STEM education is critical, as many jobs of the future will require skills in science and math. Many successful programs have been implemented through this initiative:
  - ❖ Through the STEM Pipeline, regional science fairs have been offered at MCLA at both the middle and high school level. The fairs have each grown to serve more than 100 students each year from Berkshire County and surrounding regions.
  - ❖ More than 300 Berkshire County students per year learn about STEM-related careers by attending the annual **STEM Career Fair** at BCC. This past year, all Berkshire County public high schools participated in the fair. Additionally, over 50 employers attended the fair and spoke with students about various science, technology, engineering and math career options available in the Berkshires as well as the postsecondary requirements of those careers.
  - ❖ More than 1,300 students received instruction about astronomy and space using an instructional **Starlab Planetarium**.
  - ❖ Through the **Berkshire Robotics Challenge**, offered annually by the Berkshire Applied Technology Council in collaboration with BCC and MCLA, teams of students gain a better understanding of STEM concepts and the field of advanced manufacturing.
  - ❖ Close to 500 teachers attended **professional development workshops** related to STEM in recent years.
  - ❖ Schools throughout the region utilized the science resources available in the **Regional Resource Center** at MCLA since 2005.

- The **Eighth Grade North County Career Fair** was introduced as a way to bring students to a college campus and encourage them to think about a future career path and the education requirements for that career. More than 400 students from Drury, Mt. Greylock, BART and Hoosac Valley high schools, and Abbott and Clarksburg schools participated in workshops offered on careers such as information technology, engineering, architecture, arts, automotive, electrical, green technology, marketing and journalism/media. Some of the comments from the student evaluation survey were: “I enjoyed talking to people who actually have the career I would like to have; I feel like I learned a lot; I enjoyed learning about my dream careers.”
- A variety of **workforce programs** were developed through collaborative relationships among Berkshire Compact partners in direct response to employer needs. When the Compact first was formed, BCC developed a **manufacturing associate degree** in collaboration with the Berkshire Applied Technology Council, McCann Technical School and Taconic High School to address the needs of the growing advanced manufacturing sector. The program serves both the current workforce and high school students who earn up to 16 college credits. Through a Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund grant, BCC offered

technical training in manufacturing to more than 300 current and dislocated workers. Additionally, 40 students earned certification through a **Weatherization Certification Program** offered by BCC in partnership with McCann Technical School, Taconic High School and the Center for EcoTechnology, preparing them to work in the growing green industry sector.

- **MCLA’s Professional MBA** was designed and offered as a direct response to a need identified in the Compact’s survey of adult learners. The curriculum, designed as a “professional” part-time, advanced business degree, makes graduate-level education more accessible for working adults. Students gain knowledge and skills immediately relevant to their work. MCLA’s Professional MBA offers a blend of classroom experience and practical, hands-on fieldwork. The program was introduced in spring 2011 with 11 students enrolled. The first group of students graduated in August 2012 and there are currently 40 students enrolled in the program.
- The Berkshire County Regional Employment Board (BCREB) shares the Compact’s goal of making connections between the education system and workforce needs. Through a **Northern Tier Energy Sector Training Partnership** grant, BCREB worked with BCC and McCann to develop seven new courses related to career pathways in the growing sustainable energy sector. The program resulted in 62 unemployed and underemployed participants getting jobs, and 45 employed workers gaining new skills and receiving wage increases. BCREB also supported training to meet critical employment needs in the healthcare field through two Project Health grants. BCC, MCLA, McCann and the Pittsfield Public Schools were partners in this initiative, aimed at addressing the nursing shortage and creating career ladder opportunities. As a result of **Project**



**Health**, 147 participants obtained skill credentials, 99 received wage increases or promotions, 44 unemployed/underemployed participants gained new employment and new certified nursing assistant training programs were created with local employers.

**Internships/Job Shadowing** – BCREB oversees internship and job shadowing programs in Berkshire County high schools, providing students with exposure to careers to help them make informed decisions about what type of education and career they may want to pursue. Since 2005, BCREB has overseen placement of 3,329 high school interns with 1,836 employers and has also overseen more than 10,000 career exploration activities. These work-based activities allow youth to begin making important connections between their academic learning and the workplace.

The **Berkshire Youth Leadership Program** (BYLP) was introduced by the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce as a way to expose young people to career opportunities so that they will consider living and working in the Berkshires in their future. Through this program, up to 30 high school juniors each year learn about career opportunities, develop leadership skills and gain experience working as part of a team, all skills that help them prepare for college level work and the workplace. The BYLP applicant pool has grown substantially since the program started.

