

BART

a college prep charter school

BART Expansion: Pittsfield and More

BART students have continued to succeed, and the student body has grown over the past 9 years. But even success has its downside: BART has not been able to accept every applicant and has had to choose among them by lottery.

So BART and the community will both benefit from the three decisions the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education made in January, accepting BART's requests to:

- increase BART's enrollment cap from 308 to 363 students;
- include Pittsfield among the cities and towns our school is officially chartered to serve;
- and renew BART's charter for a third 5-year term.

In recent years, BART has not had enough seats to meet the demand for interested students, especially in 6th grade. An increase in the enrollment cap will allow the school to serve more students, thus limiting the need for waitlists and student lotteries.

Pittsfield students will now receive the same enrollment preference as students in Northern Berkshire County. When

students are accepted at BART through a lottery, state law requires that the students in the school's defined region receive preference over those from other Massachusetts cities and towns.



BART's enlarged enrollment cap should also allow the school to make a modest expansion to our physical plant to meet our program needs. In the near future, we hope to have a real fitness space, auditorium and cafeteria!

Finally, students can feel confident that their documented success is recognized by the state, and that BART is here to stay. "These decisions represent a vote of confidence in BART;



we are grateful that the state recognizes our students' successes and wants to expand the opportunity to attend BART to so many more," said BART Executive Director Julia Bowen. ✨

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Community Members Come Together to Support BART Seniors

BART has high expectations for its seniors. Between choosing (and being accepted into) a college, completing an outside internship, and successfully completing a college course, our seniors have a lot to fit into their last year of high school. This winter, professionals from the community came out in force to support them.

The BART atrium filled with volunteers on the morning of December 6th. The senior class was in the midst of applying to colleges, and local professionals came in to help the students finalize their college essays. Each adult was paired with a student, and together they were able to edit and discuss the student's essay in detail. The event was a success and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants on both sides.

"In addition to getting feedback on my essay, I believe I made three real connections with community members," said one senior.

At BART, seniors must complete an 80-hour internship as a graduation requirement. In anticipation of this, human resources professionals and other members of the community came to the school on January 17th ready to help them prepare. Mock interviews were set up in the style and format



Volunteers help to prepare students for real-world job interviews

of "speed-dating," giving the seniors a chance to hone their interview skills with five different professionals. Feedback was given and recorded throughout the morning, and students were able to identify



BART senior, Dean Covert, answers interview questions

strengths and weaknesses while forming interview strategies that should prove helpful for years to come.

What is really remarkable about these collaborations is that everyone benefits: The students are better prepared for the road ahead, and the community members take away a better understanding BART's mission and gain the satisfaction that comes when you volunteer. "I am very glad and honored

“ In addition to getting feedback on my essay, I believe I made three real connections with community members. ”

— BART senior

to have been part of the review and to connect with students on both an academic and social level. I'd relish the opportunity to do this again or to be able to mentor students in the future," said one participant of her experience. ✨

BART at the Apollo

BART's very own Trevon Tarrance is performing with his bucket drumming group, Youth Alive, at the world famous Apollo Theater in Harlem, NY on March 9th. Trevon first discovered bucket drumming through working with James Edgerton, a frequent visiting artist at BART. He and his group will have 90 seconds to audition and hopefully will move on to perform at Amateur Night at the Apollo.



KALEIGH SWIFT



Kaleigh Swift - Focused on College!

One thing that can be said of BART senior Kaleigh Swift is that she has a passion to learn. While all BART seniors are required to take a college class as a graduation requirement, Kaleigh will have taken six! In addition to her rigorous academic schedule, Kaleigh works at a diner in North Adams. She gets herself to school, work and college all without having her own car; Kaleigh often takes the bus or relies on friends for rides.

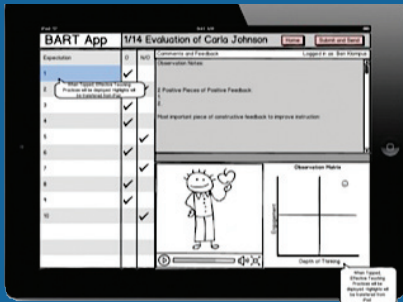
Kaleigh came to BART as an 8th grader with little to no college focus. She left BART to go to another school (although that only lasted for one day), and that experience helped her to realize that she wanted to go to college and that BART was her way to get there.

Of the 8 colleges to which Kaleigh has applied, she has thus far been accepted into 3: Simmons, Clark, and Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Kaleigh has also qualified as a John and Abigail Adams Scholar for her performances on MCAS tests and her grades at BART. As such, she is eligible to attend any Massachusetts public college or university tuition free. Kaleigh has yet to decide on her exact major, but she has narrowed it down to Nutrition, Pre-Med, or Pharmacy.

It's hard to imagine that such a dedicated and studious individual started off her career at BART with a poor attitude towards learning and school. When asked what sparked the change in her drive and focus she pointed back to the day she transferred from and then immediately back to BART: "I realized it was my future and no one was going to do it for me... I didn't want to learn a trade or be in front of a computer all day . . . I wanted to go to college!" ✨

Williams Students Design iPad App to Streamline BART's Teacher Observation Process

At BART, an important part of helping all of our students achieve academic success comes from our teacher evaluation process. BART's unique and dynamic approach fosters communication between teachers and the Principal, and helps to ensure that teachers are held to the highest standards. Creating tight communication feedback loops allows teachers to continuously improve their instruction.



With that in mind, we recently partnered with a Williams College Social Entrepreneurship Class; we asked a team of students to select or design an iPad application or "app" that would streamline our observation and feedback process. In short order, Brandon Abasolo, Rohan Bhatt, Emily Fox, Louisa Lee and Matt McNaughton came to BART, spent

time shadowing Principal Klompus, and identified the strengths and weaknesses of our current, somewhat labor-intensive system. They also considered what evaluation apps were already on the market. The team soon realized that the teacher evaluation apps currently on the market were lacking in critical areas that BART's process includes.

Their proposed solution: an app that would do everything that BART wanted and was designed to make the laborious process of teacher evaluation and data-analysis sharing easier, enabling administrators and teachers to spend less time crunching numbers and more time improving instruction. Combining video capabilities, an observation matrix, and a qualitative feedback section, this



Williams app designers field questions during a presentation

app is truly one of a kind. By tailoring it to our proven evaluation process, the students were able to create the "perfect" app for BART.

The Williams team made an impressive presentation of their work to an audience of board members, BART administrators and other Williams students in January. While their design work is over, the app is still a concept and has not yet been developed. We have been quoted a development price of approximately \$20,000. BART continues to be a technologically savvy and academically outstanding institution, and a tool such as this one can only bolster our success. Our goal now is to partner with a foundation or other organization to raise this money! 🌟

Focus on BART

On January 10th a busload of BART students headed to the Pittsfield Community Television studio to film two half-hour shows. PCTV allowed BART to dictate the content and format of the shows and produced them in association with the Miss Hall's School Horizons Program.

BART's Assistant Principal, Juraye Piereson, hosted the first segment, leading discussions with students Jake Bristol, Noah Chicoine, Shelby Davis, Raja King and Forrest McKnight. They covered topics ranging from transitioning to BART to the school's support of the students' interests and hobbies. Each of their stories allowed the viewer to better understand the value of BART as well as the tremendous effort put forth by the students.



Noah Chicoine discussing BART on PCTV

During a discussion about transitioning, Raja King shared that when she first came to BART it was with a negative attitude: "I hated being in class." But now the 9th grader says she knows "that education really is important, and I need it to succeed in the long run. I like going to school now, I feel comfortable, I feel welcomed, and I know I have teachers who are on my side."

During a dialogue about academic excellence, Noah Chicoine explained that, "at my old school I wasn't being challenged enough... but when I came to BART I knew I was being pushed right away... I was able to be challenged in all of my classes."

In the second segment, 11th grader Audrey Aka did an outstanding job as she interviewed seniors John Adams, Nicole Allen, Cassandra Chi-



Junior, Audrey Aka, interviews a panel of seniors about the college application process

coine and Dalton Lampro about the college preparation, selection and application process.

Audrey asked questions about what she could expect going into her senior year. The panel relayed advice and best practices. Also discussed was SAT prep, the importance of interviews and campus visits, and how to navigate it all. Then the students summed it all up, commenting on how busy senior year was between college classes, internships and preparing for college life. When one student said, "it's hard," the rest of the students replied "we can do it, we're BART kids!" 🌟



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Get BART Smart!



At 6:00 pm on Saturday, April 27th, the BART atrium will be transformed to host our annual event. *Get BART Smart* features trivia questions taken from our students' curriculum; teams try to outscore each other in categories like math and science, literature, and SAT questions. Food, drinks and dessert provided by Mezze Catering are included in the ticket price of \$65 per player. Find information and register your team at <http://www.bartcharter.org/news-events/gbs/index.html>. Individuals or couples welcome - we will build a team for you. See you there!

BART Briefs

■ After much debate, several votes, and discussions held in every classroom and at every lunch table, the 2012-2013 BART community voted to choose the wolf as its school mascot. Students related to the wolf's characteristic tenacity to solve problems in difficult situations, to seek out the path less traveled and, in times of difficulty, to call on its family for support in reaching goals.

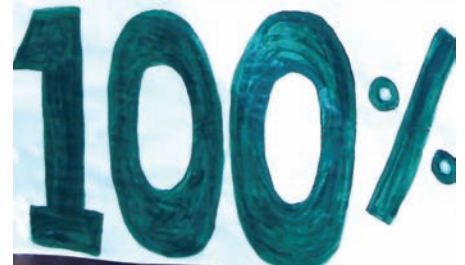
■ The work of four BART students was selected for exhibition in the 27th Annual Berkshire County High School Art Show at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge. Congratulations to Gabrielle Harrington '14, Jaslynn Hall-Rodriguez '15, Shelby Davis '15, and Jesse Cuevas '16, whose work will be on display February 16th through March 10th.

100% Success!

After two local, anonymous donors were impressed with BART students' 100% success on multiple fronts, the donors made a very generous offer: For every new dollar raised by December 31st 2012 (meaning those dollars that come from increased donations, new donors, or previous donors who had stopped donating) they would match that money, with a gift of up to \$10,000! The best part of the story: BART supporters rallied and quickly surpassed the \$10,000 goal.

Our students heard the message: the community recognizes their accomplishments, and community members are behind them, willing to help. BART students' inspiring accomplishments include:

■ 100% of BART graduates have completed a college course as well as an 80-hour internship prior to graduating.



Upon learning of their remarkable MCAS scores, proud BART students hold up 100% sign

■ 100% of BART seniors are accepted into college, despite the fact that only 20% of their parents have graduated from college.

■ 100% of BART 10th graders scored proficient or advanced on the ELA and Math MCAS in 2012, and 100% passed their science exams as well. ✨