

Representative Cheryl Youakim,
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Chair Youakim and E-12 Finance Committee Members,

Thank you very much for including BARR's legislation, HF 806, in the E-12 finance omnibus bill. While the immediate impact of this bill will be on our schools, the state will also benefit as more students graduate and more teachers find increased satisfaction in their profession.

Allow me to quickly reiterate the importance of this funding.

With this \$5M in funding, over 30,000 students and 1,500 educators in 18 schools will be able to implement and benefit from the BARR system.

I developed Building Assets, Reducing Risks, BARR over 20 years ago while working as a school counselor here in the Twin Cities. In 1999, 50% of the students in 9th grade failed a course and it was the 5th year of this pattern. I knew the students not thriving was not a reflection of my colleagues, as they were amazing, and I knew the students were incredibly talented. This was a system problem. We needed to redesign the system around relationships, data and start every conversation with the strength of the student. After only a year of implementing BARR, our failure rate was cut in half.

After seeing the incredible impact BARR had in my school, I truly believed these impacts could be seen at any school, but knew I needed to do research first. I have repeatedly stated I would NEVER ask a fellow educator to adopt this work before I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that it would work. BARR has always had an external evaluator verifying the impacts achieved.

BARR has devoted over \$40 million and 20 years (federal government funding) to conducting the most rigorous research possible - random assignment - in 78 urban, rural, suburban, public and charter schools across the nation. That research concluded 20 statistically significant outcomes for students and teachers.

The metrics for the students are truly unprecedented. Some highlights include:

- Math and reading scores go up (Evidence for ESSA-tier one).
- Higher pass rates in core classes.
- Chronic absenteeism goes down.
- Graduation rates go up.
- Risk factors go down (cigarette use, alcohol use, suicide ideation and attempts).
- Students have more supportive relationships and are more engaged in school.

This is true for all students, but the biggest impact is for students farthest from opportunity: Black, Hispanic and students living in poverty.

I also want to draw attention to the impact on the teachers. This list is not exhaustive, but research concluded:

- Teachers are more effective.
- Teachers are more satisfied.
- Teachers create positive, intentional relationships with their students.
- Teachers use data to better understand and support students and build socioemotional skills.

We had 15 Minnesota educators testify last month in support of funding BARR and several stated that, due to the connections and sense of community the BARR system builds, new teachers integrate into the school faster and they feel like the positive impacts BARR brings is leading to stronger teacher retention. The outcomes and experience is why over 80 MN schools have expressed interest in the BARR system.

Several national groups such as NCSL, the Education Commission of States, and Council of State Governments, have also tuned in to this legislation as it is a unique example of bipartisanship and a strong commitment to evidence in education.

Through this funding, a network of 18 schools will be able to implement BARR's 3-year coaching and training services. They will work together and we will collect continuous updates and data along the way and report back to you, the legislature, on student outcomes and teachers' experience.

Minnesota will lead the way nationally by prioritizing evidence in education and ensuring educators and students are thriving.

Thank you for your service, dedication and leadership. Please contact me anytime I may be of help as you navigate passage of your historic and transformative omnibus education finance bill.

My best,

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