

HF 1388, Rep. Cheryl Youakim (DFL) Hopkins, Rep. Jeff Witte (R) Lakeville, Rep. Bianca Virnig (DFL) Eagan, Rep. Mary Frances Clardy (DFL) Inver Grove Heights

SF 551, Sen. Aric Putnam (DFL) St. Cloud, Sen. Zach Duckworth (R) Lakeville, Sen. Steve Cwodzinski (DFL) Eden Prairie, Sen. Karin Housley (R) Stillwater, Sen. Nick Frentz (DFL) North Mankato

To implement the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) model in 72 schools which provides three years of coaching support, professional development, resources, and access to the national network of BARR educators. BARR has been proven to:

1. **Increase reading and math scores**
2. **Decrease chronic absenteeism**
3. **Decrease behavior incidences**
4. **Reduce risky behaviors such as substance use and suicide ideation and attempts**
5. **Bring schools, families, and communities together**

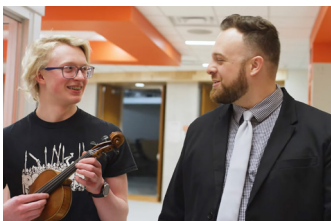
Proposal: invest \$10M in each of the next two fiscal years (FY26 & 27)



Same Students. Same Teachers. Better Results.

BARR is a K-12 comprehensive, strength-based, systems approach to education that increases academic achievement and engagement for all students by:

Improving a school's effectiveness at building **relationships**



Leveraging real-time student **data**



Capitalizing on the **strengths** of students and staff



The BARR model is one of the **most proven**, systemwide school improvement models within K-12 education.

20 areas of statistically significant outcomes

78 schools involved in randomized controlled trial research (most rigorous possible)



Met the Evidence for ESSA requirements for "strong evidence" four times in reading and math impacts.



BARR's research "met evidence standards without reservation," the highest possible WWC rating, in three separate studies.



BARR received the 2014 ACT College and Career Transition Award.



In the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). Discontinued as of Jan. 2018.

BARR increases academic achievement.

"Our MCA reading scores went up 15.8% in 4th grade and 6.9% in 5th grade. MCA math scores went up 13.9% in 3rd grade, 8% in 4th grade, and 14.9% in 5th grade.

Lake Elmo Elementary students are making positive strides academically while the national trend has been learning loss.

BARR has been critical for our school in achieving these positive academic outcomes."

Stephen Gorde, Principal
Lake Elmo Elementary School

BARR significantly reduces chronic absenteeism.

"With BARR, our chronic absenteeism rate dropped from **45.2%** in the 2021-22 school year to **20.9%** in 2023-24 – a reduction of 25 percentage points."

Josh Omang, Principal
Detroit Lakes High School



BARR reduces failure rates by an average of **35%**

“Out of over 300 BARR students, composed of the school’s freshmen, **123** kids were failing at least one course in October (2024). As of Nov. 18, that number is now **87.**”

Akram Osman, Principal
Mankato East High School



BARR is ‘Same Students. Same Teachers. Better Results.’

This is not a new curriculum. This is not new grading practices. **This is using the same things that have existed but streamlining it and making it super efficient and super powerful.**

Joseph Held, Associate Principal and BARR Administrator
White Bear Lake High School

Developed in 1999 by school counselor Angela Jerabek, BARR is now a system in 24 states, in over 375 schools, with nearly **80 schools in her home state of Minnesota.**



Over 100 additional schools await funding!

Aitkin County

McGregor Independent School District
• McGregor Secondary School

Anoka County

Bultum Academy Charter School
• **Bultum Academy**

Becker County

Detroit Lakes Public Schools
• **Detroit Lakes Middle School**
• Detroit Lakes Senior High School

Blue Earth County

Mankato Area Public Schools
• **Mankato East High School**
• **Mankato West High School**

Carver County

Eastern Carver County Schools
• Chanhassen High School
• Integrated Arts Academy

Chisago County

North Branch Area Public Schools
• North Branch Area High School

Clay County

Moorhead Public Schools
• **Ellen Hopkins Elementary School**
• Horizon East Middle School
• Moorhead High School

Dakota County

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan
• **Apple Valley Senior High School**
• Eagan High School
• Eastview High School
• Rosemount High School

South St. Paul School District

- Kaposia Education Center
- South St. Paul High School
- South St. Paul Middle School

