

# **Berkshire Compact and Berkshire Readiness Center**

## **Berkshire Compact**

The Berkshire Compact is a county-wide initiative focused on promoting a continuum of education in Berkshire County from pre-K through higher education and beyond. The Compact serves all Berkshire County residents, with the premise that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, should have the opportunity to aspire to higher education. The Berkshire Compact is comprised of a group of more than 70 civic, education and business leaders, including the entire Berkshire legislative delegation as well as the mayors of Pittsfield and North Adams.

The four goals of the Berkshire Compact are:

1. Raise the aspirations of all Berkshire County residents to view 16 years of education or greater as the accepted norm.
2. Improve access to education, training and lifelong learning.
3. Advance technology so that Berkshire County remains a competitive location for knowledge-based economies; make Berkshire County residents among the most technologically educated populations in New England.
4. Develop a new “social contract” among employers, employees and educational institutions that encourages and promotes learning, earning and civic engagement.

Working groups meet on a regular basis to advance each of the Compact’s four goals. Some of the current projects of the Berkshire Compact are a marketing campaign to reach families, college visits for third and sixth graders, county-wide professional development, Student Town Meetings, workplace readiness skills, advancing the STEM initiative and a Youth Leadership Program. The Compact has introduced the Berkshire Passport, which identifies pathways that make higher education accessible to everyone and offers an itinerary and rewards to students on the path to college.

The Berkshire Compact provides a structure that is ideal for implementing the Berkshire Readiness Center. Educators are already working with business, government and civic leaders to create an educational system that serves every Berkshire County resident. Building on the accomplishments since its inception in 2005 and successful collaborative relationships, the Compact will serve as the convener and organizational hub of the Berkshire Readiness Center.

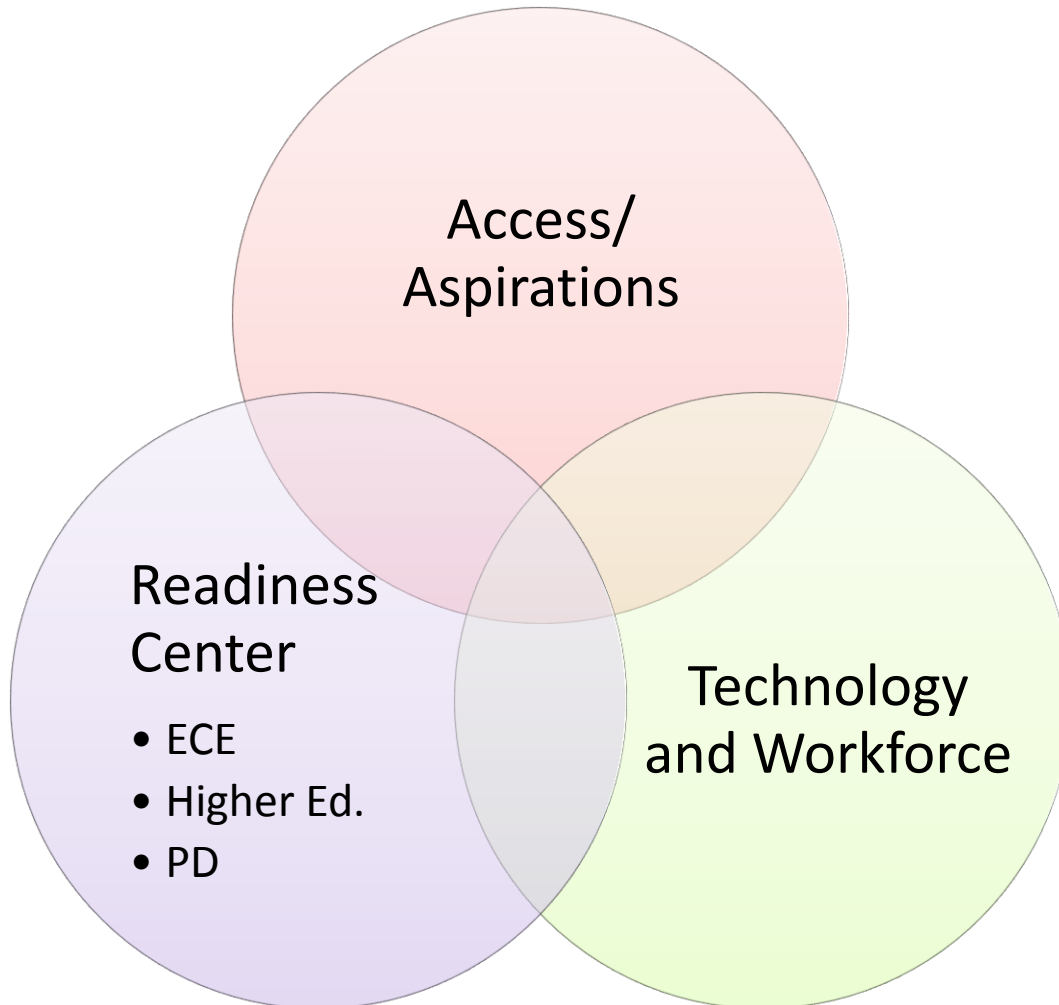
## **Berkshire Readiness Center**

While the Berkshire Compact continues to work toward meeting its four goals, the Readiness Center will provide a more focused effort on improving the quality of teaching from birth through higher education. The Berkshire Readiness Center shares all of the same goals as the Berkshire Compact and will build upon its organizational structure and collaborative relationships. In addition to meeting the broad goals of the Compact, the primary goals of the Berkshire Readiness Center as well as the other five regional Readiness Centers in the state are:

1. Improve the quality of teaching across the education continuum by increasing the content knowledge of educators and supporting the development and implementation of effective instructional practices.
2. Improve the quality of professional development and learning opportunities for educators.
3. Maximize existing resources and deliver professional development and instructional services more effectively and efficiently.
4. Drive policy improvements based on the innovative instructional practices that are developed.

The Berkshire Readiness Center will collaborate with local, regional and state partners to coordinate the delivery of professional development and instructional services that are already being provided and determine how to provide additional services. As part of a state-wide network, the center will have the opportunity to collaborate with other Readiness Centers and state partners to identify statewide trends and coordinate the distribution of professional development and instructional services and other resources.

The governance of the Berkshire Readiness Center will expand upon the Compact's structure. Compact members will also serve as the Board of Directors for the Readiness Center. The Compact's Executive Committee will be expanded to include broader representation. One or more working groups will be established to focus on the goals of the Readiness Center. Through its lead partners, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Berkshire Community College, the Readiness Center will build upon a comprehensive array of existing programs to serve the training needs of educators.



**The Readiness Center will overlap with the goals of the Berkshire Compact while providing a comprehensive approach to professional development for early childhood and K-12 educators.**