



Representative Cheryl Youakim, Chair, House E-12 Finance Committee

February 23, 2024

Re: Support H.F. 3378, Rep. Youakim

Dear Chair Youakim and House E-12 Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the Stillwater Area Public Schools we wish to express strong support for H.F. 3378, which allocates funding to expand the BARR model to 36 additional Minnesota schools.

Our district was an early adopter of the BARR program - first implementing it at Stillwater Area High School in 2017-2018 to assist in transitioning our 9th graders into the high school. BARR has been instrumental to improving our overall culture and supporting all of our students academically, socially and emotionally. This video clearly shows the impact it is making: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJASSliSQBk.

One of our elementary schools, Lake Elmo Elementary, was the first preK-grade 5 school in the state to adopt BARR. Our staff has helped shape what BARR looks like for younger students, and as we testified last legislative session, it has had significant academic, behavioral and systemic impacts. We are seeing excellent improvements at Afton-Lakeland Elementary, which adopted BARR 3 years ago. This year we received funding to implement BARR at both Brookview Elementary and Oak-Land Middle School, and have received a grant to expand to Stillwater Middle School as well.

Here are just a few examples of how BARR has impacted school culture and achievement in our district:

- Stillwater Area High School saw a decline in 9th grade failure rates from 14% to 6.5% in its first year of implementation. The number of failures for 9th graders dropped to less than 2% just before COVID and has stayed below 7% since that time.
- From 2019 to 2023, MCA scores at Lake Elmo Elementary in both math and reading for grades 3-5 increased by eight percentile points.
- While overall MCA reading scores have been on the decline in our district, both Lake Elmo and Afton-Lakeland elementary schools saw an increase in proficiency for 2023.

Based on the proven impact BARR has had for our students and teachers, the school board and administration would like to scale BARR district-wide. We urge you to support H.F. 3378 so all students and educators in the Stillwater area and more across the state can experience the growth that is possible when you focus on positive relationships and sound data.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Funk
Superintendent

Dawn Lueck
Director of Schools

Representative Cheryl Youakim, Chair
House E-12 Finance Committee

February 23, 2024

Re: Support H.F. 3378, Rep. Youakim

Dear Chair Youakim and House E-12 Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of the St. Cloud Area Schools to express strong support for H.F. 3378, which allocates funding to expand the BARR model to 36 additional Minnesota schools. I was honored to testify last year for the legislation that allowed 18 schools to implement this school year. St. Cloud applied and received funding for our two middle schools. Our district is now implementing BARR in all secondary schools, and we know that if funding were made available, we would expand to our elementary schools as well to ensure the BARR system is supporting our educators and students Kindergarten through 12th grade.

St. Cloud Technical and Apollo High Schools began implementation in the 2018-2019 and 2019-20 school years respectively, as part of a federal research grant project that helped to prove BARR's 20 statistically significant outcomes. We are proud of our increased graduation rates, especially for our students of color.

St. Cloud has seen early success in the two middle schools:

St. Cloud South Junior High: Implementation of BARR at South Junior High School in St. Cloud, MN, has been fantastic! By strengthening our teaming model, supporting a greater sense of community, and revitalizing staff members' enthusiasm, BARR has elevated the school's collaborative approach.

From the start, the decision to integrate BARR into the South Junior High's learning community was met with enthusiasm and anticipation. BARR, known for its proactive approach to supporting students' social-emotional needs and academic growth, provided a framework that aligned with South Junior High's vision for supporting students.

One of the first noticeable impacts of BARR at South Junior High has been the strengthening of the teaming model. By implementing BARR strategies, teachers were able to collaborate more effectively, share insights about individual students, and tailor their approach to meet diverse learning needs. This team dynamic not only started to

better streamline communication, but also began a more personalized and supportive learning environment for students.

BARR has created a greater sense of community within the school. Through our regular team meetings, the professional development workshops, and collaborative problem-solving sessions, staff members created deeper connections with each other.

BARR also brought new energy to both new and veteran staff members. For seasoned educators, the program provided a fresh perspective . Meanwhile, newer staff members have found themselves in a supportive community of educators committed to student success.

The success of BARR at the 6th grade level has been felt throughout all students and team members. Students have loved the I-Time lesson and have started to think differently about academics and the learning environment. Staff members found renewed passion and have been energized by the collaborative spirit.

We urge you to support H.F. 3378 so more students and educators in St. Cloud and across the state can be a part of a school culture where 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason H.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jason Harris
Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education



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JEFF VIZENOR
Principal, Jordan High School
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Representative Cheryl Youakim, Chair
House E-12 Finance Committee
February 23, 2024

Re: Support H.F. 3378, Rep. Youakim

Dear Chair Youakim and House E-12 Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of Jordan High School in the Jordan Public School District to express strong support for H.F. 3378, which allocates funding to expand the BARR model to 36 additional Minnesota schools.

