



For Immediate Release

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BART Applies for Early Charter Renewal, An Increased Enrollment Cap and the Addition of Pittsfield to its Charter Region

The Board of Trustees of the Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter Public School (BART) submitted requests to renew its charter early, modestly increase the cap on the number of students enrolled from 308 to 363, and include Pittsfield among the cities and towns that the regional school is chartered to serve. These requests are necessary to address an increased interest in the school, largely due to BART students' strong academic success.

In the next charter period, the BART Board of Trustees and the BART Foundation propose a facility expansion to create an auditorium that will support a robust theater arts program and accommodate whole-school meetings. The auditorium space will double as a lunch space. In addition, there will be a dedicated fitness space that will allow the school to use the array of equipment purchased through various fitness grants. The current building will be reconfigured to create science labs, a new library/study hall and additional classrooms. These facility changes will be possible when the school refinances its current long-term debt. In the meantime, work has just completed this summer to convert a community room into a classroom to accommodate a full complement of 308 students.

Over the last four years, BART has demonstrated solid academic success and parents have expressed strong satisfaction with the school. As a result, enrollment has grown to 308 students with a waitlist. To accommodate the growing interest in BART, the school has applied for an increase to its enrollment cap, moving from 308 to 363 students. This increase would allow BART to have 3 sections in each middle school grade and 2 sections in each high school grade. BART will still be a small school where teachers are able to know each student and form strong supportive relationships with them.

The enrollment growth has been achieved in part by attracting, through word of mouth, a growing number of students from Pittsfield; in 2012-2013, 35% of BART's student body will come from Pittsfield. State law (MGL. c.71, s. 89) requires that if any town represents more than 20% of student enrollment for two successive years, an application must be made to add it to the charter area. If the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approves the addition of Pittsfield to BART's charter region, it will go into effect for the 2013-2014 school year.

Additional information about BART's students' achievements and the renewal and amendment requests can be found at www.bartcharter.org.

About BART

BART is a nationally recognized, award-winning, tuition-free public middle and high school focused on preparing students for college. One hundred percent of BART's graduates have passed a college course and have been accepted into college prior to graduation. BART's MCAS results demonstrate the typical BART student grows more than the typical student at any other middle or high school in Berkshire County; the school's MCAS results are also among the highest in the state. BART does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, homelessness or age.