West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools

- **Two Rivers High School**

Goodhue County

Red Wing Public Schools
• Red Wing Middle/High School
• **Twin Bluff Middle School**

Hennepin County

Bloomington Public Schools
• Kennedy High School

Brooklyn Center Community Schools
• Brooklyn Center Middle/High School

Hiawatha Academies

- Hiawatha Collegiate High School
- Hiawatha College Prep - Northrop

Hopkins Public School District

- Hopkins West Junior High School

Minneapolis Public Schools

- Camden High School
- South Senior High School

Osseo Area Schools

- Park Center IB World School

Public Charter School District #41912

- Harvest Best Academy

Robbinsdale Public School District

- Robbinsdale Armstrong High School
- Robbinsdale Cooper High School
- Robbinsdale Middle School
- **Northport Elementary School**

Saint Louis Park Public Schools

- St. Louis Park Senior High School

Lake County

Lake Superior School District
• Two Harbors High School

Lyon County

Marshall Public Schools

- **Southview Elementary School**
- Marshall High School
- **Marshall Middle School**

Mower County

Austin Public Schools

- Austin High School
- Ellis Middle School
- I.J. Holton Intermediate School

Otter Tail County

Battle Lake Public Schools

- Battle Lake Elementary/Secondary School

Perham-Dent Public School District

- Perham Senior High School
- Prairie Wind Middle School

Polk County

Crookston Public Schools

- **Crookston High School**

Ramsey County

North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale District

- North Senior High School
- Tartan Senior High School

North Metro Flex Academy

- **North Metro Flex Middle School**

White Bear Lake School District

- Central Middle School
- Lakeaires Elementary School
- Mariner Middle School
- Vadnais Heights Elementary School
- White Bear Lake North Campus Senior High School
- Willow Lane Elementary School

Scott County

Jordan Public School District

- **Jordan High School**

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools

- Prior Lake High School

St. Louis County

Duluth Public School District

- Denfeld High School

Stearns County

St. Cloud Public School District

- St. Cloud Apollo Senior High School
- **St. Cloud North Junior High School**
- **St. Cloud South Junior High School**
- St. Cloud Technical Senior High School

Washington County

Marine Area Community School

- River Grove Marine Area Community School

Stillwater Area Public Schools

- Afton-Lakeland Elementary School
- **Brookview Elementary School**
- Lake Elmo Elementary School
- **Oak-Land Middle School**
- Stillwater Area High School
- Stillwater Middle School

Bold: schools funded by FY24 bipartisan legislation



BARR takes your ‘rock stars’ and puts them in a rock band.

Tamara Uselman, Coordinator
Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative

THE BARR MODEL

Building Assets, Reducing Risks



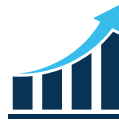
Most likely to change the world.

“BARR has not only helped improve student outcomes but is also beneficial for teacher well being. Our teachers’ mental health has improved as well as our efficiency in working together to collaboratively solve problems and support students.”

Teacher, White Bear Lake High School, Minnesota



BARR is a K-12 partner with a quarter-century track record of:



- raising student math and reading scores
- increasing teacher satisfaction and retention
- improving mental health



- decreasing student absenteeism
- decreasing discipline and suspensions
- reducing risky behaviors

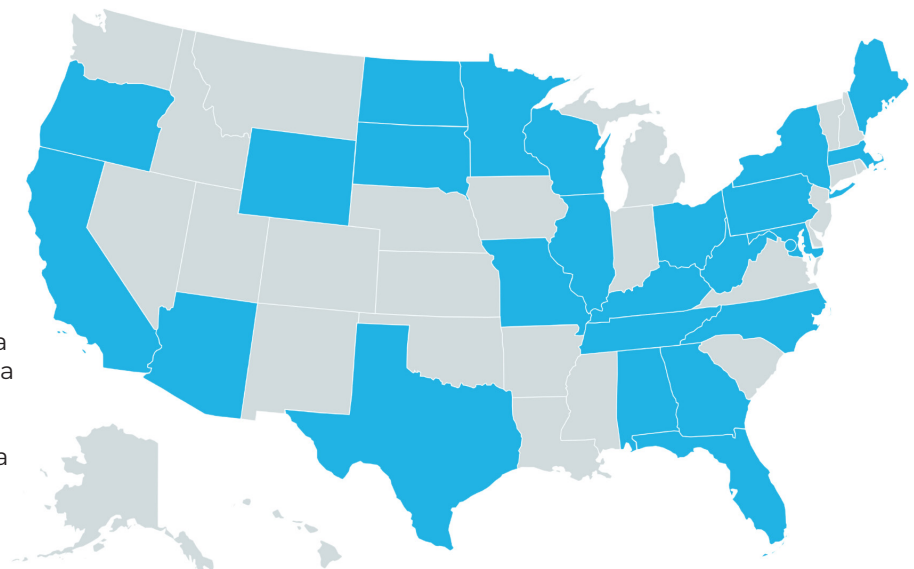
24 States plus D.C. and Growing!

