

Berkshire Educational Resources K12 **VIEWBOOK 2025**

***We bring schools and
community partners together***

Learn more at berk12.org



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

For nearly a decade, BERK12 has worked to bring together school districts, educators, and the communities they serve to strengthen education across Berkshire County. As we reflect on this journey, we are reminded of both the challenges and the promise of our collective work.

Our fundamental focus has always been on the fact that our county's cities and towns face intense pressures from rising operating costs while also carrying the responsibility of providing effective, efficient, and high-quality schools. This tension is real, and it requires collaboration, creativity, and a willingness to explore new and promising solutions. BERK12 exists because no single district or community in our region can address these challenges alone. We are stronger, and the education we offer our students can be better, when we work together.

Throughout this viewbook you will see examples of what that collaboration looks like in practice. From the Berkshire multi-district *Portrait of a Graduate* initiative to cross-district professional development, from sustainability studies to expanded preschool access, BERK12 has become a means for ideas to take root and partnerships to thrive. These efforts are not only about improving districts' academic programs and educational excellence; they also can create conditions for pathways to long-term fiscal sustainability.

We are proud of the progress that has been made, but we are also aware that there is more work to be done. The future of public education in Berkshire County depends on our shared commitment to ensuring that every child whom our school districts are charged with educating has access to a full range of educational opportunities, and that every community has schools they can sustain and celebrate.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support in this important work. Together, we can meet today's challenges and build a stronger future for our students and our region.

With gratitude,

Andrea Wadsworth, BERK12 Chair, 2025

William Cameron, BERK12 Chair, 2026



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ABOUT BERK12

About

Founded in 2015, Berkshire Educational Resources K12 (BERK12) is a group of local educators, business and nonprofit leaders, school leaders, and community members dedicated to strengthening PreK-12 education in Berkshire County, MA. BERK12 came together to address challenges such as long-term enrollment declines, strained school finances, and disparities in educational opportunity. Through collaborative efforts, we are addressing the challenges of being a largely rural region and have created a model that can be replicated. Berkshire Community College serves as fiscal sponsor for BERK12.

Mission

BERK12's mission is to support Berkshire County school districts and educators 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.



I really commend and appreciate the teachers and education professionals of Berkshire County taking the time to make sure that we're the best we can be and doing it together.

-- MA State Senator Paul Mark

MAJOR AREAS OF FOCUS

Collaborative projects

BERK12 leads cross-district groups of educators and community partners on projects that address regional education needs such as **Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate, Study Action Teams, technology integration, out of school time partnerships, and district partnerships.**

Professional development

BERK12 coordinates and creates professional development experiences including **countywide trainings, educator coaching, mentoring and new teacher induction, Professional Learning Networks,** and more. These offerings provide an opportunity for educators to enhance their skills and share knowledge with colleagues in other districts.

Networking and advocacy

BERK12 connects educators with one another as well as with community organizations, funding sources, elected officials, and businesses. **Networking events** bring together stakeholders to address critical educational issues and challenges. BERK12 **advocates** for funds and resources that support rural public education.

Sustainability

BERK12 analyzes current conditions for public school districts and creates models and projections that will help sustain them into the future. We work together with districts and local communities to **co-create options** for enhancing educational quality, efficiency, and equity. Current work is focused on a **Sustainability Study** for the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts, as well as exploring possible sustainability initiatives in Berkshire County.



COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate

The Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate (PoG) project, launched in January 2020, is in its fourth phase, fostering effective teaching and learning practices while integrating core competencies into classroom instruction. The collaboration involves six high schools: Berkshire Arts and Technology (BART) Charter Public School, Drury High School, Hoosac Valley Regional High School, Monument Mountain Regional High School, Pittsfield High School, and Taconic High School.

Progress has been made in establishing systems such as instructional rounds and Looking at Student Work (LASW) protocols, with an emphasis on strategies that make student thinking visible. These collaborative efforts are designed to build capacity among school and district leaders, along with cultivating exemplary classroom teachers.

Following extensive community outreach, the six competencies shown in the graphic below were identified as being the most essential for students to develop.



Partner schools are integrating Portrait competencies into their classrooms, programs, and activities. The implementation of instructional rounds and LASW protocols has begun to build a shared, cross-district vision for effective teaching practices.

The Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate network has also moved beyond soliciting feedback to empowering students as genuine partners and leaders. Hundreds of students have participated in student voice summits where they engaged in meaningful dialogue about their learning experiences. This has led to actionable changes in school culture, safety, and instruction.

Berkshire Portrait of a Graduate has really transformed our ability to tap into resources outside of our individual schools and collaborate with each other to move our schools forward under a single vision.

**--Kristen Negrini, English Teacher and PoG Facilitator
Pittsfield High School**

BRAINworks - Berkshire Regional Arts Integration Network

BRAINworks facilitates a cross-sector collective impact initiative that connects arts learning to larger regional goals, including community engagement, career readiness, prosocial opportunities for youth, placemaking, and connection to Berkshire County. The initiative is comprised of two key components: professional development for Berkshire County educators and a professional learning network for arts organizations.

- **BRAINworks Professional Development Program** is an arts integration professional development program for Berkshire County educators across PreK-12 classrooms that leverages the region's existing arts/cultural assets.
- **Berkshire Cultural Assets Network** is a professional learning network for arts education and community engagement staff working at Berkshire County 501(c)3 arts/cultural organizations.



Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI)



BERK12 is proud to support Pittsfield Public Schools and its early childhood community partners through the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative. CPPI grants are awarded to high-need districts to strengthen local collaboration and expand access to high-quality preschool. BERK12's role has included facilitating a comprehensive needs assessment, conducting partner meetings, authoring the strategic plan, writing the grant, and supporting key subcommittees. Partners include Berkshire County Head Start, KidZone, Boys & Girls Club of the Berkshires, 18 Degrees, and the Gladys Allen Brigham Community Center. The grant will help create a more streamlined, accessible preschool registration process for Pittsfield families, ultimately increasing equitable access to early learning.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Countywide PD Day and teacher gatherings

BERK12 sponsors an annual Professional Development (PD) Day for all Berkshire County educators. Held each year in November, the PD Day brings together over 1,200 educators from throughout the County by offering a wide range of professional development workshops across educational content areas, from STEM and the arts to special education, history, and classroom management. This gathering provides an opportunity for educators to share their expertise, hear what others are doing, and interact with staff from other districts. Several community partners serve as presenters.

In addition, BERK12 hosts teacher gatherings that provide opportunities for connection and support. Recent offerings were:

1) **Educators, Time Out: What's on your Plate?**, an evening of wine, cheese, and conversation around balancing wellbeing with the demands of teaching, and 2) **Nourish & Thrive: Taking Care of Your Body**, focused on fueling your body with life and intention.

Collaboration has been the cornerstone of my growth as an educator. We have shared experiences, best practices, and strategies and that not only helps us be better but has also created a sense of belonging and community.

--Yamila Badui, Spanish teacher, Taconic High

New teacher induction and mentoring training

BERK12 facilitates comprehensive mentoring and induction experiences aligned with state guidelines. These programs support both new and upcoming educators and the teachers that mentor them, fostering retention, professional growth, and instructional excellence.



New teacher induction. This 7-week after-school training program provides targeted, practical support for new educators. Topics covered are classroom management, learning assessments, working with special populations, and building strong school-home partnerships. The training fosters confidence, builds instructional competencies, and creates meaningful opportunities for collaboration.

Mentor training. Each August, a full-day training prepares experienced educators to take on the vital role of mentoring new educators and guiding them through their first years in the profession. Topics such as standards-based planning, culturally responsive and differentiated instruction, and conferencing and feedback practices are covered.

Professional Learning Networks

BERK12 supports the Berkshire County Professional Learning Networks (PLNs), which are year-round multidisciplinary learning communities organized by educational role type. The PLNs meet in person and virtually throughout the school year, exchanging ideas, sharing information, solving common problems, and engaging in training. The networks serve as ongoing professional development for their members.

There are eight PLNs in the following areas:

- Arts (music, visual, and performing arts)
- English Language Learners
- Foreign language
- History, social studies, civics
- Physical education
- School nurses
- School psychologists
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)



Study Action Teams

BERK12 sponsors the following three Study Action teams, which engage in cross-district collaborations:

- **Out of School Time (OST) Study Action Team.** This team strengthens Berkshire County's OST network by creating opportunities for partners to collaborate. Recent activities include virtual workshops and a networking event; updating a database of OST partners, school coordinators, and potential funders; and conducting a needs assessment.
- **Educational Technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI).** A group of educators works together to address key issues in educational technology and AI practices. They have developed and hosted professional learning sessions and outlined priorities regarding the responsible use of AI. The team provides professional learning opportunities and plans to survey educators to better understand their use of these tools.
- **School and District Leadership.** This study team of school and higher education administrators examines the current state of school and district leadership in the Berkshire region. They have reviewed literature highlighting the positive impact of strong leadership on educational outcomes and identified strategies to strengthen leadership capacity in the Berkshires.

