



Advancing Evidence.
Improving Lives.

January 30, 2023

Representative Cheryl Youakim,
Chair Education Finance Committee
443 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN, 55155

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AIR.ORG

Dear Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the American Institutes for Research (AIR), I am writing to provide important background information in support of your consideration of **HF806/SF494**, your bill to provide the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) system to more students and schools in Minnesota.

For the past eight years my organization has been the independent evaluator of the BARR model in two large-scale U.S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation (i3) grants. We used random assignment (the most rigorous way to evaluate programs like these) to assess BARR's effectiveness in 78 schools, some of which were in Minnesota. As the Principal Investigator for these evaluations, I found that BARR was beneficial for students and teachers, was sustainable and scalable, and was cost-effective. Its impacts on students were greatest for those at risk of course failure and other academic challenges. As a result, the BARR model successfully reduced long-standing opportunity gaps between different groups of students.

We found evidence that BARR improved teacher well-being and strengthened the relationships and collaboration among teachers and school administrators. BARR teachers felt more positive about their colleagues and reported receiving better support from their school administrators. This in turn benefitted their relationships with students, which then helped students do better academically. Because these relationships are foundational to the successful operation of schools and classrooms, the BARR model results in more lasting and sustainable change than other investments and interventions I have studied in high schools.

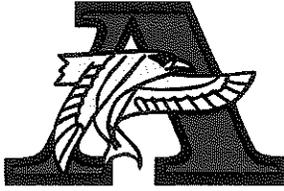
Please let me know if you would like more information about our evaluations of the BARR model. You can find our latest evaluation reports at <https://www.air.org/resource/report/building-assets-and-reducing-risks-barr-i3-scale-evaluation>

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bos", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Johannes M. Bos, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President and Institute Fellow
American Institutes for Research
jbos@air.org



Armstrong High School

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Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

It is my pleasure to reach out on behalf of Armstrong High School in the Robbinsdale school district to express support for HF 806, Chair Youakim's bill to allocate funding for more Minnesota educators and students to benefit from the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) system.

The same year that I became principal at Armstrong High School in 2018-19, we began implementing the BARR system through a federal research grant. Since then, our **graduation rate has increased nearly 4%** from 88.3% in 2018 to 92.2% in 2021. Our educators have worked incredibly hard to make this positive change. The BARR system has been the framework by which we were able to do so – helping us to scale many successful interventions to support higher credit completion, implement mentorship programs, and increase engagement in school activities.

BARR also provides student survey tools to gauge student engagement, school connection, and help us identify and respond to any mental health red flags. Since bringing the BARR system into our school, **our BIPOC students have self-reported feeling more of a sense of belonging and stronger relationships at school.**

As Minnesota educators we are directly familiar with the BARR system and the impact it has on educators and students, and we believe expanding access to the BARR system is the right solution at the right time.

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

Please support HF 806. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erick Norby
Principal

Anne Beaton
Teacher and BARR Coordinator

Tim Lloyd
Math Teacher and BARR Coordinator



Believe. Belong. Become.

ADMINISTRATION

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Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to express support for HF 806, Chair Youakim'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



Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, I am writing to express support for HF 806, Chair Youakim'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 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 Chair Youakim for taking up this important issue. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

Please support HF 806. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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



Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

We are writing on behalf of Lake Elmo Elementary in the Stillwater Area Schools to express support for HF 806, Chair Youakim'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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Lisa Boland Blake
Instructional Coach, BARR Coordinator



Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out on behalf of Marshall High School in the Marshall Public School District to express support for HF 806, Chair Youakim's bill to allocate funding so additional Minnesota educators and students can benefit from the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) system.

Since Marshall High School began BARR implementation in the 2020-2021 school year, we have been closely monitoring passing rates on a weekly basis. Through the meeting system that BARR helped us put in place, we are now able to intervene quickly and effectively with students who are failing one or more courses. As a result, **our weekly average passing rate has improved from 71% in the 2020-21 school year to 87% this school year.**

BARR is a framework that is focused on the whole student and on building community, and it helps us connect students with support services.

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

Please support HF 806. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Brian Jones
Principal



St. Cloud Area
School District 

Tech High School

Jason Harris
Principal

Hillary Johnson
Assistant Principal

Tech High School
4200 33rd St S
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Molly Kensy
Assistant Principal

Jesús Sandoval
Assistant Principal

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Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Chair
Education Finance

January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out on behalf of St. Cloud Technical High School in the St. Cloud school district to show our support for HF 806, Chair Youakim's bill to allocate funding to additional Minnesota schools so they can implement the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) system.

