

# BART

a college prep charter school

## BART Pioneer Class Graduates Ready to Succeed in College

BART's graduation requirements are thorough, preparing students for the rigors of college and post-college pursuits. The ten students who worked side by side for all four years of high school created a unique and powerful bond.

"I'm here because of the people here," said graduate Mallory Caron. "They accepted me on good days, bad days, whatever. I can guarantee I would be a completely different person without BART. I don't know about everyone here, but deep down, we owe this place something."

The choice of their commencement speaker, Andrew Gibson, spoke to the bonds that the students created in the classroom. Mr. Gibson was a humanities teacher at BART who left after the 2008-2009 year. His impact on the graduates was clear as he exhorted them to keep faith in themselves.

"No matter how well you plan, the unexpected happens," said Gibson. "Have faith in the dynamic nature of life. If a problem confronts you, confront it right back."

As is the requirement at BART, all ten of the seniors have been accepted into college. Nine have matriculated, with another taking on a secondary-educational opportunity that is a natural extension of her senior year internship.

Sarah Nelkin, who is attending the University of Hawaii - Manoa this year, used her internship to explore a career in anime.

Nelkin, who worked at her internship via the Internet, always had a strong interest in Japanese culture and animation. No doubt she will miss New England winters.



Using new technology is a large part of BART's curriculum and was instrumental in the education and career goals of graduating senior Nick Miclette. He completed his internship with world-renowned special effects designer Douglas Trumbull and his company, Trumbull Ventures LLC. Building on this internship, his love of design, and the use of technology gleaned at BART, Nick headed to the Rochester Institute of Technology this fall, where he is majoring in industrial design.

The 2011 graduating class from Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter Public School was accepted into 38 schools in total.

**Kimberly Bongiovanni** - Hampshire College

**Mallorey Caron** - The Art Institute of Boston at Lesley College

**Brandi Genette** - Post Secondary Program in Dental Assisting at Charles H. McCann Technical School

**Morgan Hussey** - University of New Hampshire

**Dylan Lampro** - Berkshire Community College

**Nicholas Miclette** - Rochester Institute of Technology

**Sarah Nelkin** - University of Hawaii - Manoa

**Alexandra Perkins** - Salve Regina University

**Matthew Rose** - Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

**Gabrielle McNeice** - Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts ✨

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## Speaker Series Strikes Chord

At BART, we prepare our students for the challenges of the 21st century workplace through rigorous academic study, an extensive arts program, and the widespread use of technology. But it is just as important that we also expose students to the broader world, which is much greater than the walls of our school or even the borders of our towns.

With this in mind, BART has started a Professional Speaker Series, a program which is designed to draw a clear line between education and career opportunities. In early October, the series' first speaker, Cheshire resident Lloyd Wynter, visited BART's sixth-grade class. As a financial advisor for Morgan Stanley/Smith Barney in Pittsfield, Wynter has spent nearly a decade in the financial industry in various roles.

After beginning his college career with plans to major in broadcast television/radio, Wynter understood that his interest in international news and politics and his knack for numbers would dovetail nicely into a degree and career in International Business Management and International Studies.

The students were most interested in Wynter's college career. During the question and answer period, of the 20 questions they asked, 18 dealt with college. Students wanted to know about workloads, dorm life, campus food and free time - the important details that help define college life!

"It was great," said Wynter. "The kids were curious, they were polite, and they were all well behaved." 🌟

## Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter Public School Earns High Growth Distinction for Third Year in a Row

The results from the 2011 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams were released in mid-September, and once again BART teachers and students had reason to celebrate. For the third year in a row, BART was identified by the state as a "high growth" school in English language arts (ELA) and math. BART is the only district in Berkshire County to achieve this distinction for three years running.

Being commended as high growth means that BART's students have shown more academic growth than their academic peers across the state. (Academic peers are those students with similar score histories.)

"These results are the product of what we see here on a daily basis," said Julia Bowen, executive director at BART. "Our students should be proud that their hard work pays off."

Other highlights of BART's MCAS scores include:

- A greater percentage of BART students were proficient or advanced on the 10th grade ELA and math MCAS than in any of BART's sending districts.
- 97% of 10th grade BART students scored proficient or advanced on the English exam.
- 91% of 8th grade BART students scored proficient or advanced on the English exam.
- BART's median student growth percent-

tile, a measure describing the growth of the typical student within a district over the course of a year, was in the top 5% of districts statewide for ELA, and the top 6% of districts for math.

- The median student growth percentile (SGP) for BART special education students was the 2nd highest in the state in ELA and 5th highest for math out of 393 districts; the median SGP for BART low-income students was 7th highest in the state for ELA and 19th highest in math.

The school recently held an awards ceremony on September 23, where over 400 awards and commendations went out to students who performed above their previous years' scores in English and/or math.

"All the bubble charts and graphs don't really mean anything," said Principal Benjamin Klompus, pointing to the charts and graphs illustrating the school's MCAS improvement. "The reason I came to work here is that I want to move students like you toward college, and more important, toward a successful life. What matters is you, the students, achieving your goals." 🌟



## BART Holds First Ever Mountain Day

On Thursday morning, October 6, BART students, faculty, and staff set out to conquer the highest peak in the state, Mount Greylock (3,491 feet). Hikers fought wet trails, slick rocks, mud, and increasingly cold and windy conditions on their ascent. The goal was rewarding though as the group sat atop the mountain for lunch overlooking the early foliage of Berkshire County. To see more of the great hiking photographs shared by Mr. Henkel's sixth-grade class, check out the last page of this newsletter.

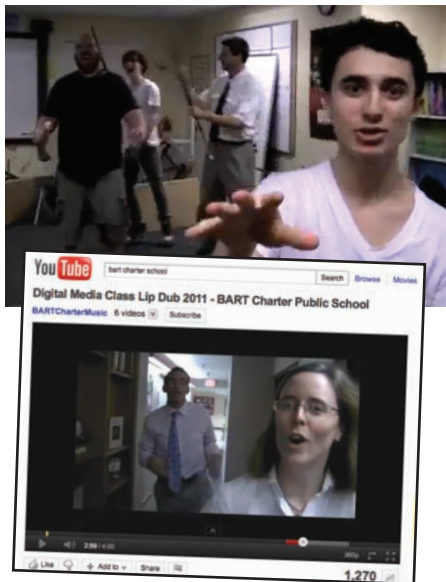
# BART Students Complete Musical Coup

Classroom work can wear, especially as summer draws near. Teachers and students know it's hard to keep minds sharp and working at peak potential. This phenomenon forces teachers to think of new ways to drive a lesson home. In two Introduction to Media classes at BART, two teachers did just that when their classes completed BART's first "lip-dub," a one-take lip-synch to recorded music, performed throughout the school building.

The two classes, taught by Ms. Milne and Ms. Branham, were up to the task: the students chose the song, learned the lyrics, directed the action, cleared the hallways and handled all the challenges that the BART building dealt them.

With eager students manning the camera, a willing faculty, and the school at their disposal, the decision was made to use Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now" to illustrate the determined nature of the BART student. On Thursday, June 9, around 2 p.m., the hallways of BART turned from an academic environment to one with choreographed dancers, a zombie, and lip-synching students and faculty.

To watch the video, visit [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and search for BART Charter Lip Dub. The four minutes are worth it. 🎵



COLLEEN GARRITY



## Refusing to Accept Average, BART Senior Aims for Success

The iconic image of a teenager, with leg kicked over a couch arm, remote-control in one hand, cell phone in the other, and a 2-liter soda on the floor, is burned in all parents' minds. But as with every stereotype, there are exceptions. One of the exceptions at BART is Pittsfield's Colleen Garrity, a 17-year-old senior who decided at a young age that BART would best fit her educational needs. She hasn't looked back. "If I aim high," said Garrity, "I push myself as hard as I can."