**“The Passport to College provides a useful guide to help students and their families realize and understand the steps they need to take to succeed in school, and prepare early for college.”**

**Susan R. Pivero** | Taconic High School,  
Guidance Department Director

## **PASSPORT TO EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS MILESTONES**

### **Early Education (ages 0 – 5)**

- Attend an early childhood educational program or participate in social opportunities to prepare for school
- Attend Wee Read Berkshire County events
- View a StoryWalk
- Get a free book through Reach Out and Read
- Attend kindergarten orientation/registration
- Open a college savings account
- Borrow books from your local library — start your own home library
- Have your parents read to you every day
- Get ready to read!

### **Kindergarten – Grade 5**

- Enroll in full day kindergarten
- Participate in third grade college visits
- Score proficient or above on assessment tests
- Consult with the MEFA website ([www.mefa.org](http://www.mefa.org)) for college financing strategies
- Open a college savings account/continue to save
- Obtain free or reduced admission passes to museums and other places of interest at local libraries
- Get involved in fun activities at school and in your community



## PASSPORT TO COLLEGE MILESTONES

### Grades 6 – 8

Participate in sixth grade college visits  
Achieve proficient scores on assessment tests  
Go to career days and science fairs  
Sign up for vacation, after school or summer programs in art, music, science math, robotics  
Play Quest for College board game  
Open a college savings account; continue to save

### Grades 9 – 12

Become familiar with your high school's graduation requirements  
Meet graduation requirements and prepare for college by taking and being successful in appropriate coursework  
Start a portfolio of awards, honors and activities so that you can build a resume; update annually  
Go to career days and science fairs  
Challenge yourself by taking honors or AP classes  
Take dual enrollment courses for college credit  
Participate in a job shadow day or volunteer internship  
Consult with the MEFA website ([www.mefa.org](http://www.mefa.org)) for college financing strategies  
Achieve proficient or higher scores on assessment tests  
Earn an Adams Scholarship providing free tuition at a Massachusetts public higher education institution with qualifying test scores  
Apply to community programs such as MountainOne Junior Board of Directors or Berkshire DA Youth Advisory Board  
Participate in SAT or ACT preparation and testing  
Take junior year **ACCUPLACER** to determine college readiness and placement levels  
Talk to your school guidance counselor about how to prepare for and find the college that's right for you  
Attend a college information session at your school  
Attend a regional college fair in your area and speak to college representatives  
Visit three or more college campuses  
Track your college plans and applications through YourPlan for College, Naviance or CareerCruising  
Attend financial assistance presentations; research financial aid and apply for national, local and college scholarships  
Compete FAFSA forms and college financial aid forms to qualify for financial aid

**APPLY TO COLLEGE! GO TO COLLEGE!**



## Outreach

- The *Passport* concept was developed to define a clear path of milestones that lead to higher education. The *Passport to College*, aimed at students in middle and secondary grades, is distributed to sixth grade students each spring during Berkshire County Goes to College week. The *Passport to Educational Success*, aimed at children from birth to grade five, is distributed at early childhood events. The Passports provide useful frameworks for students and their families to stay on the path toward higher education and emphasize that early planning is essential. Both versions of the Passport are available on the Compact's website, [www.berkshirecompact.org](http://www.berkshirecompact.org).
- The Compact collaborated with PCTV to introduce a monthly television show, *Reach Out for Education*. The purpose of the show is to inform the public about important topics related to education and workforce development. The shows were aired throughout Berkshire County, educating the public about topics such as the college application process, how to pay for college, workforce needs, women in STEM careers, local science fairs, internships, service learning programs and financial literacy. The partnership with PCTV has been very positive and has resulted in increased visibility for the Compact.

## Trends in Education

- The Berkshire Compact for Education newsletter is distributed to members and educators several times each year to keep everyone informed about our work. The Compact's online presence includes a web site, a Berkshire Compact Facebook page and a Passport to College fan page. Through these outreach tools, the Compact shares stories and photos about its work, raising visibility with the public.
- The MountainOne Financial Partners' Junior Board of Directors served as a focus group for the Berkshire Compact for Education, providing input to the Compact's marketing programs. The junior board consists of high school juniors and seniors who meet monthly to learn about corporate structure and the business environment. Marketing and outreach programs that were reviewed by the junior board include the Passports, the Facebook page and the website. The junior board provided useful suggestions to help the Compact's marketing materials appeal to the target audience.

In addition to looking at the results of programs and initiatives under the Compact's umbrella, it is important to look at long-term outcomes of the whole education system. The educational outcomes examined in this section are a result of the collective work of many different organizations, and are a good measure of changing trends and progress. Students who graduate from high school and make the decision to continue on to college have benefitted from the Compact's work, as well as from programs that are in place at their school and in their community. In the coming years, we will continue to measure the impact of Compact programs on students as they pursue postsecondary plans.

### Enrollment

Overall enrollment in Berkshire County high schools, in grades 9-12, declined at a higher rate than enrollment across the state. Demographics and school choice are contributing factors to shifts in enrollment.

#### High School Enrollment in Berkshire County (Grades 9-12)

District	School	Enrollment 2005-06	Enrollment 2011-12
Adams-Cheshire	Hoosac Valley High School	478	404
Berkshire Arts and Technology	BART Charter School	143	106
Berkshire Hills	Monument Mountain Regional High School	639	520
Central Berkshire	Wahconah Regional High School	702	587
Lee	Lee High School	349	308
Lenox	Lenox Memorial High School	276	273
Mount Greylock	Mt Greylock Regional High School	444	400
North Adams	Drury High School	583	434
Northern Berkshire Regional	Charles McCann Vocational Technical School	491	470
Pittsfield	Pittsfield High School	965	940
	Taconic High School	1,050	916
Southern Berkshire	Mt Everett Regional School	220	243
<b>% change from 2005-06 to 2011-12</b>			
Berkshire County Enrollment	11.7% decline	6,340	5,601
Statewide Enrollment	3.2% decline	296,511	287,055



## Test Scores

At the tenth grade level, students must earn passing scores on the math, English Language Arts (ELA) and science MCAS tests in order to graduate. Since the Compact began, there has been an increase in the percentage of Berkshire County tenth grade students scoring proficient or advanced on the math and ELA portions of the MCAS. Berkshire County scores were slightly above statewide averages in 2012, whereas in 2006, County scores in the “proficient and advanced” categories were lower than statewide averages.

An additional test score that the Compact tracks is third grade MCAS scores in reading. We have begun

to focus on early childhood programs in the past several years in response to concern that a high percentage of students are below the proficient level in reading at the end of third grade, which is strongly correlated with poor educational outcomes. We support Berkshire United Way’s Pittsfield Promise initiative, which was created to address this problem. The average percentage of students scoring “proficient or advanced” on the third grade MCAS in reading declined slightly from 2006 to 2012. Early literacy remains a critical concern and will continue to be a high priority of the Compact.

### Standardized Test Scores Among Berkshire County Students

MCAS	2005-06		2011-12	
	ELA, Advanced or Proficient	Math, Advanced or Proficient	ELA, Advanced or Proficient	Math, Advanced or Proficient
<b>10th grade scores</b>				
Berkshire County	65%	59%	89%	79%
Statewide	69%	67%	88%	78%
<b>3rd grade scores</b>	<b>Reading, Advanced or Proficient</b>		<b>Reading, Advanced or Proficient</b>	
Berkshire County	57%		54%	
Statewide	58%		61%	

Source: Countywide averages are based on data from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

## College Attendance Patterns

Among all Berkshire County public school districts, the college attendance rate following graduation remains steady. However, there was a positive trend among low-income students during this time period. For the five Berkshire County districts with the highest number of low income students, the percentage of students going on to attend a college or university increased by 10%. While low-income students have a lower college-going rate than the overall population in these districts, the percentage that are attending college is increasing. This subset of Berkshire County students is a critical group for the Compact to focus on, as they face more financial barriers to attending college.



### College/University Attendance Among All Berkshire County Public School Districts\*

2005-06		2009-10	
All students	Attending college/university	All students	Attending college/university
1,293	938	1,353	969
	73%		72%

\*Notes: (1) Districts included in chart are Adams-Cheshire, Berkshire Hills, Central Berkshire, Lee, Lenox, Mt. Greylock, North Adams, Northern Berkshire Regional, Pittsfield and Southern Berkshire. (2) Does not include Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter School because they do not have data for 2005-06 (3) Data is from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. The chart provides information about the enrollment of Massachusetts's public high school graduates into institutions of higher education within 16 months of graduating high school. (4) The source of higher education information is the National Student Clearinghouse, which receives data from more than 3,300 colleges, enrolling 93 percent of US college students.

### Graduation and Drop Out Rates

	2005-2006	2010-2011
4 year graduation rate		
Berkshire County	81.2%	82.8%
4 year graduation rate adjusted (doesn't include transfers in and transfers out)	86.7%	85.9%
Statewide 4 year graduation rate	79.9%	83.4%
Average annual dropout rate in Berkshire County	3.23%	2.34%
Statewide average annual dropout rate	3.3%	2.7%

Source: Countywide averages are based on data from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

### College/University Attendance among Low Income Students

District	School	2005-06		2009-10	
		Low Income Students	Students Attending College/University	Low Income Students	Students Attending College/University
Adams-Cheshire	Hoosac Valley High	15	8	22	14
Central Berkshire	Wahconah Regional High	23	13	44	29
North Adams	Drury High	28	12	58	35
N. Berkshire Regional	Charles McCann Voc Tech	30	7	48	16
Pittsfield	Pittsfield and Taconic High	87	42	175	97
Averages		183	82	347	191
%			45%		55%

Notes: Source of higher education information is the National Student Clearinghouse. The chart provides information about the enrollment of MA public high school graduates into institutions of higher education within 16 months of graduating from high school.



## Trends in Berkshire County Public Education

Enrollment of Berkshire County students at both BCC and MCLA has increased and the percentage of students transferring from BCC to MCLA has increased. These positive trends show that Berkshire County students are benefitting from local public education and are working toward four year degrees within the county at a higher rate.

### Trends in Berkshire County Public Education

	<b>% increase from 2005-06 to 2011-12</b>
Berkshire County students enrolled at MCLA	12%
Berkshire County students enrolled at BCC	10.4%
Transfer students from BCC to MCLA	36%



## The Berkshire Readiness Center

The Berkshire Readiness Center is one of six Readiness Centers in Massachusetts, begun as part of Governor Deval Patrick's readiness agenda for education. It provides high quality professional development and is focused on meeting the needs of educators at all levels. Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Berkshire Community College work together with Berkshire County school districts to improve the quality of education. The Berkshire Readiness Center's work is highly regarded throughout the state and has resulted in:

- Professional development sessions focused on topics such as understanding and implementing the new Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and educator evaluation process.
- Comprehensive support for the early education community, including ongoing training and opportunities for degree completion.
- Defining college and career readiness and training educators as part of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).
- A countywide New Teacher Induction Program.
- Professional learning networks that bring job-alike educators together to collaborate and share best practices.
- The Berkshire County Educator Recognition Program that acknowledges outstanding preK-12 educators.

## Moving Forward

We launched the Compact with the premise that education is a fundamental right, and with a commitment to develop the capacity of every learner in Berkshire County from early childhood through lifelong learning. As a result of the dedicated work of Compact stakeholders, a continuum of support is available to all Berkshire County residents to lead them on the path toward higher education.

Moving forward, we will continue our work in partnership with stakeholders across the County to improve early childhood literacy, to support students throughout school, and to increase the percentage of traditionally aged students and adult learners that go on to pursue and complete higher education degrees.

As we build on our progress and success, the data presented in this report tell us we need to dig deeper, strengthen our existing partnerships, bring new stakeholders into the work of the Compact and never accept the status quo. We know that educational affordability continues to challenge many families and presents a barrier to achieving their aspirations. In connection with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Vision Project and other initiatives, we will increase our focus on efforts to make education both accessible and affordable, and to ensure that as individuals

and as a community we realize our educational and economic potential.

Across the media, there has been a steady drumbeat of questions about the necessity and value of a college education. Is college worth it? Does higher education matter? Will an investment in education prepare students for the workforce and help them secure a job when they graduate?

Through the work of the Compact, we state emphatically that education matters at every level, from early childhood through lifelong learning. Learning instills a sense of wonder and discovery. It creates awareness of possibility and fuels aspirations. This is the sense of wonder a young child gets from reading, when the world of learning opens up to them. It is present on the faces of students who step onto a college campus for the first time as part of a Berkshire County Goes to College campus visit. It is there in the aspirations of students whose educational journey leads them to college, training, work and citizenship, prepared and excited to learn and succeed.

The work of the Compact and its stakeholders continues. The opportunities are limitless and the horizon is boundless.







**MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS**

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