BARR has been successfully implemented in 350+ schools. It works in all types of geographies and systems, alongside any number of existing school initiatives.

Alabama
Arizona
California
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Kentucky

Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Missouri
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota

Ohio
Oregon
Pennsylvania
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming



BARR[®]

Same Students. Same Teachers.
Better Results.

The BARR model is distinguished as one of the **most proven**, systemwide school improvement models within K-12 education.

“

We have to be intentional, identifying for every kid what they are passionate about, what they are excited about... **BARR does that for every student.**”

Dr. John B. King, Jr., SUNY Chancellor and former U.S. Secretary of Education at the **National Governors Association** 2024 Summer Meeting



BARR Founder and Executive Director Angela Jerabek was honored with the James Bryant Conant Award at the **2024 Education Commission of the States National Forum on Education Policy**. This award recognizes significant contributions to public education, placing Jerabek alongside notable figures like U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Fred Rogers and Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, to name a few.

According to the **Maine Department of Education**, more than 87% of high school seniors graduated last year. Rates had fallen significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, but have now nearly returned to their pre-pandemic high. Heather Manchester, the superintendent for the Oxford Hills Schools District, pointed to a new program, being used in several districts across the state, called “Building Assets, Reducing Risks,” in which teachers and staff closely track each student in ninth grade.

Robbie Feinberg, 2024, “*Maine high school graduation rates make a comeback since the pandemic*” Maine Public, mainepublic.org



Every school receives:

- Professional development and coaching
- Lessons for intentional relationship building
- Access to the national network of BARR educators



The BARR model has met the Evidence for ESSA requirements for “strong evidence” four times in reading and math impacts.



The U.S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse review concluded that BARR’s research “met evidence standards without reservation,” the highest possible WWC rating, in three separate studies.



BARR was included in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) which was discontinued as of January 2018.



BARR received the 2014 ACT College and Career Transition Award.



Contact:

Angela Jerabek, Executive Director and Founder
angela.jerabek@barrcenter.org | 612-695-7661

barrcenter.org

Annual Briefing
2023-24 BARR Schools in Minnesota

Project Overview

In the 2023-24 school year, the BARR model was implemented in **48 schools across 16 counties** in Minnesota. This presence means we served more than 19,000 students, impacted 3,549 teachers, and built relationships in 24 school districts. Over the last 26 years, BARR Center has served 80 schools and 38 districts – 3.5% of the state's schools and 11.6% of its districts.

Outcomes¹

Each BARR school in Minnesota saw an improvement in at least one of three areas: 1) Academics, 2) Attendance, and 3) Behavior.

100% of the schools made progress in at least one of the three areas, and many made progress in multiple areas.

Course Failure Rates

- **30 schools** reported course failure rates
- **90%** of these schools decreased course failure rates
- **24.2%** average percent decrease

Chronic Absenteeism

- **7 schools** reported chronic absenteeism rates
- **83.3%** of these schools decreased chronic absenteeism rates
- **11.7%** average percent decrease

Attendance Rates

- **28 schools** reported attendance rates
- **64.3%** of these schools increased attendance rates
- **16.3%** average percent increase

Behavior Referrals

- **24 schools** reported behavior referrals
- **70.8%** of these schools decreased the number of behavior referrals
- **11%** average percent decrease

BARR Student Survey

The BARR Student Survey (designed for middle and high school students) was sent to 37 schools. 1491 students responded to the BARR Student Survey. Highlighted results for those students are bulleted below:

- **97%** of students agreed: “My teacher often encourages me to do my best.”
- **95%** of students agreed: “I believe I will be able to reach my goals.”
- **90%** of students agreed: “If my teacher asks me how I am doing, I often feel that they are really interested in my answer.”
- **90%** of students agreed: “My teacher pushes me to become a better thinker.”
- **83%** of the students agreed: “I feel safe at my school.”

Year One of BARR Implementation

11 schools in their **first year of BARR implementation** reported on failure rates:

- **90.9%** of schools **experienced decreased** failure rates
19.4% average percent decrease

¹ Percent Growth Formula = $\left(\frac{\text{New Value} - \text{Original Value}}{\text{Original Value}} \right) \times 100$

Figure 1. Schools by District		
<p>Austin Public School District Austin High School</p> <p>Bloomington Public School District Kennedy High School</p> <p>Charter Schools Bultum Academy Harvest Best Academy K-8 Hiawatha Academy – Collegiate High School Hiawatha College Prep – Northrop Campus North Metro Flex Academy K-8</p> <p>Crookston Public Schools Crookston Secondary</p> <p>Detroit Lakes Public School District Detroit Lakes Senior High School Detroit Lakes Middle School Roosevelt Elementary School</p> <p>Duluth Public School District Denfeld High School</p> <p>Eastern Carver County School District Integrated Arts Academy</p> <p>Eden Prairie School District Eden Prairie Senior High School</p>	<p>Jordan Public School District Jordan High School</p> <p>Mankato Area Public Schools Mankato East High School</p> <p>Marshall Public School District Marshall High School Marshall Middle School Southview Elementary School</p> <p>Minneapolis Public Schools Camden High School South Senior High School</p> <p>Moorhead Public School District Ellen Hopkins Elementary School Horizon East Middle School Moorhead High School</p> <p>Osseo Public School District Park Center IB World School</p> <p>Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools Prior Lake High School</p> <p>Red Wing Public Schools Red Wing Middle/High School</p> <p>Robbinsdale Public School District Northport Elementary School Robbinsdale Armstrong High School Robbinsdale Cooper High School</p>	<p>Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School District Apple Valley Senior High School</p> <p>South St. Paul Public School District South St. Paul High School</p> <p>St. Cloud Public School District Apollo Senior High School North Junior High School South Junior High School Technical Senior High School</p> <p>Stillwater Area Public Schools Afton-Lakeland Elementary School Brookview Elementary School Lake Elmo Elementary School Oak-Land Middle School Stillwater Area High School</p> <p>West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan School District Two Rivers High School</p> <p>White Bear Lake School District Central Middle School Lakeaires Elementary School Mariner Middle School Vadnais Heights Elementary School White Bear Lake Area High School Willow Lane Elementary School</p>

Figure 2. School Stories in Media	
<p><u>Programs Boost Student Achievement with Peer, Teacher Help</u></p> <p><u>White Bear Lake Area Schools Raises the BARR</u></p> <p><u>"BARR Takes Your 'Rock Stars' and Puts Them in a Rock Band"</u></p> <p><u>Marshall Public Schools Shine: Celebrating Educators, Community, and Student Achievements</u></p> <p><u>Perham School Board Votes to Implement BARR Model at High School</u></p>	<p><u>New Program at APS Showing Early Optimistic Results</u></p> <p><u>Putnam Named Minnesota Superintendent of the Year</u></p> <p><u>Bipartisan Education Funding Legislation Aims to Improve Student Success in More Minnesota Schools</u></p> <p><u>Moorhead Area Public Schools Part of Pilot Program to Improve Student Attendance</u></p> <p><u>Marshall Students Score Better than Average on Math, Science Test Scores</u></p>



Senate E-12 Finance Committee Members
March 6, 2025

Re: Support S.F. 551, Senator Putnam

Dear Chair Kunesch and Senate E-12 Finance Committee Members,

I am writing to ask you to support S.F. 551, which expands the BARR model to 72 additional Minnesota schools. Background and details on this bipartisan, evidenced-based proposal are provided in the attached document.

Thanks to you, the 2023 legislature provided \$5,000,000 to fund 18 new BARR schools in the 2023-24 school year. These schools were selected from over 50 that applied including elementary, middle, and high schools from across the state. We are already seeing tremendous results, and local communities have noticed, as evidenced by recent newspaper articles in Mankato, White Bear Lake and Detroit Lakes.

The demand for BARR is high. We are aware of more than 100 schools across the state that are eager to implement the BARR model, and would do so, if more funding was available.

As you know, Minnesota's schools are experiencing declining student academic outcomes while mental health needs and chronic absenteeism have increased. Teacher recruitment and retention have become exceedingly more difficult. The evidence shows that the BARR model helps schools improve in all of these areas. Critically, the improvement comes quickly, in the very first year the model is implemented.

Together, let's continue the progress and momentum from last year. Please make it possible for more Minnesota schools to implement the BARR evidenced-based model and support S.F. 551.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Angela Jerabek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela Jerabek
Founder and Executive Director, BARR Center



Armstrong High School

Robbinsdale Area Schools

10635 36th Avenue North

Plymouth, MN 55441

763-504-8800 | ahs.rdale.org

Senate E-12 Finance Committee
Senator Mary Kunesch, Chair

March 3, 2025

Re: Support SF 551

Author: Senator Putnam

Coauthors: Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley and Frentz

Dear Chair Kunesch and Senate E-12 Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of Armstrong High School, in the Robbinsdale Area School District, to express strong support for SF 551, Senator Putnam's bill to allocate funding so additional Minnesota students and educators can benefit from the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) model. BARR is a framework that is focused on the whole student and has helped us build a positive school culture for both students and staff.

Since Armstrong High School began implementing the BARR model in our school, we have seen improvements in several areas:

- From 2019 to 2023 our graduation rate increased from 89.7% to 91.6%
- Our attendance rate for ninth grade is 79.1% which is better than the Minnesota state average of 74.5%
- Student participation in activities and athletics is up from 52% in 2019 to 79% in 2024

Everything we were already doing works better in the BARR system.

BARR is exactly what Minnesota schools need at this time. We are grateful to Senator Putnam for taking up this important issue and Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley and Frentz for co-authoring. We urge you to support SF 511.

Sincerely,

Erick D. Norby



APPLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

A **STEM** school dedicated to
Academics, Arts & Athletics



Drew Mons
Principal

14450 Hayes Road
Apple Valley, MN 55124
P: 952-431-8200
F: 952-431-8744
www.district196.org/avhs

Senate E-12 Finance Committee
Senator Mary Kunesch, Chair

March 3, 2025

Re: Support SF 551
Author: Senator Putnam
Coauthors: Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley and Frentz

Dear Chair Kunesch and Senate E-12 Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of Apple Valley High School in the 196 School District to express strong support for SF 551, Senator Putnam's bill to allocate funding so additional Minnesota students and educators can benefit from the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) model. BARR is a framework that is focused on the whole student and has helped us build a positive school culture for both students and staff.

Since August 2022, Apple Valley High School began implementing the BARR model and we have seen improvements in several areas including grades, attendance, and failure rates.

- **AVHS experienced a 5.2% drop** in students receiving one or more F grades from 2022-23 to 2023-24, compared to a **1.4% decrease** across District 196 high schools. The impact was even greater for **Black/African American students**, with a **9.5% decrease**, compared to a **2% decrease** districtwide.
- Participants consistently noted that **the support provided by BARR teachers was instrumental in boosting their confidence and their ability to communicate effectively**, empowering them to take a proactive approach to their learning.
- **Students also highlighted** the value of **communication and leadership skills**, recognizing their critical role in **fostering self-awareness and social connections** both within the classroom and across the broader school community.

Everything we were already doing works better in the BARR system.

BARR is exactly what Minnesota schools need at this time. We are grateful to Senator Putnam for taking up this important issue and for Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley and Frentz for coauthoring. We urge you to support SF 511.

Sincerely,


Drew Mons
Principal



One District. Infinite Possibilities.

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools • DISTRICT196.ORG

ADMINISTRATION

Phone: 218.847.4491

Fax: 218.846.1797

PRINCIPAL

Joshua Omang

jomang@detlakes.k12.mn.us

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Justin Messer

jmesser@detlakes.k12.mn.us

ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR

Rob Nielsen

rnielsen@detlakes.k12.mn.us

DETROIT LAKES HIGH SCHOOL**1301 Roosevelt Avenue, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501****www.dlschools.net****COUNSELING CENTER**

Phone: 218.847.4491x2217

Fax: 218.846.2387

Student Last Name A-G

Doreen Richter

drichter@detlakes.k12.mn.us

Student Last Name H-N

Sara Pender

spender@detlakes.k12.mn.us

Student Last Name O-Z

Nathan Ochsner

nochsner@detlakes.k12.mn.us

Senate E-12 Finance Committee

Senator Mary Kunesch, Chair

February 26, 2025

Re: Support for SF 551

Author: Senator Putnam

Coauthors: Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley, and Frentz

Dear Chair Kunesch and Senate E-12 Finance Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of Detroit Lakes High School in the Detroit Lakes School District to express strong support for SF 551, Senator Putnam's bill to allocate funding for expanding the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) model to more Minnesota students and educators. BARR is a framework focused on the whole student, and it has significantly contributed to building a positive school culture for both students and staff at our school.

Since implementing the BARR model, Detroit Lakes High School has seen improvements in several key areas:

- **Reduced Chronic Absenteeism:** Our chronic absenteeism rate dropped from 45.2% in the 2021-22 school year to 20.9% in 2023-24—a reduction of 25 percentage points. This positive trend continues into the current school year as we maintain our commitment to student engagement and attendance.
- **Lower Failure Rates:** In the 2023-24 school year, our 9th-grade failure rates decreased by 72% compared to pre-BARR and pre-pandemic levels. We continue to see improvement as more students successfully complete their coursework with the support of BARR interventions.
- **Improved Behavior:** Office referrals have decreased by 36.4% from the 2021-22 school year to 2023-24. This reduction in behavioral incidents has remained consistent this year as students thrive in a positive and structured environment.
- **Strongest Outcomes for Students Furthest from Opportunity:** These impacts are particularly significant for our Native American students, who make up over 20% of our population, and our socioeconomically disadvantaged students, who comprise 38% of our student body. We are encouraged to see these students continue to experience academic and personal growth with the critical support and resources that BARR provides. The model has enhanced our existing efforts, making our student support systems more effective.

BARR is exactly what Minnesota schools need right now. We are grateful to Senator Putnam for championing this important initiative and to Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley, and Frentz for their support as coauthors. We urge you to support SF 551.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. A. Omang". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "A" followed by the last name "Omang".

Josh Omang
Principal
Detroit Lakes High School



Senate E-12 Finance Committee
Senator Mary Kunesh, Chair

March 3, 2025

Re: Support SF 551
Author: Senator Putnam
Coauthors: Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley and Frentz

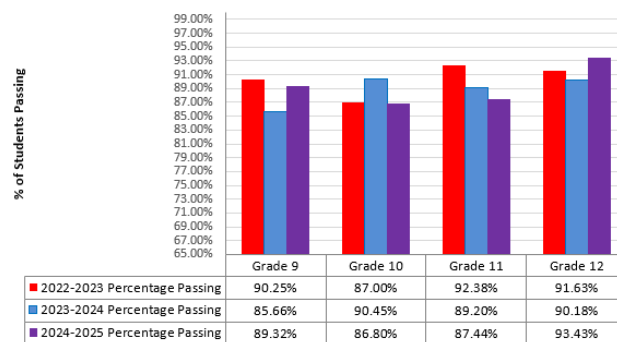
Dear Chair Kunesh and Senate E-12 Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of Marshall High School, Marshall Public School District 413 to express strong support for SF 551, Senator Putnam's bill to allocate funding so additional Minnesota students and educators can benefit from the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) model. BARR is a framework that is focused on the whole student and has helped us build a positive school culture for both students and staff.

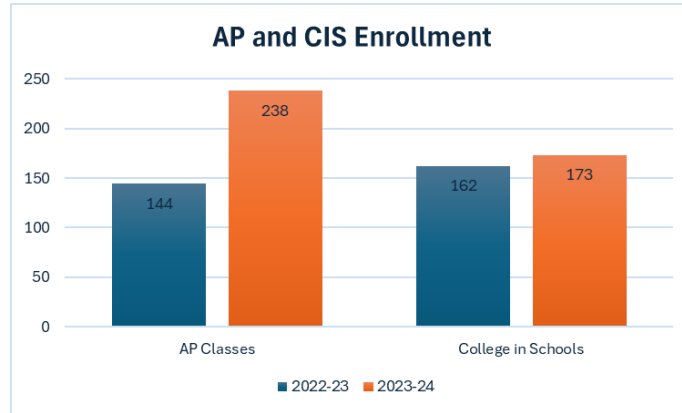
Since Marshall High School began implementing the BARR model during the 2019-2020 school year model with our 9th grade students in our school, we have seen improvements in several areas.