While fighting a cold, Garrity recently took time out from her hectic schedule to talk about her day and the things that are important to her as a senior at BART.

Her schedule:

5:30 a.m. - The alarm rings.

7-7:30 a.m. - Garrity leaves with mom for school.

8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Classes, including AP Calculus and English, and Epidemics on Virtual High School.

11 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. - Tuesdays and Thursdays, Garrity travels to Williams College for her Mozart class. When time permits, she participates in the school's chorus class, for fun, not for school credit.

3:40 p.m. - Garrity leaves BART with mom for home.

5 to 8:30 p.m. - On every day except Friday, Garrity, a black belt in karate,

spends her evenings at Zen Quest Martial Arts in Lenox. To help offset her costs for classes, she also teaches and works the front desk for the school.

8:30 to 10:30 p.m. - Garrity finishes up homework, reads, watches TV and otherwise relaxes.

Weekends - On Sunday morning, Garrity volunteers at the Berkshire Humane Society.

A year from now, Garrity's world will be much different, though likely just as busy. She's headed to college, a goal she says she's held for years. The schools she'd most like to attend include Skidmore, Mount Holyoke, Hampshire, and Amherst College.

Garrity plans on pursuing a degree in music, specifically vocal performance. She also wants to continue her interests in disease, genetics and DNA. "I know, they're totally unrelated," said Garrity. "But I'm interested in why people look like they do, why some people have allergic reactions and some don't. I like to find out as much as I can."

"What's great about her schedule is that it is so diverse and challenging," said Barbara Robertson, college and internship counselor at BART. "It shows she's taking advantage of making her own choices. Epidemics and Mozart? Those are very much Colleen's interests. It is inspiring to look at the diversity and to see a student at 17 with so much self-knowledge." 🎵



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## Mountain Day Photos

SAMANTHA DORWIN

## BART Student Travels the Science Fair Circuit

During a fourth-grade field trip, a young Samantha Dorwin caught the science bug. Visiting Williams College on Science Day, she saw DNA from a strawberry being extracted and weighed. In sixth grade, her first year at Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter Public School (BART), she completed the same experiment while also comparing DNA strands from a strawberry with those of a banana, sparking a journey through local and state science fairs.

Dorwin, now an eighth grader, has shifted her work to an engineering topic: “It’s All About the Blades” is an examination of the design, engineering, and materials used in modern-day wind turbines.

Starting at BART with the November, 2010, science fair, she earned a trip to the Region 1 Science Fair in April at MCLA in North Adams. Her impressive showing at MCLA, with scores above 95% from

all three judges, moved her to the June state finals at the Massachusetts State Science and Engineering Fair at Worcester Technical High School. Dorwin walked away with a second-place finish and earned an invitation to apply for a spot in the national competition for U.S. 6th, 7th, and 8th graders, the Broadcom MASTERS™ (Math, Applied Science, Technology, and Engineering for Rising Stars) in Washington D.C.

“It’s All About the Blades” examines how the material and shape of a windmill’s blades affect the amount of energy generated. Dorwin made models of different blade shapes with different materials to test which ones were the most efficient. After building a 20-inch tower, she ran wires to a light bulb to test the energy flow.

Dorwin believed the plastic material would be more efficient than the balsa wood; however, test results forced the young scientist to change her conclusion. Since testing a hypothesis is the basis for the scientific method, it was a strategy that Dorwin’s teacher, Amy Wiles, encouraged. “We create the hypotheses in class,” said Wiles. “And they can come out wrong. I always say ‘that’s okay.’”



Samantha works on her windmill project.

The fair in Worcester is a little like arriving at Fenway Park after toiling away in Peoria.

Wiles, who was in town during the fair, said it’s an intense environment and the rules are strict.

Despite not being invited to the national fair in Washington this year, Dorwin believes a career in environmental or civil engineering awaits her after school. ✨