



Senator Mary Kunesh, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Kunesh and Education Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, I am writing to express support for SF 494, Senator Putnam's bill to allocate funding for more Minnesota educators and students to benefit from the strength-based, research-validated Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) system.

For the past decade, the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation and the BARR Center have partnered together with a deep commitment to supporting young people to ensure they are not just surviving but thriving. As the CEO and President of Hazelden Betty Ford, and a physician and child psychiatrist, I believe the BARR system has the right elements, the right spirit, and the right science to help adults in every school build much stronger relationships with students, an essential aspect of helping students thrive.

What I really appreciate about the BARR system is its inherent belief in teachers, their talent, and their ability to change lives. BARR brings out great qualities like empathy, patience, and optimism in teachers and then teachers, in turn, bring those qualities out in their students. The result is a nurturing school community that profoundly impacts educators and students.

I have seen BARR's positive impact on educators and students firsthand and believe expanding access to the BARR system is a win for Minnesota.

I am 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Lee".

Dr. Joseph Lee
President and CEO, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation