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Senator Mary Kunesh, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Kunesh and Education Finance Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to express support for SF 494, Senator Putnam's bill to allocate funding for additional Minnesota educators and students to benefit from the BARR system. We are writing on behalf of Detroit Lakes High School in the Detroit Lakes school district, a BARR school.

As a first generation descendant of the White Earth Nation Ojibwe Tribe, the first person in my family to graduate from college, and now a school administrator, I deeply understand the importance of a strength-based approach that focuses on relationships and a school culture that is supportive of learning. At Detroit Lakes High School, BARR supports:

- A great, team-based culture for our staff with regular presence of administrators.
- Educators that inspire students, nearly a quarter of whom identify as American Indian.
- A cohesive system that brings together various initiatives, programs, and curriculum.
- Systemic use of data to help students make progress academically, socially, and emotionally.

After one year of implementation of the BARR program we have seen a 42.2% reduction in our 9th grade failure rate, and we were able to effectively allocate resources to those students with 3 or more failures, who statistically are in danger of not graduating. For our 10th-12th graders, we have seen a 27% reduction in the failure rate since implementing BARR.

Furthermore, we also saw a 33% reduction in out of school suspensions in just one year of BARR implementation. Simply put, BARR has had a tremendous impact on our students and has enabled our staff to have gains with students who would otherwise fall through the cracks.

We are grateful to Senator Putnam for taking up this important issue. Thank you for the opportunity to share our support.

Please support SF 494. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joshua A. Omang
Principal, Detroit Lakes High School
BARR Administrator

Kelly Kalina
BARR Coordinator