St. Cloud Tech has benefited greatly since implementing the BARR system in the 2018-19 school year through a federal research grant. As part of the grant, in the first year BARR was implemented with a limited number of 9th-grade students. Now seniors, **84% of BARR students are on track for graduation compared with 70% of non-BARR students.** BARR allows us to leverage data and relationships so that all students are seen and supported.

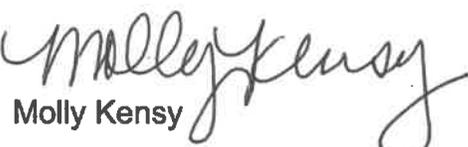
Furthermore, through BARR systems, we've engaged our students directly in their data to promote achievement and *to create a safe, healthy responsive environment so that every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status has access to a high-quality education where adults know them, recognize their strengths, and help them succeed.*

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

Please support HF 806. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Jason Harris
Principal


Molly Kensy
Assistant Principal, BARR Administrator

Jennifer Schad
BARR Coordinator



Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the Twin Cities Business Architecture Forum (TCBAF), I am writing to express our support for expanding the BARR system to more Minnesota schools through Chair Youakim's bill HF 806.

TCBAF, founded in Minnesota in 2010 and the largest professional community of Business Architects in the world, has been working with BARR to guide and assure the advancement of what we believe is an essential leap forward for the success of our students and educators in Minnesota.

The TCBAF Community represents thousands of member Business Architects and partners worldwide, with several businesses located in the twin cities (Medtronic, Cargill, and Cigna, among others). For the past several years, through our *Architecting for Good* program, TCBAF has provided essential strategic planning and consulting services for MN non-profit organizations who may not otherwise have the opportunity to benefit from professional business architecture practitioners. We recently began providing pro bono strategic planning support to BARR Center, the nonprofit organization that founded and delivers the BARR System.

When we learned about the phenomenal impact the BARR System has on schools, we knew it was an organization we wanted TCBAF's team of experienced professionals to support. We are business architects, but we are also parents, grandparents, and Minnesotans, and from the extensive data and evidence available on the BARR system, we believe it has tremendous potential and should be expanded to more schools in Minnesota and across the nation.

We could see immediately that this unique and highly studied system has cracked the code and figured out what it takes to decrease failure rates, improve math and reading scores, and narrow the achievement gap for all students, including BIPOC students. And, on top of the academic outcomes, teachers' satisfaction and student experience improve in BARR schools. Our TCBAF Community is proud and excited to align with an organization like BARR Center, bringing word of its many achievements and incredibly high potential for Minnesota's education system to our homes, businesses, colleagues, and elected representatives. With outcomes like



these, especially in times like these, we are investing our time, energy and talent in BARR and encourage the Education Finance Committee to provide financial support through advancement of HF 806.

I am personally grateful to you, Chair Youakim and members, for giving your time and consideration on behalf of this remarkable organization and mission. As a former state government employee and lifelong Minnesotan, I am deeply aware of the many truly deserving and critically important priorities you balance. The BARR Center and the BARR System are extraordinary in the field and deserving of the attention you'll assuredly give them for the benefit of Minnesotans. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,

Linda Finley
Founder and President
Twin Cities Business Architecture Forum



White Bear Lake Area High School North Campus

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Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Chair
Education Finance
January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of White Bear Lakes High School in the White Bear Lakes school district to express support for HF 806, Chair Youakim's bill to allocate funding for more Minnesota educators and students to benefit from the BARR system.

BARR provided us with training, coaching, and materials for how to support each and every student in an efficient and effective manner.

As a result, **we have seen reoccurring discipline issues go down and passing rates go up.** Students feel seen and understood in a way that has never happened before. With our success at the high school, White Bear Lake district has expanded BARR into both middle schools and three elementary schools with similar results. With state funding, we could ensure the remaining elementary schools can also adopt BARR to become a K-12, district-wide success system.

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

Please support HF 806. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joe Held
Assistant Principal
BARR Administrator

Amanda Schroeder
Teacher, BARR Coordinator

Angela Nelson
Principal