

Our solution.

August 2, 2025

www.berk12.org



BERK₁₂

Berkshire Educational Resources K12

We bring school and community partners together



...a time of transition!

Topics

1. Call to order (A. Wadsworth)
2. Introductions/welcome (A. Wadsworth)
3. Approval of minutes (May 31st)
4. Updates from Chair and Exec. Committee (A. Wadsworth, J. Eberwein)
 - Advocacy, news, other updates
 - BERK12 leadership (Chair)
5. Budget & funding update (J. Eberwein)
 - Closing FY25 funds, reports
 - FY26 Funding/Budget, recap
 - FY26 Project Prospects, update
 - NEA appeal, update
6. BERK12 Working Domains
 - A. Collaborative projects
 - Portrait of a Graduate: (B. Sheran)
 - BRAINworks: (L. Donovan)
 - CPPI, Pittsfield (Team)
 - Other
 - B. Professional development (W. Ballen, J. Rush, Team)
 - Mentoring & New Teacher Induction (2025-26)
 - Professional learning networks (closing activities, plans for next year)
 - Study action teams (closing activities, plans for next year)
 - Technology/BRLI series
 - Leadership
 - County-wide PD for 2025
 - PD ideas and planning for 2025-26 (convening, PD series, topic-specific)
 - C. Networking & advocacy (Team)
 - BSTA/DA's Office
 - Website transition & Dashboard
 - View Book - Draft for review (M. Nash)
 - D. Research towards partnerships (J. Eberwein, Team)
 - Mohawk Trail – Hawlemont: Phase III
 - North Berkshire County Sustainability Study
 - 6 District Partnership (Gill-Pioneer) Support
 - Other
7. Items raised by BERK12 members (A. Wadsworth)
8. Public participation (A. Wadsworth)
9. Determination of date for next meeting (A. Wadsworth)
10. Adjournment



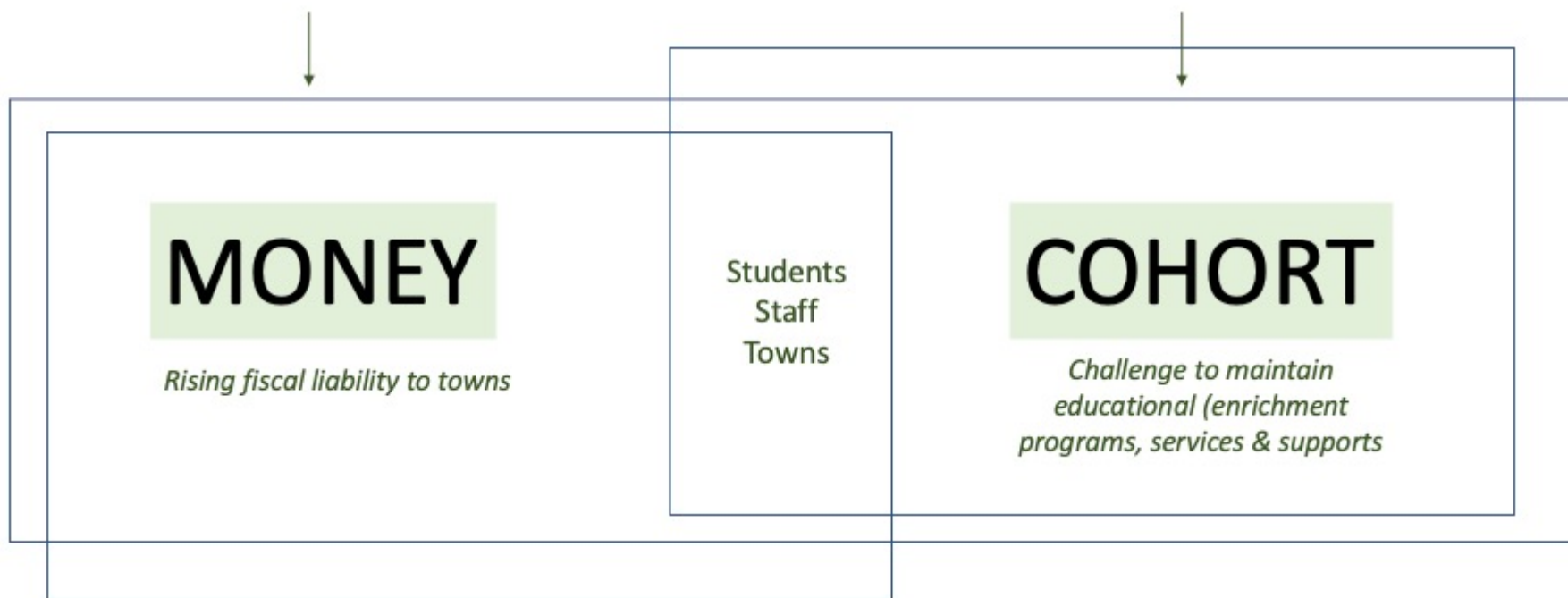
Our aims



Berkshire Educational Resources K-12 (BERK12) brings together districts and community partners to ensure access to high-quality educational experiences across Western Massachusetts.

In light of *declining enrollment and stretched resources* (people and dollars), we believe that connecting partners is imperative to improving student outcomes and the social, cultural, and economic conditions throughout Berkshire County.

DECLINE IN ENROLLMENT



MISSION

Our mission is to support Berkshire County school districts, educators, and community partners by collaboratively offering solutions to short and long-term issues, in order to promote high quality public education, which all children deserve, regardless of background or circumstance.

We are thinking and planning for the future!

We are Berkshire County's most comprehensive cross-sector organization focused on education!

QUOTE OF THE MONTH!

Regionalization is a “political, economic and educational marriage” that fulfills a constitutional responsibility to educate children in public schools. It is not an easy path. It is a process that demands goodwill, compromise and dedication. Most importantly, the process demands the trust of everyone involved albeit a citizen, a parent, or a political leader. ~DESE GUIDANCE

SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Southern Berkshire Regional School District reopens search for interim superintendent

By Talia Lissauer, The Berkshire Eagle Jul 31, 2025 2 min to read



ADMINISTRATION

Trump to bring back Presidential Fitness Test in schools

BY BRETT SAMUELS - 07/31/25 9:30 AM ET

EDUCATION

Education Department says it's releasing more than \$5 billion in frozen grants

JULY 25, 2025 • 3:44 PM ET

'It's how we use this for learning,' Lenox and Lee schools partner with MIT to prepare students for the AI revolution

By Clarence Farris, The Berkshire Eagle Jul 28, 2025 4 min to read



HEALTH

'We are terrified': Gateway City leaders prepare for federal cuts, changes to Medicaid

Local health officials are bracing for sweeping changes to MassHealth under the Trump administration's tax bill, which will largely hit low-income, immigrant communities

by HALLIE CLAPLIN
July 24, 2025

President and principal of Lee Elementary, helps Harlee Towne, 6, in a classroom last May. The Lee and Lenox public schools are partnering with intelligence on teachers, administrators, students and families.

PITTSFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Pittsfield School Committee has decided which schools will host grades 5-6 and 7-8 in the 2026-27 restructuring

By Maryanne Williams, The Berkshire Eagle Jul 23, 2025 2 min to read



'I think it's going to open some doors.' Program teaches Morningside students film and interview skills

By Dylan Thompson, The Berkshire Eagle Jul 27, 2025 3 min to read

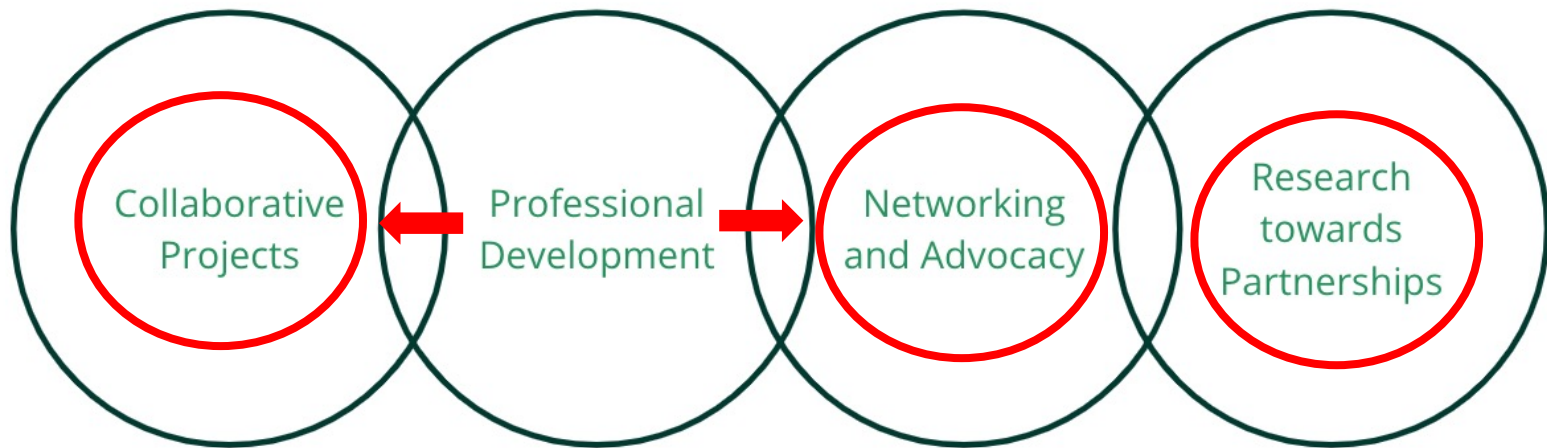


Abby Baker, 15, speaking while being interviewed on Monday morning at Morningside Community School. Baker is one of 27 students involved in the Berkshire Film and Media.

NEWS

How We Work

We bring educators & community partners together through:



+ TARGETED SOLUTIONS (BY DISTRICT/ORGANIZATION)

Increase district capacity

In order to:

TO HELP SCHOOLS MAKE BETTER WHAT CURRENTLY EXISTS.

TO HELP EXPLORE WHAT COULD BE.

By facilitating:

- Greater fiscal efficiency
- Greater educational effectiveness
- Greater access, opportunity & equity for students

Resulting in:

The highest quality education across the Berkshires that provides all children with a broad array of high-quality and developmentally appropriate educational opportunities that will enable them to successfully complete postsecondary degrees and/or become productive members of the workforce and citizens in a democratic society.

Success

CHAIR/EXEC/PM

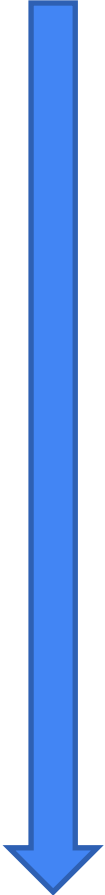
Advocacy, News and Other Updates
Leadership



FUNDING AND BUDGET



FY 2025 WORK (reminders):

- 
- **Mohawk Trail – Hawlemont Sustainability, Phase II**
 - **Barr Portrait of a Graduate – Year 1 of 3**
 - **November PD Day**
 - **Professional Learning Networks**
 - **Study-Action Teams**
 - **New Teacher Induction/Mentor Training**
 - **Teacher gatherings**
 - **Website/Dashboard**
 - **Networks (BSTA)**
 - **BRAINworks (BTCF & NEA)**
 - **Berkshire Educational Convening (#2)**
 - **CPPI, Preparation for Early Implementation Grant**
 - **Ongoing advocacy efforts (for example, rural network)**
Initial support for Northern Berkshire Sustainability; Rowe inclusion in MTRSD; West Springfield; 6 Town Partnership

BUDGET UPDATES:

- **Closing out, FY25**

- FY25 Earmark
- Barr Portrait of a Graduate (first year of 3)
- Mohawk-Trail, Phase II (completed)
- Barr Exit Grant – will track through fall...mostly encumbered
- BRAINworks
 - NEA – Closed on May 31
 - Berkshire Taconic (through calendar year 2025)
 - Mill Town (small grant)
- CPPI – project has been completed, July 2025 – summer work through August

- **Prospects and In-Hand, FY26**

- Mohawk-Trail/Hawlemont – Phase III (FY26 Earmark)
- Northern Berkshire Sustainability (FY26 Earmarks)
- Barr Portrait Year 2 (of 3)
- Feigenbaum (support November PD +....possible PLN/Study Action)
- Mentoring/New Teacher Induction (Years 1 & 2) – PPS/Berkshire Districts
- 6 Town Partnership (support for community engagement/campaign)

- **In the works, Prospects, FY26**

- Additional CPPI work (In Pittsfield or other communities)
- Professional Development
- Other restructuring/consolidation district needs

BANKED

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grant making• Website• Finance |
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FY2026 Projects

YES/LIKELY

- Mohawk Trail – Hawlemont Sustainability, Phase III
- Barr Portrait of a Graduate – Year 2 of 3
- November PD Day
- New Teacher Induction/Mentor Training
- Teacher gatherings
- Website/Dashboard
- BRAINworks (BTCF) – THRU DECEMBER 2025
- Networks (BSTA)
- Ongoing advocacy efforts (for example, rural network)
- 6 Town Partnership (support for community engagement/campaign)

MAYBE

- Northern Berkshire Sustainability (FY26 Earmarks)
- Other restructuring/consolidation district needs

NOT WITHOUT FUNDING

- Professional Learning Networks
- Study-Action Teams
- Berkshire Educational Convening (#3)
- Additional CPPI or “like” work (In Pittsfield or other communities)
- Other restructuring/consolidation district needs
- Other Professional Development

Amendment 706

Budget Amendment ID: FY2026-S3-706-R1

Redraft EDU 706

BerK-12 Public School Regionalization

~~Mr. Mark moved that the proposed new text be amended in section 2, in item 7010~~

1192, by adding the following words:- "; provided further, that not less than \$150,000 shall be expended to Berkshire Educational Resources K-12 to perform regionalization and efficiency work with public school districts in Berkshire county and with the Mohawk Trail regional school district in Franklin county"; and by striking out the figure "\$100,000" and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- "\$250,000".

FY26 EARMARK

*To further control spending and protect taxpayer dollars, Governor Healey is vetoing \$130 million, resulting in a final budget that is more than \$1 billion less than the H1 proposal and \$130 million less than the final conference budget. The administration is also continuing an Executive Branch hiring freeze, halting a planned non-union manager pay raise scheduled for January, saving \$17 million, and **delaying payment on earmarked funds for local projects in the budget totaling approximately \$125 million until later in the year** when more is understood about their affordability.*

PLANNED FUNDING

FUNDS TO:

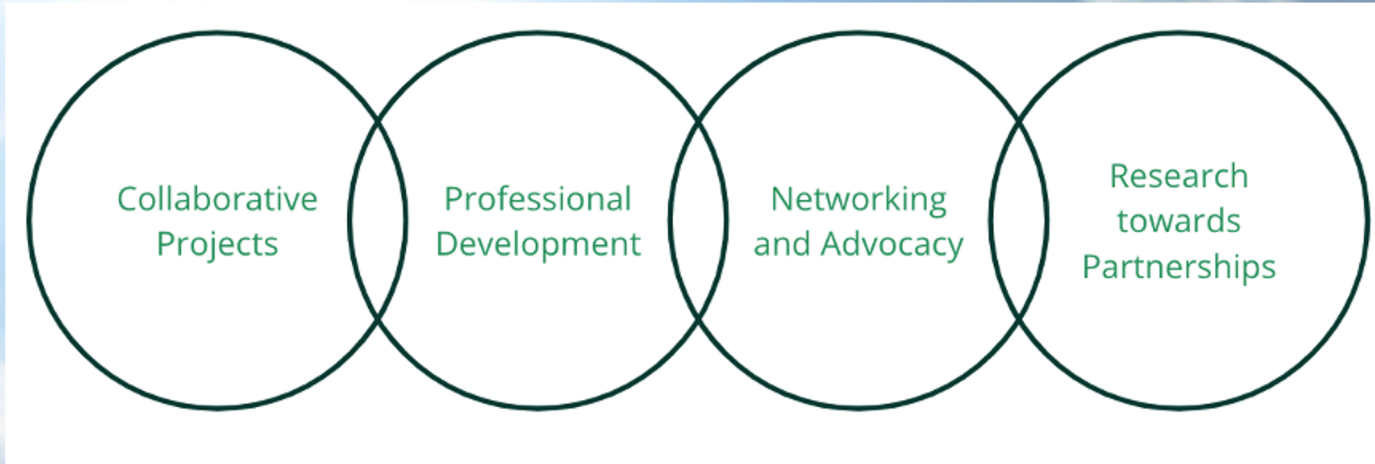
- Manage ongoing BERK12 efforts across target FY26 projects
- Write summary reports
- Respond to/author grants and responses to RFP/Q
- Monitor budget, website, dashboard
- Advocacy & marketing
- Preparation for fall activities (Nov. PD, NTI/mentoring)
- Work with MTRSD/HRSD & north Berkshire pre-funding
- Prepare for November PD and PLNs
- Continue BSTA
- Manage POG
- Explore marketing tools (view book), and PD.....etc.

We will be combining all non-time bound funds into a BERK12 Revolving (currently MISC)

APPROVED (MAY 2025):

- Funding for 16 hrs/week (Sheran and Eberwein, July – October: 4 months), from Revolving
- Funding for Ballen through November, 2025 (Feigenbaum contingent)
- Funding for additional consulting (\$8,000), from Revolving

Our work domains..



Updates.

Collaborative Projects

- Portrait of a Graduate, Barr
- BRAINworks
- CPPI

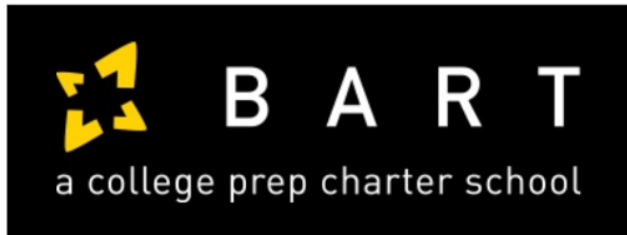


Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate

Our Partner High Schools On This Journey!



DRURY
HIGH SCHOOL
North Adams Public Schools

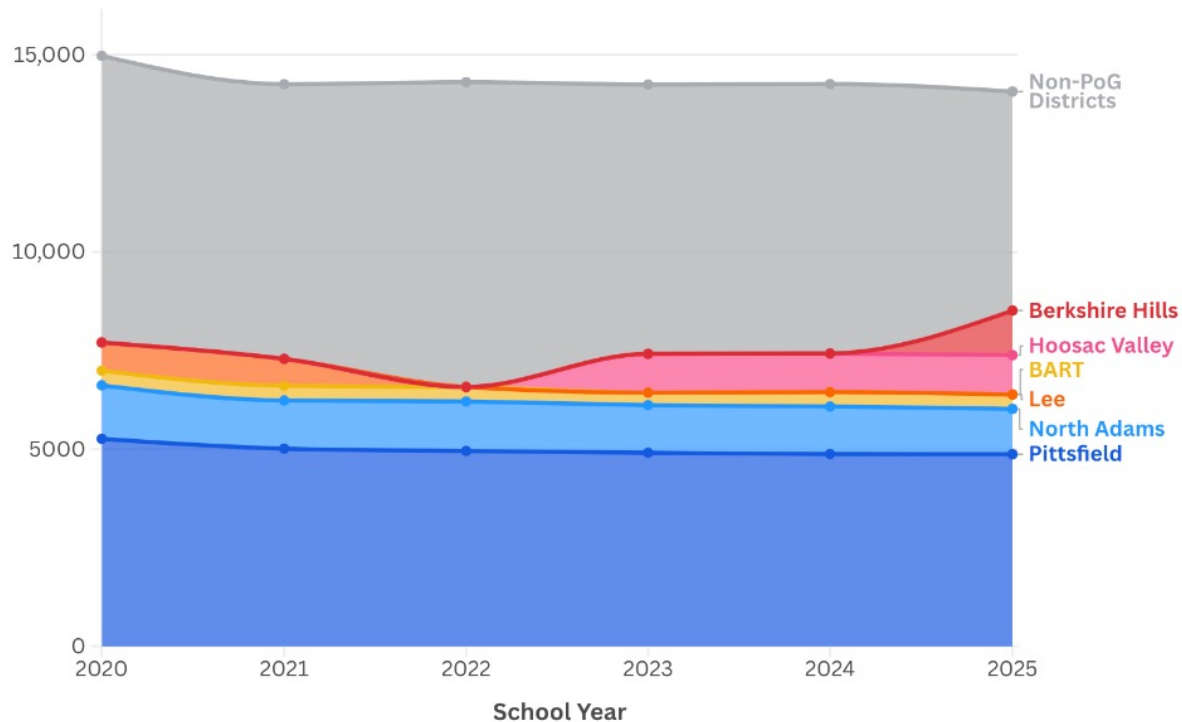


Project Reach

Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate Districts and Non-PoG District Enrollment

Pittsfield North Adams BART Lee Hoosac Valley Berkshire Hills Non-PoG Districts

of Students Enrolled



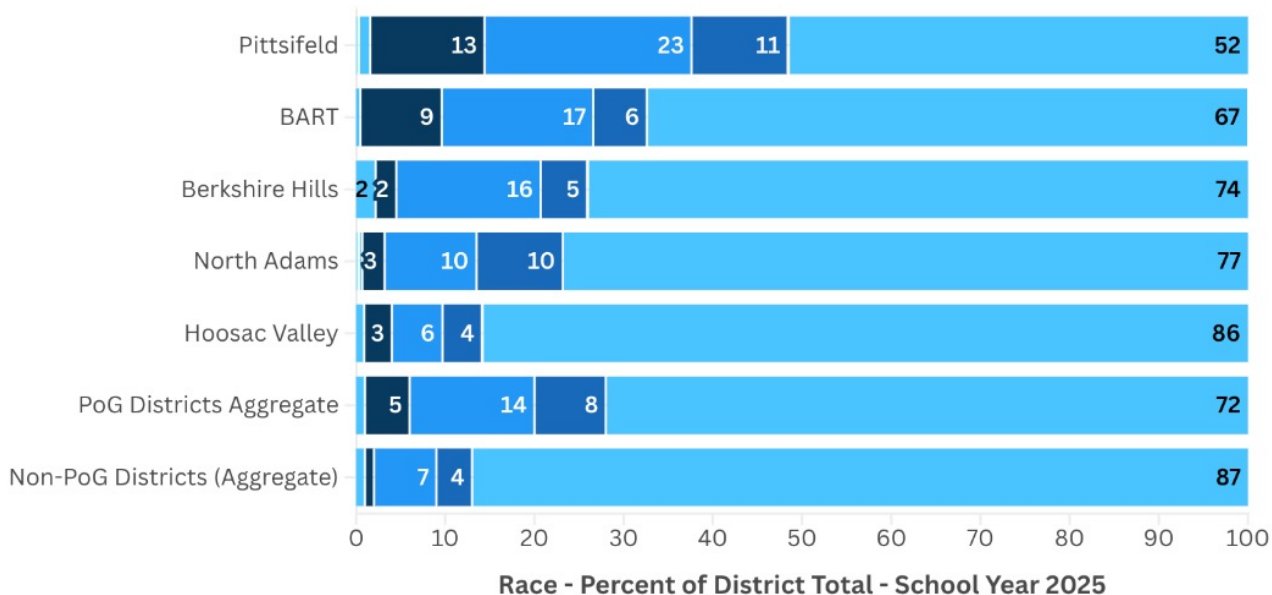
BERKSHIRE POG SCHOOLS ARE MORE DIVERSE THAN OUR NON-POG PEERS

Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate Districts and Non-PoG Districts

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

American Indian or Alaska Native Asian Black or African American Hispanic or Latino
Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander White

District

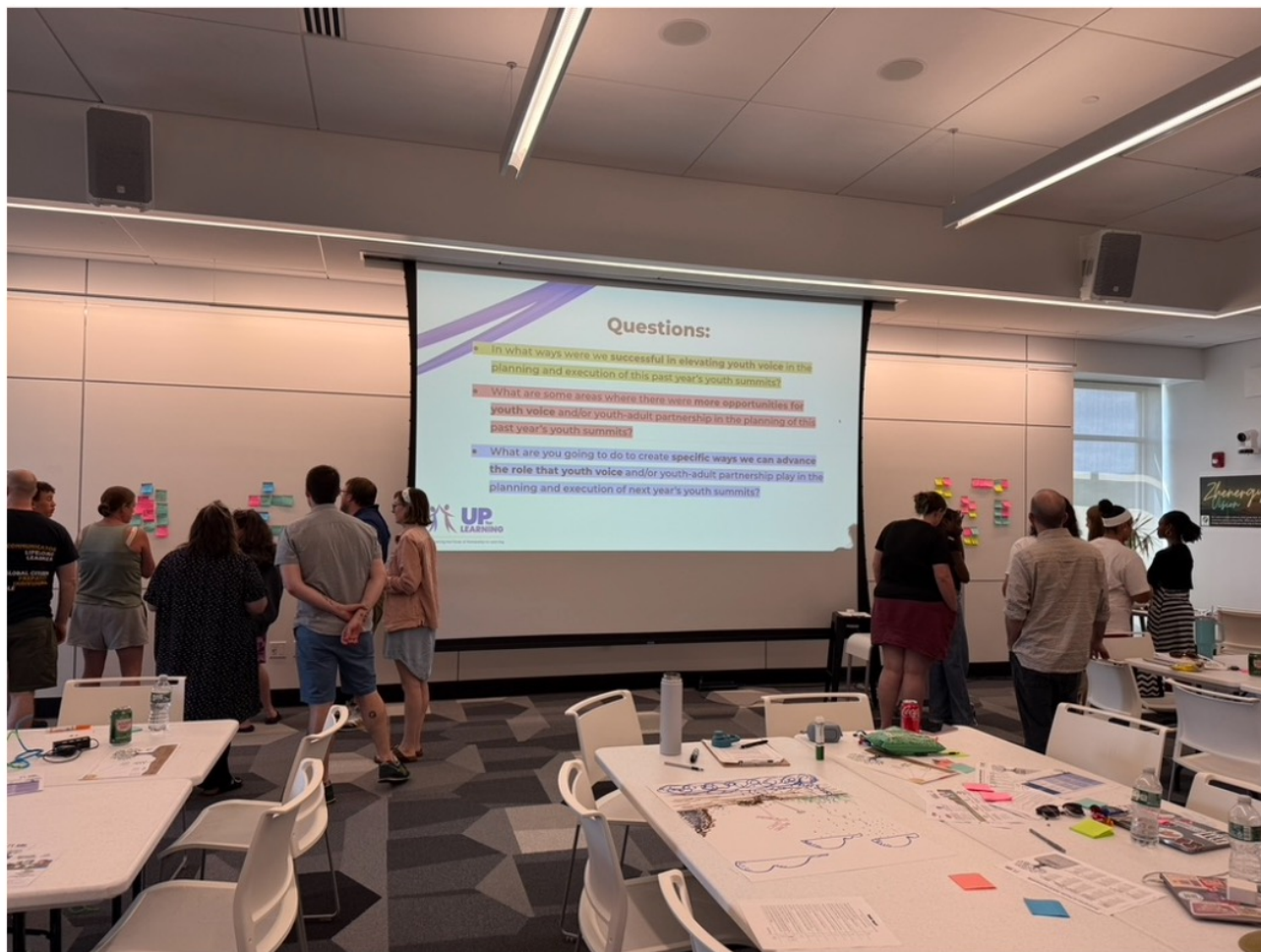


Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate - Project Updates

- Completed/submitted Phase IV Year 1 report to to Barr. Actively planning for 25/26.
- Project Facilitator presented at the MCLA Leadership Academy cohort focused on student voice and building cohesion with new projects/initiatives
- Theme for the Year - **Building Bright Spots** - supporting effective instructional practices (student visible thinking strategies)
- New/focused role **Instructional Teacher Leads** - 5 teachers per school
 - Coaching, PD opportunities, network support, open classroom for observation
- *June / July Professional Development Opportunities*
 - *UP for Learning - Youth Adult Partnership (25 educators and students)*
 - *Deepening Literacy - Reflective Writing and Accountable Talk (30 educators)*

What's Next...

- Phase IV Year 2 Kick Off - August 14th - all network school teams
- School site plan development and implementation including instructional rounds and peer learning opportunities
- BARR Foundation Network Events
 - **Fall** Oct 20-22nd (Salem MA) and **Spring** May - TBD (Franklin, NH)



UP for Learning - Youth Adult Partnership Workshop

Ed Tech and AI Study Team

- Hosted three (3) professional learning sessions focused on AI and ed tech at The BIC
 - Student Data Privacy
 - Conversations on AI and Machine Learning
 - Teaching AI in the Elementary Classroom
- Thanks (again) to our Ed Tech / AI study team leaders!
 - Ronna Zigmund (Richmond)
 - Ginger Armstrong (Lee)
 - Kate Olender (Lenox)
- **Boundaries and Breakthroughs AI Workshop - 30 educators from nine districts!**
 - Began developing / thinking concretely about shared guidelines for AI use
- Related - Jeff Riley (former MA Commissioner) / Day of AI lead for a November PD day workshop



BERKSHIRE K-12 EDUCATORS
Spring Into AI and Ed Tech Sessions
Sponsored and Facilitated by BERK12
at The Berkshire Innovation Center
4:30 to 6:00pm

Opportunity to earn PDs for participation in all sessions and completion of a demonstration of learning project

A FREE opportunity to Collaborate with your Berkshire K-12 Colleagues

Student Data Privacy Protection
Offered in collaboration with The Berkshire County District Attorney's Office
Thursday May 1st

Conversations on AI and Machine Learning
Tuesday May 6th

Teach Them It Isn't Magic: Teaching AI in The Elementary Classroom
Tues. May 13th

Click [HERE](#) to register and to see session descriptions

Berkshire Resources for Learning and Innovation
A collaborative project of Berkshire Educational Resources K12 (BERK12) educators and schools, support and resources to purposefully integrate AI into their pedagogy. By engaging in cross district professional learning, a collaborative regional network and collective expertise in using education, foster innovative, equitable, and meaningful learning opportunities for all.

For Questions Contact: [Brendan Sherrin, BERK12 Project Facilitator](#)



Facilitator: Casey Daigle from CES

Top Priorities for AI Guidelines

- **Student Use:** Define when and how students can use AI to enhance learning while ensuring independent thought occurs first. Prohibit AI use on exams and establish clear consequences for misuse.
- **Educator Use:** Specify appropriate professional uses for AI (i.e. lesson planning, feedback) with strict protocols on protecting student data and privacy. Ensure consistent application among staff.
- **Ethical & Legal**
 - **Governance:** Designate who creates, monitors, and enforces AI policies.
 - **Safety & Privacy:** Restrict technologies like facial recognition and define legal boundaries for data collection and use.
- **Transparency:** Mandate clear disclosure and citation for any AI-generated content.
- **Critical Awareness**
 - **Identifying "Red Flags":** Train all users to recognize AI-generated errors, bias, and misinformation.
 - **Environmental Impact:** Address and educate on the energy and water costs of AI technologies.

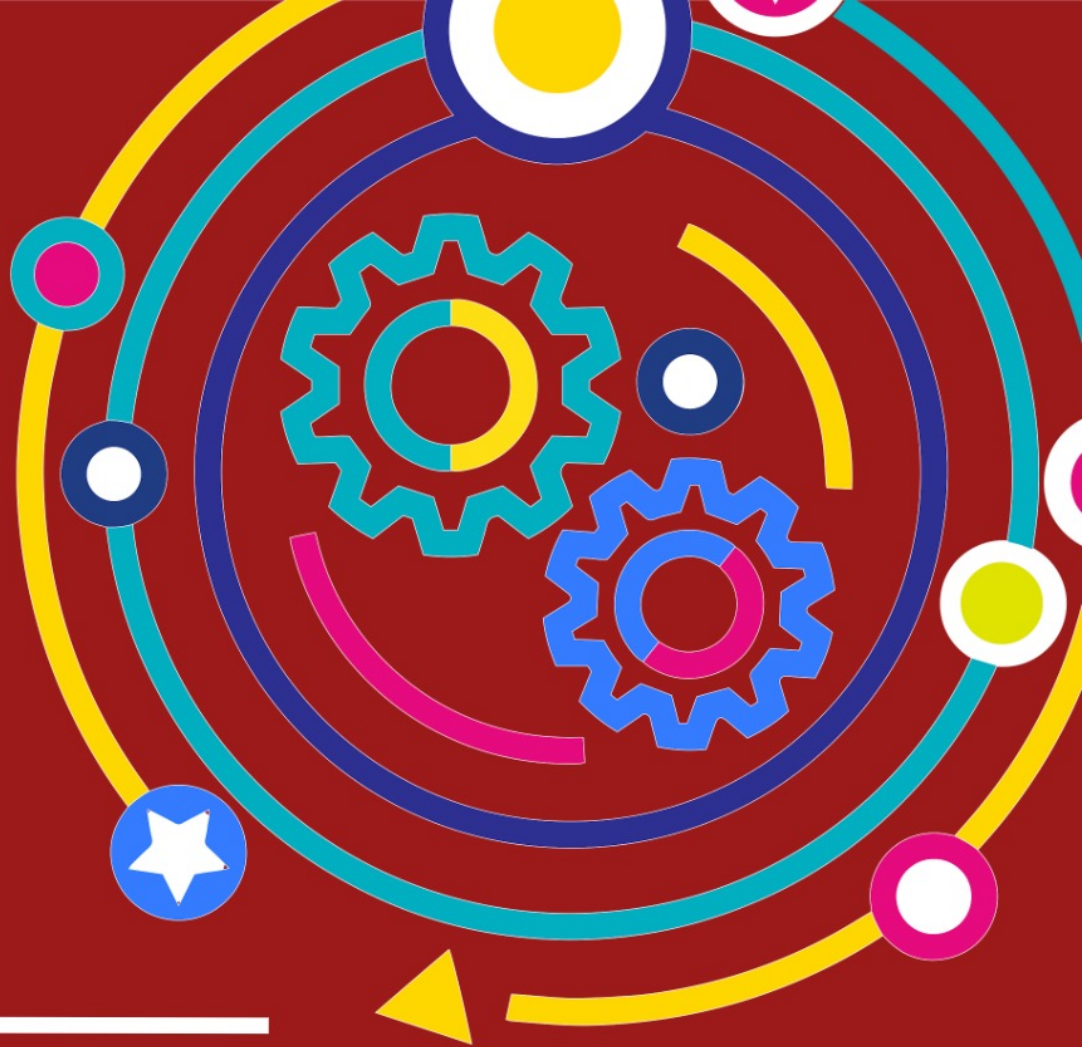
School and District Leadership Study Team

- **8 educational leaders from 5 different districts participating** - includes assistant superintendents, former and current superintendents, principals, and an assistant principal
- Conducting a collaborative literature review - examining current research in the field of ed leadership as well as local data and trends
- Developing a survey for current/aspiring leaders. Some potential questions include:
 - How often do you engage in conversations about your satisfaction of being a school or district leader?
 - Are you involved in professional learning groups regionally or at the state level?
 - What leadership opportunities did you engage in before becoming a school or district leader?
 - What experiences do you believe best prepared you for school or district leadership?
 - What skills or dispositions do you feel aspiring leaders most need to be successful?

School and District Leadership Study Team

Preliminary Recommendations

- **Networking** - Establish new or strengthen existing collaborative networks of school and district leaders. Build networking opportunities for leaders to engage cross-district and in role alike groups, potentially working on projects, initiatives, or examining topics of local or regional interest.
- **Appeal of Leadership** - Provide opportunities for school and district leaders to highlight positive aspects of serving in leadership roles.
- **Identifying and Cultivating** - Identify opportunities for leadership in schools for teachers and other educators to build skills toward future career possibilities. This includes but is not limited to activities such as chairing and organizing committees or leading a team or PLC group.
- **Local Leadership Cohorts** - Develop a cohort of aspiring leaders to create a pipeline of effective and well-trained educators to take on school, and eventually district, leadership roles. Connect these educators with programs and pathways for licensure.



BERKSHIRE
COUNTY
MAKES
ART WORK

With current events impacting the arts and culture field, this page serves as a dedicated hub where we will compile the latest updates, ensuring you stay informed and engaged with the issues that matter most.

Legend:

Executive



Judicial



Congressional



Advocacy

**July 25, 2025****Executive Update**

7/25/2025: The **U.S. Department of Education** has announced plans to **release billions in previously withheld school grant funding**. The freeze impacted over \$6 billion in grants that support critical programs like English language learning, adult literacy, summer and after-school programming, and teacher professional development. After intense bipartisan pressure, legal challenges from states and school districts, and scrutiny from 10 Republican senators, the Office of Management and Budget concluded its review and will begin forwarding the funds to states in the coming week. **School leaders reacted with relief, noting that the uncertainty had disrupted planning and**

Updates on National Endowment for the Arts FY 2026 Grant Opportunities

The National Endowment for the Arts is updating its FY 2026 grant guidelines, with deadlines in March and July 2025. These changes impact organizations applying in the Grants for Arts Projects or Challenge America categories; please see below for pertinent details.

Challenge America

The Challenge America opportunity is canceled for FY 2026. Organizations that have applied or were planning to apply to the FY 2026 Challenge America grant opportunity are encouraged to apply to the Grants for Arts Projects category at the March or July deadlines instead.

This change is to focus NEA staff resources on the Grants for Arts Projects category.

In phase 6, of our collective impact initiative, programs are organized around sustainability and deepening impact including:



- 1) Research/design of the Berkshire Blueprint for Arts Integration and Education 2.0, including a sustainability plan
- 2) Continue conversations with the Kennedy Center exploring a national partnership with one of their arts education programs to support the Berkshire region
- 3) Increase alignment and documentation of arts organizations' offerings with Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate outcome indicators
- 4) Collect/analyze data to launch a regional shared measurement approach using national creative youth development indicators
- 5) Address regional needs by focusing professional development offerings on arts as a pedagogy for advancing student literacy outcomes
- 6) Leverage arts organizations as assets to address community engagement needs of the Berkshire artist community by responding to community data
- 7) Build an advocacy platform by continuing the Thinking Like a Region Podcast which collects/analyzes the creative capacities developed from immersive arts and arts education experiences
- 8) Continue to strengthen Berkshire Cultural Assets Network, a professional learning network for arts education and community engagement staff at arts organizations.

Partners in Education



The Partners in Education program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is designed to assist arts organizations throughout the nation to develop or expand educational partnerships with their local school systems. The primary purpose of these partnerships is to provide professional learning in the arts for teachers. In 1992, this program was awarded the Association of Performing Arts Presenters' Dawson Award, which recognizes innovative and successful projects.

The Partners in Education program is based on the belief that teachers' professional learning is an essential component of any effort designed to increase the artistic literacy of young people. The Kennedy Center's extensive experience with its local professional learning program, established in 1976, provides the basis for this national program.

Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate



Your Voice Through Film is a semester-long course that will provide the means for young people in our region to share and amplify their voices and perspectives on social issues that are important to them through the medium of film. Students will have the opportunity to explore the forces and events that are creating divisions within our communities and society - as well as ways individuals and communities are coming together to address a shared problem or issue. Through research, collaboration and the creation of a film, students will be empowered to see that their voices matter and can make a difference.







Sensing Nature at the Clark: Clark educators lead a slow engagement with nature and art, focused on enhancing wellbeing. This new seasonal program encourages visitors to connect deeply with the landscapes on the Clark's campus and in the galleries.



ARTcentric Berkshires introduces students to local visual artists to explore how they use inspiration from the world around them - for example biology, geology, and culture - in their art.



Ballot Ballad: Youth Voice, Civic Power, and the American Songbook: An interdisciplinary civics curriculum integrates art and advocacy to empower students with knowledge of their voting rights through collaborative and creative expression. Using theater, movement, and songwriting—rooted in American singer-songwriter traditions—students co-create an original performance that educates both performers and audience members about the right to vote and the broader importance of civic engagement.

	<p>Curriculum in Motion™: Artist Educators are in residence in schools and work in the classroom, guiding teachers and students in creating original movement that applies choreographic approaches, creative processes, and kinesthetic learning strategies to investigate and solve problems, articulate ideas, contextualize content, affirm intuitive knowledge, work cooperatively, and improve self-esteem.</p>
	<p>Moving Life Stories (MLS) is a creative-based workshop where students are offered an opportunity to share their ancestry, family stories, personal journeys, and life experiences through movement and words in a safe space. When memories, ideas and experiences are investigated through movement and turned into art, transformation occurs, creating an increased understanding of self, community and respect for others and their differences.</p>
	<p>Behind the Scenes at MASS MoCA: The new two-visit model would include a behind-the-scenes look at either an exhibition currently in development, or a visual or performing artist residency where new work is being developed at the museum, as well as an exploration of careers in the creative sector.</p>
	<p>Playwright Mentoring Program is an intensive out-of-school activity that uses theater as a catalyst to help young people learn valuable life skills. PMP is offered at no cost to the students, and no audition is required. Meeting weekly, PMP offers teenagers a brave space to talk about difficult issues in their daily lives. Participants learn the fundamentals of devising, playwriting, and improvisation from experienced mentors. Theater is used as a means of self-exploration and self-expression. Over the course of the program, teens collaborate to create an original performance piece based on their own stories.</p>

Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate

Signature Experiences through the Arts




The Problem We All Live With: Learning about Civil Rights Through Art is a free offering to Berkshire Country schools that will provide opportunities for young people to explore the Civil Rights movement through the arts. These will take place either on a guided tour of the Museum, or during an in-class visit by a museum educator using the NRM's Virtual Field Trip platform.



Mobile Museum Units - Science of Color: The MoMU for Colour displays several objects from the museum's collection that present vivid colors found in nature, as well as examples of humans using pigments to color objects. These objects include Egyptian shabtis, glass slags, remarkable agate specimens, and toys designed by the great Alexander Calder. Students are then guided through the science of color, starting with an overview of the electromagnetic spectrum and Newton's breakthroughs.

Lisa Donovan

Arts Integration Playbook



Visual Art Strategy:
I Am From Poems

Found Poetry: A creative form where poets take existing texts and reshape them into new works.

WORKSHOP PLAN	GRADE LEVEL	DURATION
"In Her Voice: A Found Poetry Exploration of Toni Morrison"	11th grade English	90 minutes (Can be adjusted for block scheduling)

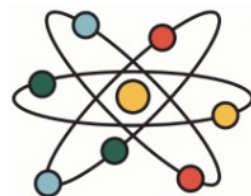
Objectives:

- Students will create an "I Am From" poem using Toni Morrison's life and works as inspiration
- Students will craft a found poem using excerpts from articles about Morrison
- Students will present their poems, reflecting on Morrison's influence

Standards (Massachusetts ELA Frameworks Grade 11-12):

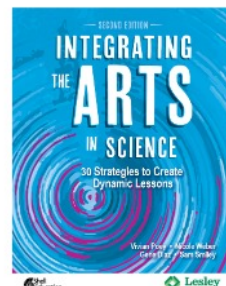
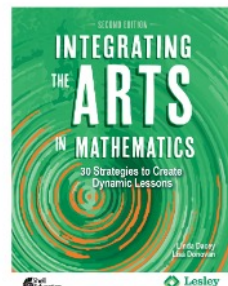
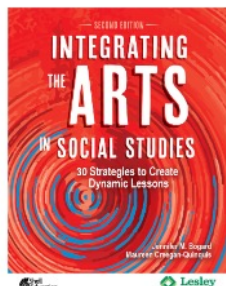
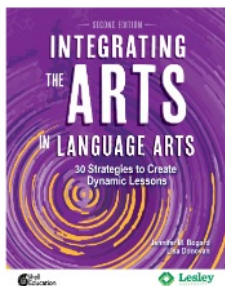
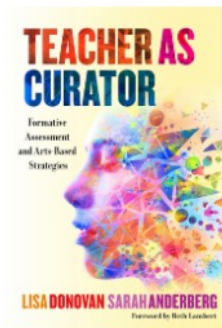
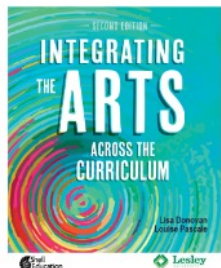
Standards/Objectives	Evidence	Collection Strategies
RL. 11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	Students will be able to: Draw ideas and insights about Toni Morrison's life from primary sources and craft a poem that highlights key aspects	Poem Discussion of artistic choices Note Catcher
SL. 11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners.	Students will be able to: Discuss their artistic choices What they chose to feature and how they used the elements of poetry to convey and amplify ideas	Poem Discussion of artistic choices Note Catcher
W. 11-12.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured sequences.	Students will be able to: Craft an I am from poem using words, phrases from a range of sources and personal inferences	Poem Discussion of artistic choices Note Catcher

Chemistry and the Arts: Exploring the Art/Science Relationship



Dr. Lisa Donovan (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts)
Nicole Ager (Pittsfield High School)

Arts Integration Series for 13 Pittsfield Schools



11/4 Countywide PD Day at Tanglewood Leveraging the Arts for High-Impact Learning

Tanglewood's Linde Center - Lenox, MA



Workshop Objectives:

- Learn and practice flexible arts integration strategies that you can use in your classroom to get to high-impact learning
- Identify specific connections between arts-based learning and the six Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate competencies (at both the elementary and secondary levels)
- Experience how arts-based learning can powerfully engage students with academic content
- Learn techniques from Berkshire arts/cultural organizations' educators to discover their unique educational assets and learn how to connect them to your curricular content

Six culturals will share their **POG-aligned workshops** to offer flexible strategies in arts integration that yield high-impact student learning (MASS MoCA, Jacob's Pillow, Berkshire Museum, WAM Theatre, Barrington Stage Company, Norman Rockwell Museum).

CREATIVE SECTOR SUMMIT

MEETING THE MOMENT:
CREATIVE ADVOCACY & CULTURAL
ORGANIZING FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES

June 6, 2025

10 AM - 5 PM

Northampton Center for the Arts



A photograph of three young students in a classroom. On the left, a girl with dark hair and a blue headband looks up. In the middle, a boy in a light blue shirt looks up with an open mouth. On the right, a boy with curly hair in a dark blue shirt looks up with his right arm raised. They are all looking towards the upper right of the frame. The background shows bookshelves and a black office chair.

Equitable access to meaningful education

We work at the classroom, school, and district level
to drive change in Boston schools.

Systemwide Change and Collective Action for Arts Education in Massachusetts

How can we achieve equitable arts education impact on a systemwide level? Presenters from three different regions and contexts in Massachusetts— rural (Berkshire County), mid-sized gateway city (Springfield), major urban center (Boston)-- will share how they catalyze collective action to increase access to arts education in their communities. Panelists and attendees will discuss conditions and strategies that strengthened their arts education ecosystems and challenges around ensuring equity, quality, and sustainability. The session will include the sharing of specific tools and resources.

Session Presenters: Ruth Mercado-Zizzo, Edvestors; Lisa Donovan, BERK12; Eileen McCaffery, Community Music School of Springfield

BCAN membership meeting at Tanglewood on August 15th



BCAN members are invited to gather at the Linde Center at Tanglewood on Friday, August 15th at 9AM for a relaxed, midsummer meetup. Connect and catch up with arts education and community engagement colleagues from across the Berkshires. Enjoy some morning refreshments and wonderful music at the open rehearsal at Tanglewood immediately following at 10:30AM (all BCAN attendees are invited!)

BCAN aims to create opportunities for the membership to network and collaborate, so come gather with us this summer to connect!

ATTEND SXSW EDU

March 9-12, 2026 – Austin, TX

The SXSW EDU Conference & Festival is an annual event fostering innovation and learning in the education industry. Located deep in the heart of Austin, Texas, SXSW EDU is the premier destination for discovery.

Registration opens on October 1, 2025



SXSW EDU application: Rigor in the Creative Process, based on BRAINworks research, submitted in the arts education track at this national education conference



BERKSHIRE
COUNTY
MAKES
ART WORK



CPPI NETWORK MEETING

July 17, 2025



Purpose: Updates to the Community Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) Network Team and solicit feedback based on adjusted Pittsfield early implementation funding; Prepare for grant submission (August 1).



CPPI Priorities:

- **Expansion of access to affordable quality preschool.** Through subsidies and scholarships, via a mixture of public and private classrooms - supported by community resources (mental health and social services) while closing transportation gaps.
- **Building locally aligned quality.** Strengthen and align curriculum, policy, assessments, and professional development - reflective of evidence-based best practice.
- **Equitable access to special education and inclusion.** Ensure full inclusion of children with disabilities across all settings.

Strategic Plan Update

1. General edits and updates (throughout document) - *additions/edits based on feedback from partners, ABT, & team.*
2. Updates to Identified Needs (pp. 7-10) - *whether this is or is not something that will be addressed in the early implementation plan.*
3. Priority Area Summaries (see p. 18) - addition of simple connection of needs/root causes/goals/activities as introduction to section.

Needs <i>Issue/Challenge Identified from Needs Assessment</i>	Root Causes	Goals <i>Goals to Address that Issue/Challenge</i>	Activities <i>Action Steps for Achieving Goals See chart below for detailed action steps.</i>
Lack of a coordinated, city-wide registration and information system. Families struggle to find clear, consistent information about available programs.	Multiple independent providers (public schools, community-based programs, private centers) operate separately with their own enrollment processes and communication methods. No single agency or entity has clear responsibility or capacity to coordinate information and registration city-wide. There is no existing centralized digital platform or unified database to house program information and facilitate enrollment across providers.	Goal 1: Enhance coordination and implementation of pre-k programming in the City of Pittsfield.	Hire a dedicated staff person (possibly under a city-wide pre-k program coordinator) to help families understand their options, complete applications, and access supports like financial aid or special education evaluations. Create a user-friendly, city-wide website or digital portal that houses up-to-date information on all public and community-based preschool options, including program features, hours, tuition, language support, and availability. Create a centralized registration system or, at minimum, links to application processes for each site.

CPPI Funds

Priority Areas:

1. Access
2. Locally Aligned Quality
3. Special Ed/Inclusion

Universal:

All partners (staff, students, systems)

Examples:

- Professional Development
- Marketing/Enrollment Systems
- Leadership/Network
- CPPI Coordinator

Targeted:

Pilot classrooms (one per partner)

Examples:

- Instructional coach
- Data collection
- Curriculum
- Itinerant (SLP)

Application Process



noreplyeecgrants@noreply.mass.gov

to me ▼

The status of the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) Application, Fiscal Grantee Superintendent / Chief Executive Approved.

Next Available Status(es):

- Returned to Grantee for Edits Prior to Award Decision
- Application Withdrawn - Not Scored
- EEC Program Reviewed - Awarded (Pending Funding Approval)
- EEC Program Reviewed - Awarded With Edits (Pending Funding Approval)
- EEC Program Reviewed - Not Awarded

INVESTMENT	COST	PPS MATCH	Adjusted amount based on \$250k reduction
CPPI Grant Coordinator	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
CPPI Instructional Coach	\$85,000		\$35,000
CPPI Project Coordinator	\$60,000		\$30,000
CPPI Itinerant Specialist	\$100,000		\$50,000
Program Leadership/Network Stipends	\$50,000		\$30,000
Consulting support/evaluator	\$30,000		\$10,000
Educational and Instructional Materials	\$15,000		\$5,000
Instructional Tech, including software	\$10,000		\$5,000
Other (Advertising/Marketing)	\$5,000		\$5,000
Professional Development	\$40,000		\$30,000
Tuition Assistance*	\$70,000		\$20,000
Admin fee/CLERICAL	\$10,000		\$5,000
TOTAL	\$500,000		\$250,000

SUMMER WORK (PD, PLANNING, JOB DESC/POSTING)

Professional Development

- NTI Planning (2025-26)
- 2024-5 Wrap-up
 - Study Action (OST, BRLI, Leadership)
 - PLNs
- Nov 2025 – County-wide/Thanksgiving week
- Convening & PD planning



New Teacher Induction (Years One & Two)

Judy Rush

Course Content	
Date	Course Syllabus
Sept 10	<p>Launching Your Educator Journey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding Your Teaching License – Navigating the licensure process and requirements. Instructional Year at a Glance – Mapping out key milestones and instructional priorities. Essential School Systems – Overview of evaluation processes and Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS). The Purposeful Classroom – Establishing clear learning goals and fostering an engaging classroom environment.
<p>Thriving in the Classroom: A Yearlong Induction Program for New Educators</p> <p>Delivery Format: The Course includes seven two-hour in-person sessions and online components with products.</p> <p>Course Description: This yearlong induction program is designed to support new educators in developing the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to thrive in their first years of teaching. Through a series of structured sessions, participants will gain a deeper understanding of instructional best practices, student engagement strategies, assessment techniques, and professional responsibilities. The program also provides opportunities for individualized support, collaboration, and reflection, ensuring a strong foundation for long-term success in the classroom.</p> <p>Course Objectives: By the end of this course, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand Professional Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigate licensure requirements and the educator evaluation process. Develop an awareness of school systems, policies, and district expectations. Implement Effective Instructional Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design purposeful lessons with clear learning objectives and success criteria. Utilize formative and summative assessments to inform instruction and enhance student learning. Support Diverse Student Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply strategies to support special populations, including English Language Learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, and gifted learners. Integrate culturally responsive teaching practices to create an inclusive classroom environment. Engage and Collaborate with Caregivers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish strong partnerships with families to support student learning and well-being. Communicate effectively with caregivers to build trust and foster engagement. Develop Classroom Management and Student Support Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) to promote a positive classroom culture. Apply strategies for student engagement and relationship-building. Plan for Long-Term Success in the Profession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on their first-year experiences to identify strengths and areas for growth. Develop a professional growth plan for continued development and effectiveness in the classroom. 	<p>Understanding the evaluation cycle is crucial for your professional growth and development. For this assignment, please complete the following tasks:</p> <p>→ Share the Purpose of Educator Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In your own words, describe the purpose of educator evaluation. Why is it important for your growth as an educator and for your students' success? <p>→ District Evaluation Deadlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a list of the key due dates for the educator evaluation cycle in your district, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reflection and goal-setting Educator Plan submission Formative Assessment evidence submission Summative Assessment evidence submission Self-Rating Using the Educator Rubric <p>→ Using the educator rubric your district uses for evaluation,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate yourself in one element from each standard. Be sure to provide brief reflections on why you chose your ratings. <p>This assignment will help you familiarize yourself with the evaluation cycle and reflect on your progress.</p>
	<p>Clarity in Instruction: Defining Success for Student Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting explicit learning intentions and success criteria to enhance student understanding. Aligning instructional strategies and assessments to ensure student progress toward learning goals.
	<p>For this assignment, you will focus on the concept of Teacher Clarity, as introduced in the video by Doug Fisher. Teacher clarity helps make the learning process more transparent for students and ensures that they understand what is expected of them.</p> <p>→ Watch the video on Teacher Clarity by Doug Fisher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay attention to the key concepts he discusses regarding the importance of clear learning intentions and success criteria for students.

Networking & Advocacy

- BSTA (W. Ballen)
- Dashboard/Website Transition
- Winter convening (Rush)
- Viewbook – (Nash)





Berkshire Educational Resources K12 VIEWBOOK 2025

*We bring schools and
community partners together*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- About BERK12
- Major areas of focus
- Collaborative projects
- Professional development
- Networking and advocacy
- Sustainability
- Partners
- List of services offered

Research Towards Partnerships

Mohawk Trail-Hawlemont
Northern Berkshire Districts
Gill-Montague



ONGOING SINCE LAST MEETING

- **PLANNING FOR PHASE III**
- **PHASE III RFP (NEXT SLIDE)**
- **ONGOING RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY INQUIRIES**
- **ADVOCACY FOR FUNDS AND RURAL NEEDS
(EARMARK, OTHER?)**
- **MONITORING/ADVISING OTHER POSSIBLE
SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS (NORTH
BERKSHIRE)**
- **END OF YEAR REPORTING/FINANCE**
- **BRIEF (CONSOLIDATION/SCHOOL CLOSURES)**
- **BERK12, PREPARING PHASE III PROPOSAL**



August | The Mohawk Trail School System
Mohawk Trail Regional School District | Hawlemont Regional School District

24 Ashfield Rd. Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts 01370 Ph: (413) 625-0192 Fax: (413) 625-0196
Sherly Stanton, Superintendent of Schools
William Lataille, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts Sustainability Study

PHASE III SUSTAINABILITY STUDY PROPOSAL REQUIREMENT CRITERIA

This document and the Phase III Sustainability Study scope of services are available to all interested proposers at rp-case@mtrsd.org or the Mohawk Trail Regional School District, Central Office, 24 Ashfield Road, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370

INTRODUCTION

General

The Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts is comprised of eight towns in Western Franklin County, Massachusetts: Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Hawley, Heath, Plainfield, and Shelburne, and one (1) town (Rowe) that tuitions students into the district.

Background

This Request for Proposal is a result of the efforts by the districts to provide technical assistance and support long- term sustainability.

Objectives

The Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts seek a consultant to provide technical assistance and support as the districts continue to seek ways to ensure their long-term sustainability.

Scope of Services

Attached document labeled Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts Phase III Sustainability Study RFP.

RFP

PROJECT TASKS:

- **Project Facilitation** (General project management and work planning)
- **Educational Planning** (Develop educational vision with [stakeholders](#) groups)
- **Regional Agreement** (To be written and prepared for town meetings)
- **Community Outreach** (Public information sharing, engagement, and feedback)
- **Marketing and Campaign** (In advance of town votes)
- **Transition Planning** (Timelines and contingencies)
- **Targeted Analysis** (Further analysis is various functional areas such as transportation and buildings)
- **Advocacy** (For legislation and rural commission recommendations, & ongoing funding)

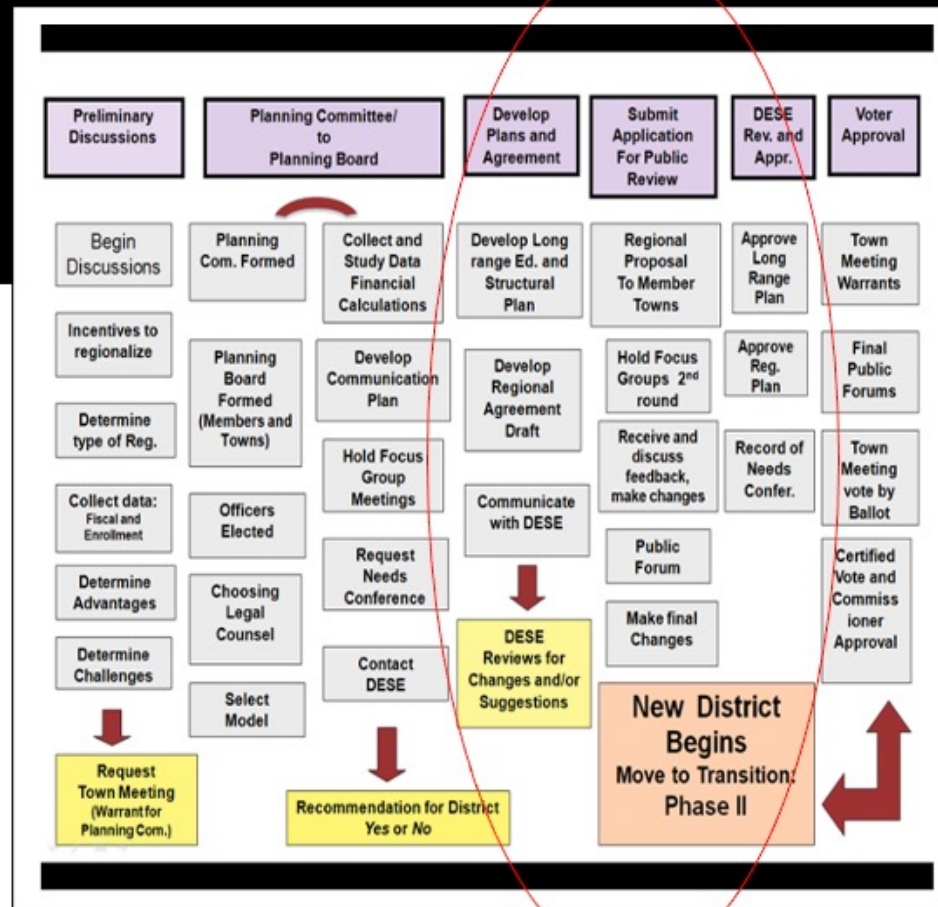
AUGUST 4TH, 1:30PM

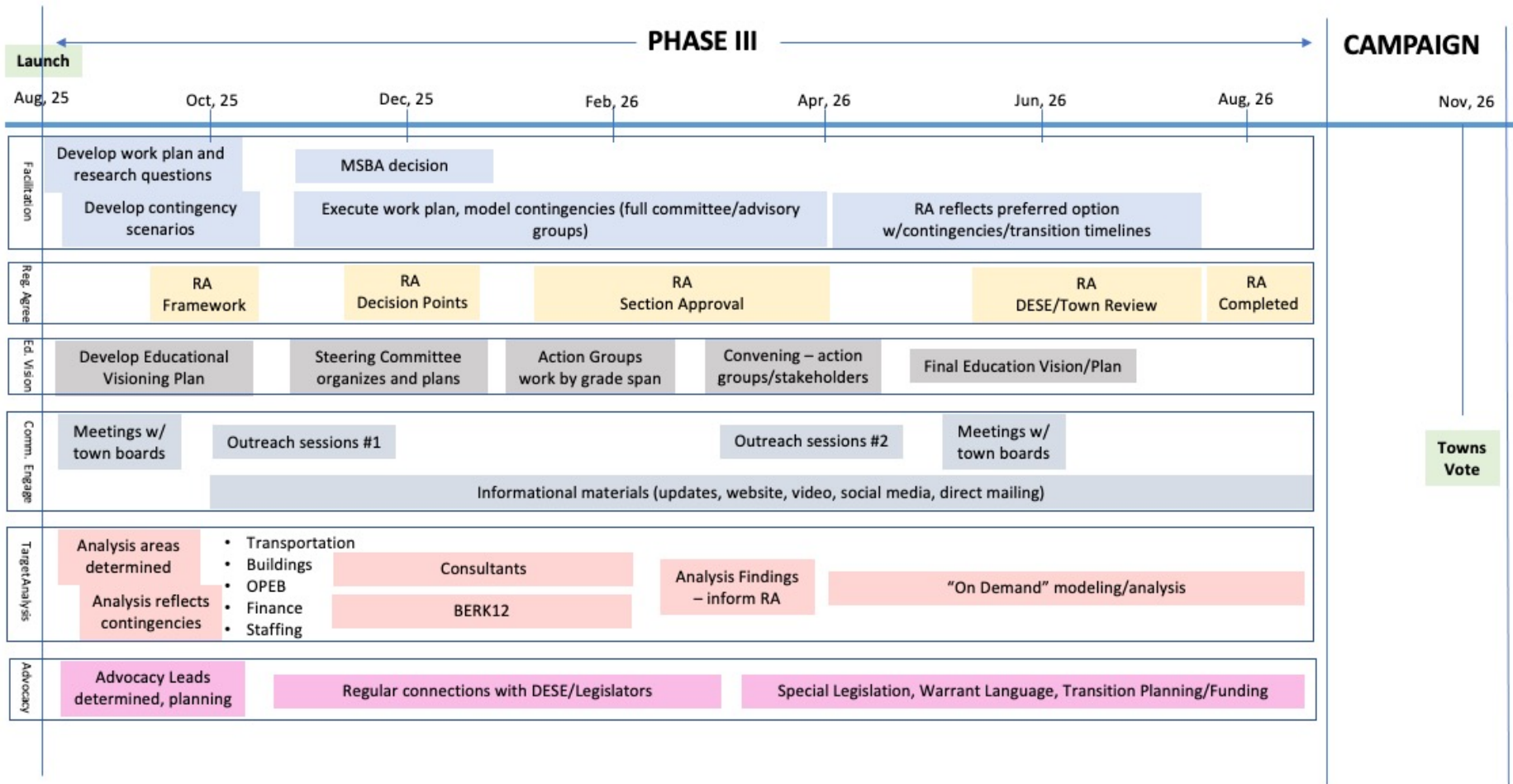
REGIONAL AGREEMENT

Pathway to Regionalization (DESE)

Form/Expand/Enlarge

- Cover, Intro, Phase I, Phase II
- DESE Communication!
 - Needs Conference
 - Long Range Educational & Structural Plan
 - Community engagement
 - Guidance by functional areas (tech to staffing)





TRANSITION (2 FISCAL YEARS)

The Impact of School Closures

June 2025 (Version 7.1.25)

J. eberwein

Purpose.

The purpose of this brief is to provide a high-level review of research as relates to consolidation and school closures, with a consideration towards rural schools. Questions regarding the impact of school closures on a community, the local economy, workforce and property values - as examples - have been consistently raised among MTRSD/HRSD stakeholders. This brief attempts to address some of those questions. The purpose of doing so is to further inform the 2D8T Sustainability Study.

To start this memo, it's important to underscore that all research is limited, and specific context matters. While research findings and themes are drawn from, no study perfectly predicts any future scenario because every school, district, and community is unique. Rather, research can inform, somewhat imperfectly, decisions by considering results drawn from these case studies. Moreover, for some questions the body of research is quite small, and for other questions the findings from available studies is mixed (conflicted), with closures/consolidation/regionalization having both positive and negative consequences. Weighing the value of potential gains against risks can be informed by reviewing research findings in "like" scenarios.

Below, several questions will be asked and answered, recognizing this brief is not exhaustive but rather provides, for consideration, a broad overview. It is a starting point. The following questions will be asked/answered:

- Is there a right sized school?
- Is there a right sized district?
- What does literature say (generally) about the impact of consolidation?
- How do schools, if at all, impact property (home) values?
- How do school closures (generally and if at all) influence property values?
- Do school closures have a particular impact in rural areas?
- If a rural district consolidated schools (closing some but not all) into a new contemporary facility, does that change the impact for students, staff and community?
- How can a district/community mitigate against the negative effects of school closures?
- How can districts support students, staff, and family members during a school closure?
- Given the challenges associated with rural schools including factors such as declining enrollment, travel distances, limited funding, school closures - and the like - are there recommended/proven solutions?
- If a school closes, how can the facility be repurposed?
- Case Study, a selection
- References, alpha

DRAFT BRIEF

BERK12



Sponsors and Funding Supporters



BERK₁₂

Berkshire Educational Resources K12
AUGUST 2, 2025

www.berk12.org
info@berk12.org



Next meeting....?