Jordan High School applied for funding to implement the BARR system after this funding was released by the Minnesota Legislature in 2023. Since we began implementing the BARR system, we have seen improvements in several areas, including a reduction in failure rates and increased attendance. It has also helped our staff to be more efficient and clear in our student support meetings.

We urge you to support H.F. 3378, so more schools in the Jordan Public School District, as well as around Minnesota, have the opportunity to experience the benefits of the BARR system.

Sincerely,

Jeff Vizenor

Jeff Vizenor
Jordan High School Principal



Representative Cheryl Youakim, Chair
House E-12 Finance Committee

February 22, 2024

Re: Support H.F. 3378, Rep. Youakim

Dear Chair Youakim and House E-12 Finance Committee Members,

I am reaching out to you on behalf of Marshall Public Schools to express strong support for H.F. 3378, which allocates funding to expand the BARR model to 36 additional Minnesota schools. Marshall High School's principal shared several impacts in a letter of support during the 2023 Legislative Session, and we are proud that this helped to secure the funds that ultimately led to two more of our schools – Marshall Middle School and Southview Elementary – being funded this school year. Yet we want to expand further and urge you to support H.F. 3378 so Marshall can expand BARR into its remaining schools.

Marshall High School began BARR implementation in the 2019-2020 school year as part of a national philanthropic grant. Marshall High School has used this program to increase academic performance amongst our ninth-grade students, improve relationships which have helped to decrease office referrals, and strengthen relationships between student-student, staff-student, and staff-staff. Our Elementary and Middle Schools have seen improvements in several areas in a short time. Some of the impacts we have seen are teachers supporting one another with student concerns, teachers getting to know individual students better, more efficient meeting formats, and a decrease in behavior referrals in the office.

Students and teachers across our district and across Minnesota deserve to experience the positive impacts that BARR supports. Please support H.F. 3378.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeremy Williams
Superintendent



Independent School District 152



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Representative Cheryl Youakim, Chair
House E-12 Finance Committee

February 22, 2024

Re: Support H.F. 3378, Rep. Youakim

Dear Chair Youakim and House E-12 Finance Committee Members,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of Moorhead Area Public Schools to express strong support for H.F. 3378, which allocates funding to expand the BARR model to 36 additional Minnesota schools. Horizon Middle School began implementing the BARR system in 2019, with Moorhead High School following suit the next year, as part of BARR's federal research grant. After seeing the positive impacts of BARR in these schools, two Moorhead elementary schools applied for the funding provided by the Minnesota Legislature in 2023. Only Ellen Hopkins Elementary School received funding.

Since Moorhead Area Public Schools began implementing the BARR system, we have seen improvements in several areas:

1. Moorhead High School: The BARR Program has provided a structure for us to monitor student performance and needs through professional connections between our families, staff and student. We meet on a weekly basis in both the block and big block meetings to problem solve student's needs, hearing a variety of voices of our on staff professionals. Our Community Connect meetings have provided the opportunity to bring other professionals to the table to connect struggling students with the services they need in order to be successful. The BARR Program has also initiated the discussion at Moorhead High School regarding the change of grading practices and how to more effectively grade our students' efforts and progress toward graduation. We have seen improvement in our failure rates, as low as 10% in some courses and increased attendance in class on both the global scale and some significant improvement on a student to student basis.

2. Horizon Middle School: BARR has strengthened the connection between our staff and the students through the ITime lessons and the intentional discussions that occur in the teacher and big block meetings. Through the use of a survey, 91.9% of students stated that they felt valued by at least one adult. The BARR model has given teacher teams focus on creating opportunities and strategies to connect with those 8.1% of students that may not have felt valued. Another success is our work with students that were failing 1 or more classes. Through staff

collaboration, the failure rate in 8th grade dropped 17% from the year of BARR implementation (2019) to present (2024).

3. Ellen Hopkins Elementary: Implementation began in September due to late approval of the BARR grant. Since our school is very new to BARR, data is not yet indicative of the progress that we are experiencing. Relationships (student-student, staff-student, staff-staff) are strengthening with student and staff surveys, small block meetings, and U-Time implementation. Strength-based discussions centered around universal student growth has been a game changer in our school. Utilizing the minds and experiences of our staff, our greatest assets, has opened immeasurable opportunities for our school and community.

Our district is hopeful more funding will be released so our remaining elementary schools can begin implementation next school year. In fact, BARR should be available to any interested school across the state. For this reason, we urge you to support H.F. 3378.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brandon Lunak
Superintendent

Dr. Jeremy Larson
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning