



Senator Mary Kunesh, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Kunesh and Education Finance Committee Members,

We are writing on behalf of Lake Elmo Elementary in the Stillwater Area Schools to express support for SF 494, Senator Putnam's bill to allocate funding so additional Minnesota educators and students can benefit from what the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) system brings.

As the building principal, I recognize the positive culture change that resulted from the implementation of the BARR Model at Lake Elmo Elementary School. I have seen an increase in collaboration among our educators as we implement BARR into our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. The focus is on student strengths creating more productive conversations leading to solutions that support our students. The BARR model provides a space for student-focused conversations aimed at building student-teacher relationships and combining data points and student stories to make data informed decisions. Our educators value data, and have increased their capacity to see and support all learners in meaningful ways, while developing stronger relationships with their students, resulting in academic, social and emotional growth.

The focus of our school improvement plan for 2021-22 school year was math. From 2019 to 2022 our MCA scores in grade 3-5 increased 10.2%. Each grade level exceeded their MCA school improvement plan goals. This year our focus is on literacy. Our most recent FastBridge scores indicate students are meeting and exceeding their growth goals. Lake Elmo Elementary students are making positive strides academically while the national post-pandemic trend has been learning loss. BARR has been critical for our school in achieving these positive academic outcomes.

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,

Stephen Gorde
Principal

Kelly Hoskins
Teacher, BARR Coordinator, and St. Croix Education Association Treasurer

Kristin Arnt
School Psychologist



Stillwater
AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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