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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ‘BERKSHIRE COUNTY GOES TO COLLEGE DAY’**

NORTH ADAMS, MA – The Berkshire Compact for Education has announced it will hold its third annual “Berkshire County Goes to College” week during the week of April 12.

The initiative – which provides the opportunity for every sixth-grade student in the County to visit a local college campus in early April – is part of an effort to raise awareness of college in Berkshire County residents at an early age. Nearly 1,300 sixth graders are expected to participate with a visit to a college campus this year.

The sixth-grade students will visit one of four Berkshire County college campuses – Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), Williams College, Berkshire Community College (BCC) or Bard College at Simon’s Rock. The visit is part of the Berkshire Higher Education Passport – a plan to help improve access to a college education. The Passport was developed to encourage Berkshire County students to obtain 16 or more years of education and training.

On April 14, students from Lanesborough Elementary School, Sullivan Elementary School in North Adams, and C.T. Plunkett School in Adams will visit MCLA. Activities will include a chemistry experiment, some hands-on fun in the physics lab, a visit to the College’s television studio where they will produce a mock TV show, opportunities to meet with faculty and students, and a tour of campus. New this year will be “The Art of College”, a workshop that deals with size modeling lead by Art professor Melanie Mowinski. Another feature will be a “Bringing Literature to Life” workshop with MCLA English Professor Rosanne Denhard and her students.

On April 16, students from Undermountain Elementary School in Sheffield and Monument Valley School in Great Barrington will visit MCLA.

Students from Clarksburg Elementary School, Greylock Elementary School in North Adams, Lee Elementary School, and Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter Public School (BArT) in Adams will visit BCC on April 13. On April 14, students from Nessacus Regional Middle School in Dalton will visit BCC.

Students from John T. Reid Middle School in Pittsfield and Lenox Memorial Middle/High School will visit Bard College at Simon's Rock on April 13.

On April 14, students from Cheshire Elementary School, Brayton Elementary School in North Adams, Herberg Middle School in Pittsfield, Richmond Consolidated School, Abbott Memorial School in Florida, Hancock Elementary School, and Williamstown Elementary School will visit Williams College.

A new initiative for the Compact includes collaborations with early childhood educators. The week of April 12 is also The Week of the Young Child. The theme for 2010 is *Early Years are Learning Years*.~ During this week, the Compact will be raising visibility about both the sixth grade college visits and the importance of early childhood education.. One of the best predictors of whether a child will do well in school and go on to contribute actively in society is the child's progress in reading and writing. Although reading and writing abilities continue to develop throughout life, the early childhood years—from birth to age eight—are the most important period for literacy development.

For more information, contact MCLA's Office of Admission at 662-5410 or go to [www.mcla.edu/compact](http://www.mcla.edu/compact).