- Improvement in attendance of 9th grade students
 - Through the end of February 2025 the average daily attendance of our 9th grade students is at 95.01%, 4% higher than our other 3 grades.
- Strong academic performance of 9th grade students at the end of semester 1 during the last

Comparison of % of Students Passing
Sem 1 Week 18 & Term 2 Week 9



- Increased enrollment of Advanced Placement and concurrent enrollment classes since implementing the BARR framework



In short, everything we were already doing works better in the BARR system.

BARR is exactly what Minnesota schools need at this time. We are grateful to Senator Putnam for taking up this important issue and for Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley, and Frentz for coauthoring. We urge you to support SF 511.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Jones".

Brian Jones
Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Snyder".

Emily Snyder
BARR Coordinator



Senate E-12 Finance Committee
Senator Mary Kunesch, Chair

March 11, 2025

Re: Support SF 551

Author: Senator Putnam

Coauthors: Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley and Frentz

Dear Chair Kunesch and Senate E-12 Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of Stillwater Area Public Schools District #834, we strongly support SF 551, Senator Putnam's bill to allocate funding so additional Minnesota students and educators can benefit from the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) model. BARR is a framework that is focused on the whole student and has helped us build a positive school culture for both students and staff.

Lake Elmo Elementary began implementing BARR in the 2020-21 school year, during the height of the pandemic. This framework played a crucial role in helping our staff and students navigate those challenges, and it continues to strengthen the school community.

As the previous principal of Lake Elmo Elementary, I observed how BARR enhanced collaboration among educators through our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. By focusing on student strengths, BARR fosters more productive discussions, leading to better support for students. The model encourages student-teacher relationships and integrates data with personal insights, allowing for more informed decision-making. Since adopting BARR, we have observed measurable improvements: higher academic performance on MCAs and district assessments, as well as a notable decline in behavioral office referrals.

Recognizing this success, our superintendent prioritized expanding BARR to all schools in our district. With prior state funding, we have already introduced BARR at Stillwater Middle School, Oak-Land Middle School, and Brookview Elementary, moving closer to full implementation across our district.

Our educators value data-driven strategies that foster meaningful connections with students. BARR has strengthened these efforts, enhancing academic, social, and emotional growth. Simply put, everything we do works better within the BARR framework.

BARR is exactly what Minnesota schools need at this time. We are grateful to Senator Putnam for taking up this important issue and for Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley and Frentz for co-authoring. We urge you to support SF 511.

Sincerely,

Stephen Gorde,

Professional Development Lead



White Bear Lake Area Schools

Independent School District 624

Dr. Alison Gillespie

Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

District Center

2399 Cedar Avenue

White Bear Lake, MN 55110-4331

Office (651) 407-7567

Senate E-12 Finance Committee

Senator Mary Kunesch, Chair

February 28, 2025

Re: Support SF 551

Author: Senator Putnam

Coauthors: Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley and Frentz

Dear Chair Kunesch and Senate E-12 Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of White Bear Lake Area Schools ISD624 to express strong support for SF 551, Senator Putnam's bill to allocate funding so additional Minnesota students and educators can benefit from the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) model. BARR is a framework that is focused on the whole student and has helped us build a positive school culture for both students and staff.

Since White Bear Lake Area Schools began implementing the BARR model in our schools, we have seen improvements in several areas. We've seen significant positive results in both student outcomes and school culture. The BARR framework has strengthened relationships between students and staff, fostering a more supportive and connected learning environment. Through intentional data-driven interventions and proactive collaboration, we have observed increased student engagement, improved academic performance, and a reduction in behavioral concerns. Teachers report feeling more equipped to identify and address student needs early, leading to more personalized support and a greater sense of belonging among students. This system-wide approach has reinforced our commitment to ensuring every student is seen, supported, and set up for success.

Everything we were already doing works better in the BARR system.

BARR is exactly what Minnesota schools need at this time. We are grateful to Senator Putnam for taking up this important issue and for Senators Duckworth, Cwodzinski, Housley and Frentz for coauthoring. We urge you to support SF 511.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alison Gillespie

Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning