



Office of the President

August 21, 2009

Dr. Saeyun Lee
Executive Office of Education
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
One Ashburton Place, Suite 1403
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Dr. Lee:

We are pleased to submit this letter of intent to apply to establish a Readiness Center for Berkshire County. This proposed center will be aligned with the Commonwealth's vision for the Readiness Centers as collaborative hubs while reflecting the unique needs, opportunities, and partnerships of our region.

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) will serve as the lead partner in the Berkshire Readiness Center. Berkshire Community College (BCC) will be a key partner in the project. The regional partners for the center will be drawn from the membership of the Berkshire Compact for Education (the Compact). The Compact is comprised of dozens of leaders from the region, including legislators, educators, business executives and public officials. Andy Mick, publisher of the daily newspaper the *Berkshire Eagle*, and chair of the Berkshire Compact, has signed this letter on behalf of the membership. For your reference, a full list of Compact members and their organizational affiliations is attached.

The board of directors for the center will include the chair of the Berkshire Compact, the presidents of MCLA and BCC, and representatives of K-12 education (including vocational education), early childhood education, workforce development, the business community, and the Berkshire legislative delegation.

Planning for the Center has already begun. The partners are working closely with Donna Harlan, the Regional Assistance Director (RAD) assigned to the County. Members of the Berkshire County Superintendents' Roundtable will serve as K-12 representatives on the Readiness Center Board. A briefing for all partners will be held on August 24.

The Berkshire Readiness Center will leverage existing programs and initiatives such as the Berkshire STEM Pipeline Network, MCLA's Center for Professional Development, and the Berkshire Wireless Learning Initiative to support teacher preparation, professional development, and mentoring in order to advance student achievement and ensure that educators in the region have the tools and training to provide high-quality instruction to all Berkshire County students.

The Berkshire Readiness Center will build upon the work of the Compact, which has already made progress in addressing educational access and student aspirations in our region. Programs that promote the goals of the Compact and the Readiness agenda include the Berkshire County Goes to College campus visitation program, the BCC "Positive Options" alternative high school, a Berkshire STEM Fellowship program in astronomy for area teachers, and MCLA's Leadership Academy, a summer professional development program for emerging educational leaders. The partners in the Compact and the readiness center share a commitment to quality teaching across all grade levels. MCLA has a long history of teacher preparation in the region; the College's graduate education program provides instruction in both pedagogy and content, including programs in English, history, mathematics, science, reading, and instructional technology. Both BCC and MCLA offer professional development programs to support teachers in achieving their licensure and certification goals and advancing in their careers.

The Compact and its higher education partners have a track record of delivering innovative programming and instructional options for students. Among these are dual enrollment courses that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school, alternative high school for at-risk students, a Fast-Track accelerated degree program for adult learners, Accuplacer skills assessments, online courses, and courses delivered at satellite campus locations, such as the Intermodal Education Center in Pittsfield.

In addition to promoting and supporting these programs, the Readiness Center will define and collect performance data, and conduct needs and outcomes assessments based on articulated Compact and program goals. In addition, Readiness data will be aligned with other regional initiatives such as the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation (BEDC)'s Berkshire Blueprint and the database of demographic and economic data being developed by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

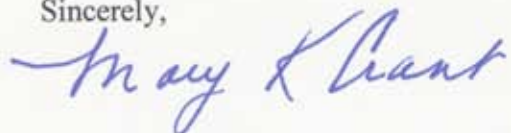
A number of area businesses and employers are represented as partners on the Compact. These include both individual employers representing the service, healthcare, cultural, finance, and nonprofit sectors, as well as business and workforce organizations such as the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, BEDC, and the Berkshire Regional Employment Board.

Through engagement with these stakeholders, the Berkshire Compact has made significant progress in a short time with limited resources. The Compact and its partners have been creative and innovative in use the modest funding that has supported the initiative to date. Compact initiatives have received significant in-kind support from the higher education partners and others.

In order to serve the needs of the entire county, we propose that the Berkshire Readiness Center will operate in three locations: Headquartered at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, with additional sites on the BCC campus and at BCC's South County Center in Great Barrington. These centers will deliver information and serve as accessible locations to support the delivery of professional development resources, provide office space for the Regional Assistance Director and other Readiness staff, and ensure access to all constituents across the region. We have already taken steps to provide Donna Harlan with a primary location and administrative support at MCLA; additional space has been identified at the other two sites as well.

We look forward to submitting a full proposal, and to being part of this important statewide initiative. If you have any questions, please contact MCLA President Mary Grant at 413-662-5201 or Mary.Grant@mcla.edu. Thank you.

Sincerely,



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



Paul E. Raverta, Ed.D.
President, Berkshire Community College



Andy Mick
Chair, Berkshire Compact
(on behalf of the Compact membership)

Rose Ellis
Chair, Berkshire County Superintendents' Roundtable



Berkshire Compact Members

Jane Allen, Board of Trustees, MCLA
Kathy Amuso, Chair, Pittsfield School Committee
Peter Andersen, Guidance Director, Lenox High School
Keith Babuszcak, Assistant Superintendent, Pittsfield Public Schools
William Ballen, Superintendent/Special Education Director, Shaker Mountain School Union #70
Maureen Baran, Board Chair, Northern Berkshire United Way
Ellen Barber, Education Department, MCLA
Mayor John Barrett III, City of North Adams
Al Bashevkin, Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
Representative Daniel Bosley
Heather Boulger, Executive Director, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board
James Brosnan, Superintendent, Charles H. McCann Vocational Technical School
Kerry Burke, Principal, Lee High School
Jim Canavan, Director, Northern Berkshire United Way
Roselle Chartock, Education Department, MCLA
William Coan, Retired Superintendent, Lenox Public Schools
Gina Coleman, Dean of Student Affairs, Williams College
Christa Collier, Gladys Allen Brigham Community Center
David Crane, Excelsior Printing
Eugene Dellea, President, Fairview Hospital
Senator Benjamin Downing
Lise Dube-Scherr, Norman Rockwell Museum
Donald Dubendorf, Attorney at Law
Jake Eberwein, Superintendent, Pittsfield Public Schools
Rose Ellis, Superintendent, Williamstown Elementary School
Mary Farley, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board
Frances Feinerman, Dean of Academic Studies, Berkshire Community College
Anne French, Service-Learning Program Director, North Adams Public Schools
Mary Grant, President, MCLA
Representative Denis Guyer
Julie Hannum, Berkshire Tech Prep Consortium Director, Berkshire Community College
Kristine Hazzard, Executive Director, Berkshire United Way
James Kolesar, Assistant to the President, Williams College
Peter Kopcha, Director, Southern Berkshire Educational Collaborative
Peter Larkin, Public Policy Advisors
Ron Latham, Director, Berkshire Athenaeum
Eugene Leibowitz, Board of Trustees, MCLA
John Lipa, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board

Susan Lombard, Board of Trustees, Berkshire Community College
Pamela Malumphy, Regional Director, Massachusetts Office of Business Development
Mary Marcy, Provost, Bard College at Simon's Rock
Sheriff Carmen Massimiano, Berkshire County
Doug McNally, Principal, Taconic High School
Brooke Mead, Berkshire Immigrant Center
Andy Mick, Chair, Berkshire Compact
James Montepare, Superintendent, North Adams Public Schools
Kathy Morgan, Guidance Director, Drury High School
William Mulholland, Dean of Lifelong Learning, Berkshire Community College
Robert Nason, Town Manager, Lee
Ann Nemetz-Carlson, Childcare of the Berkshires
Andrea Nuciforo, Registrar of Deeds
Nancy Ovitsky, Business Administration Department, MCLA
Representative Smitty Pignatelli
Paul Raverta, President, Berkshire Community College
Denise Richardello, Vice President of External Relations & Enrollment Management, MCLA
David Rooney, President, Berkshire Economic Development Corporation
June Roy-Martin, Quality Printing
Mayor James Ruberto, City of Pittsfield
Tina Schettini, Admissions, Berkshire Community College
Ann Scott, Education Department, MCLA
Arthur Scott, Vice President, Northern Berkshire Healthcare Systems
Rhonda Serre, Vice President, MassDevelopment
Heather Shogry, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board
Al Skrocki, Superintendent, Adams-Cheshire Regional School District
Ray Smith, Berkshire Visitors Bureau
Representative Chris Speranzo
Eloise Stevens, Executive Director, Berkshire County Head Start
Susan Strong, Principal, Lenox Memorial High School
Michael Supranowicz, President & CEO Berkshire Chamber of Commerce
Joseph Thompson, Director, MASS MoCA
William Travis, Superintendent, Mt. Greylock Regional School District
Sarah Vega, Berkshire Life Insurance Company of America
Sandra Zink, Retired Director of Human Resources, Interprint, Inc.

Mary Nash, Project Coordinator, Berkshire Compact