I spend a lot of time in back and forth emails with partners, and this [OST networking] event provided the space to have meaningful conversations about work being done and work we'd like to collaborate on in the future.

--Annie Pecor
Assistant Superintendent of
North Adams Public Schools,
OST Coordinator

NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY

Berkshire Stands Together Alliance

The Berkshire Stands Together Alliance (BSTA) came together in 2023 when local organizations met to discuss how to respond to a rash of local identity-based bias incidents. In addition to BERK12, partners are the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, the Anti-Defamation League of New England, Berkshire Health Systems, the Berkshire County District Attorney's Office, the City of Pittsfield, the local chapter of NAACP, local school districts, and local businesses and community organizations.

Recent activities of BSTA include support for the Jewish Federation's **Hate Has No Home Here** campaign, the creation of a resource guide outlining anti-bias and hatred activities in Berkshire County, and support for the **Changemakers for Good** initiative, an anti bias/hatred program currently in six Berkshire County school districts and growing.



Educator Convenings

BERK12 periodically hosts convenings that bring together educators with community and business leaders, elected officials, and students. These sessions provide an opportunity to share the progress and outcomes of BERK12's work in the community and discuss ways to address critical issues in education.

Recent convenings have featured discussions about enrollment trends, challenges in education, collaboration and regionalization among school districts, and highlights of BERK12 initiatives.

At a recent gathering, when asked to identify opportunities for the future, attendees stressed the need to share resources that support learning, build regional networks, work together on advocacy, and build a talent pipeline.

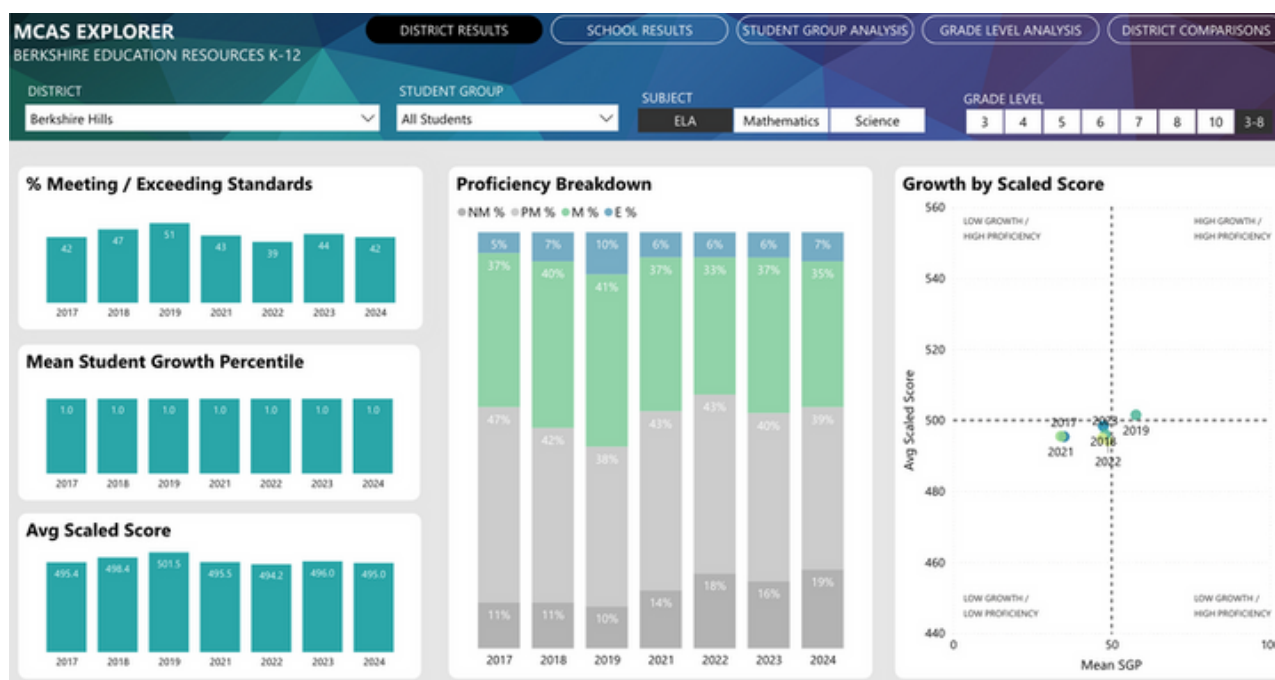


Dashboard

[BERK12.ORG/DASHBOARD](https://berk12.org/dashboard)

Overview. The BERK12.org website features four interactive dashboards, designed in partnership with Open Architects. The dashboards provide accurate, timely data about educational trends and outcomes in Berkshire County in the areas of academics, enrollment, finance, and MCAS.

The data can be broken down by school, district, and other subcategories, providing a resource for districts and community partners to retrieve data needed for reporting, grant applications, and analysis. The dashboards are also useful for community members who want to know more about the schools in the region. As shown below, the MCAS dashboard provides information such as growth percentile, scores, and proficiency levels.



Description of dashboards.

- The **Academic Dashboard** provides data on high school academics and outcomes along with post-high school data. It features SAT and Advanced Placement test scores, graduation rates, and college attendance patterns.
- The **Enrollment Dashboard** features student enrollment data broken down by town, district, grade level, and various demographics. There is also information about student choice patterns in and out of districts.
- The **Finance Dashboard** includes a wide range of data about state aid, school choice, staffing, net school spending (NSS), and per pupil costs.
- The **MCAS Explorer Dashboard** provides breakdowns of MCAS scores and proficiency rates for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. The data is useful for examining MCAS scores over time and comparing results among districts.

SUSTAINABILITY

2Districts8Towns

BERK12 is working with the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont regional school districts to conduct an ongoing study and analysis as the districts seek ways to ensure their long-term sustainability. The project, branded as the **2districts8towns (2D8T) Sustainability Study**, encompasses the Western Massachusetts towns of Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Hawley, Heath, Plainfield, and Shelburne. The BERK12 team is comprised of consultants with expertise in educational design, program development, community outreach, school finances, and school building infrastructure.



Purpose of study. The 2D8T study was designed to identify the best options for providing a high-quality education that prepares students for future success in college, career, and life, while considering educational and fiscal opportunities and challenges. Like many rural areas across the Northeast, the region faces challenges with declining enrollment, rising operational costs, relatively flat state aid, and increasing student needs.

Stage 1. The first stage of work focused on collecting data on enrollment, current educational programming, fiscal conditions, and building infrastructure. BERK12 consultants engaged with the community by making school visits, analyzing school data, and conducting surveys and community meetings to gather perspectives about the districts and schools.

Stage 2. The next stage involved a deep dive and analysis of the data that was gathered in Stage 1. This resulted in generating options for moving forward.

Stage 3. Next, potential operating models that offer a more sustainable future for the schools and member towns were presented and discussed in community settings. BERK12 generated a final report identifying preferred models for moving forward and recommended next steps.

Ultimately, the 2D8T Steering Committee adopted the goal of organizing all students and staff onto a single PreK-12 campus on the Mohawk Trail Regional School (MTRS) campus, to occur in phases over several years. Both of the districts' school committees approved this recommendation. BERK12 will continue to provide support in research, analysis and community outreach for the Sustainability Study as it moves into the next phase of work. Visit 2districts8towns.org to learn more.

Past work and future growth

Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB).

From 2020-23, BERK12 worked with Southern Berkshire County's Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB) researching and modeling potential collaboration and regionalization options for the Berkshire Hills and Southern Berkshire Regional School Districts. BERK12's role was to conduct public outreach through meetings and surveys, manage the steering committee and working teams, develop options, and create detailed models for and analysis of the preferred option.

After considering various options, the RSDPB steering committee recommended that the two districts merge and create a shared high school while keeping elementary and middle schools intact. To implement the recommendation, residents of all eight towns in the two districts would have had to approve a merger agreement at a special town meeting. Ultimately, four towns voted in favor and four were opposed. The process, however, was an important step forward in considering the future sustainability of education in Southern Berkshire County.

Growing towards the future.

In addition to working closely with Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts, BERK12 has had discussions with districts in Northern Berkshire County and other nearby districts, such as the 6 town regionalization planning board, about potentially helping with future regionalization efforts. The research and community outreach process for the RSDPB and 2D8T initiatives has provided a valuable template for further research work.

BERK12 also has the potential for future work in expanding professional development offerings, bringing additional districts into the Portrait of a Graduate work, and providing districts with customized assistance that helps them face challenges in providing high quality education while managing costs.

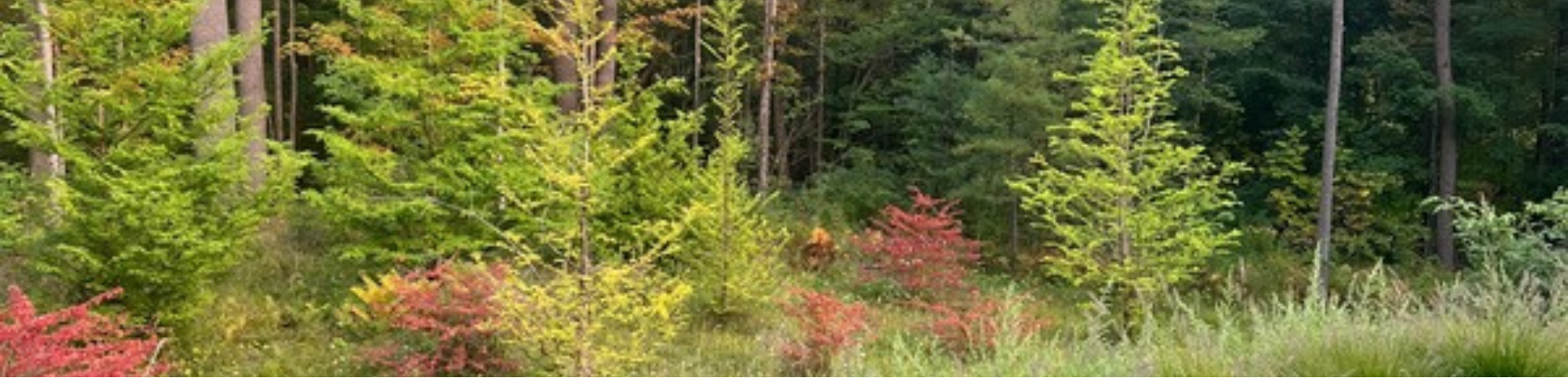




LIST OF BERK12 SERVICES

BERK12 is our region's most comprehensive cross-sector organization focused on education. We are eager to collaboratively improve educational systems and structures in our schools. Below is a list of services available to our partners in the Berkshire County region and beyond. Services can be customized to meet the needs of districts.

- **Sustainability and District Reorganization:** Analyzing current conditions, modeling and projecting, and co-creating options that meet a district and community's needs to enhance educational quality, efficiency, and equity.
- **Project Management and Facilitation:** Organizing, leading, and co-developing district projects for success that engage community stakeholders.
- **Research Partnerships:** Collaborating with school districts and other organizations on projects to generate new knowledge and best practices that support public awareness and decision making.
- **Program Evaluation:** Evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs, interventions, and initiatives using a rigorous mixed-methods research approach.
- **Professional Development:** Coordinating and creating PD experiences, educator coaching, New Teacher Induction, and more.
- **Team Building, Mediation, and Community Outreach:** Supporting districts and stakeholders to work better together, along with community focused outreach and engagement efforts.
- **Educator Networking Workshops:** Designing and leading after-school sessions that support teacher well-being through hands-on activities such as nutrition, exercise, mindfulness, and creative expression.
- **Needs Assessments:** Conducting comprehensive needs assessments across schools and districts to identify areas for improvement in student learning, school culture, and climate.
- **Working with School Committees:** Conducting working sessions to help school committees address key issues and challenges, and strengthen their effectiveness.
- **Policy Analysis:** Analyzing current policy and practice to support improved student outcomes, enhance district operations, and revised policy changes.
- **Strategic Planning:** Assisting school districts in developing and implementing strategic plans to improve student outcomes and achieve long range goals.
- **Grant Writing:** Assisting in securing funding for educational programs and initiatives.



PARTNERS

We are grateful for the support and involvement of our local and statewide partners:

Barr Foundation
Berkshire Community Action Council
Berkshire Community College
Berkshire County's school districts
Berkshire Legislative Delegation
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
Berkshire United Way
Commonwealth of Massachusetts/Community Compact Funding
Feigenbaum Foundation
Gilson Family Foundation
Lee Bank
Massachusetts Association of School Committees
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
Massachusetts Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funding
Massachusetts Teachers Association
MassHire Workforce Board
Mill Town Capital
National Endowment for the Arts
Williams College

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For more information about BERK12, please visit our website: berk12.org



Berk12.org