

Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) is a K-12 comprehensive, strength-based approach to education that boosts achievement for all students by improving a school's effectiveness at building relationships, leveraging real-time student data, and capitalizing on the strengths of students and staff. BARR increases academic achievement and engagement for all students, **with largest impacts demonstrated for students farthest from opportunity (including Black, Hispanic, and students in poverty)** through professional development, coaching, curriculum for intentional relationship building, and access to a national network of BARR educators.

## BARR Schools in Minnesota

**Bold indicates schools funded by bipartisan legislation**

### Aitkin County

- McGregor Secondary School

### Anoka County

- **Bultum Academy**

### Becker County

- Detroit Lakes Senior High School
- **Detroit Lakes Middle School**
- **Roosevelt Elementary School**

### Blue Earth County

- **Mankota East High School**

### Carver County

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

### Chisago County

- North Branch Area High School

### Clay County

- Moorhead Public Schools
- Horizon Middle School
- Moorhead High School
- **Ellen Hopkins Elementary School**

### Dakota County

- South St. Paul School District:
  - Kaposia Education Center
  - South St. Paul High School
  - South St. Paul Middle School
- **Two Rivers High School**
- **Apple Valley Senior High School**

### Goodhue County

- Red Wing Middle/High School

### Hennepin County

- Brooklyn Center Middle/High School
- District Charter Schools:
  - Harvest Best Academy K-8
  - Hiawatha Academy, Collegiate High School
  - Hiawatha College Prep, Northrop Campus K-8
- **Eden Prairie Senior High School**
- Hopkins West Junior High School
- Kennedy High School
- Minneapolis Public Schools:
  - Henry Senior High
  - South Senior High (Minneapolis)
  - Park Center IB World School
- Robbinsdale Public School District:
  - Robbinsdale Armstrong High School
  - Robbinsdale Cooper High School
  - Robbinsdale Middle School
- **Northport Elementary School**
- St. Louis Park Senior High

### Lake County

- Two Harbors Secondary

### Lyon County

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

### Mower County

- Austin High School
- Austin Middle School

### Polk County

- **Crookston High School**

### Ramsey County

- North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale District
  - North Senior High School
  - Tartan Senior High
- **North Metro Flex Academy Charter School**
- White Bear Lake School District:
  - Central Middle School
  - Lakeaires Elementary School
  - Sunrise Park Middle School
  - Vadnais Heights Elementary School
  - White Bear Lake North Campus Senior High
  - Willow Lane Elementary

### Scott County

- **Jordan High School**
- Prior Lake High School

### St. Louis County

- Denfeld High School

### Stearns County

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

### Washington County

- River Grove Marine Area Community School
- Stillwater Area Public Schools:
  - Afton-Lakeland Elementary School
  - Lake Elmo Elementary
- **Brookview Elementary School**
- **Oak-Land Middle School**
- Stillwater Area High School

The BARR model is distinguished as one of the most proven, systemwide school improvement models within K-12 education. It is the first and only school improvement intervention to successfully climb the three tiers of evidence required under the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) program.

**20 years** of research and development

**115 schools** involved in research trials

**20 areas** of statistically significant outcomes

↑ BARR increases academic achievement and engagement for all students, with largest impacts demonstrated for students farthest from opportunity including Black, Hispanic, and students in poverty. BARR also increases teacher satisfaction and collaboration.

↓ BARR reduces risky behaviors such as chronic absenteeism, substance use, disciplinary incidences and suicide ideation and attempts.

“The proof is in the research. **The proof is in the schools.**”

“From starting the BARR model in 2019 until now our MCAs have grown an average of 10.2% just in math which is huge considering the state we are all in and all of the challenges we have overcome in the last four years. **This year focused on literacy and our most recent scores indicate that students are meeting and exceeding their growth goals.**”

– Kelly Hoskins, Fifth Grade Teacher and BARR co-coordinator at Lake Elmo Elementary

“Armstrong High School's graduation rate has increased by 4% since 2018, our first year of BARR. Our students of color report feeling more of a sense of belonging due to the stronger relationships they have with adults and teachers in our building. **BARR has permanently changed Armstrong High School for the better in four years.**”

– Erick Norby, Principal at Armstrong High School

“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.**”

– Tony Walfoort, Social Studies Teacher at White Bear Lake High School

“Since we brought this system into our school, I've seen a significant change in our school culture at every level. **The BARR system truly does get results.**”

– Josh Omang, Principal at Detroit Lakes High School



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.



The BARR model has met the Evidence for ESSA requirements for “strong evidence” four times in reading and math impacts and one time in social-emotional learning.



BARR is listed in the CASEL Guide as a SElect Program, which is the top designation a program can earn for meeting or exceeding all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL (social-emotional learning) programming.



BARR is included in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.



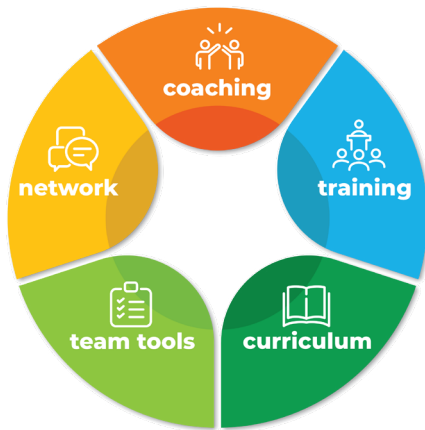
BARR received the 2014 ACT College and Career Transition Award.



“A systemic and intensive focus on data, relationships and evidence-based support can help meet the current challenges. **Real-time data** helps schools pinpoint where students are struggling; a **focus on relationships** increases students’ school engagement, and an **evidence-based approach** supports all students, particularly the large number currently shown to be off-track.”

– Angela Jerabek, Founder and Executive Director of the BARR Center

## From Strong Implementation to Sustainability and Success



### What the BARR Center provides over three-years:

- **Coaching:** experienced former educator who guides the BARR implementation process and the professional development of staff to ensure success.
- **Training:** on-site training that aligns the BARR system with existing school structures while building educators’ expertise and a strong community of trust.
- **Curriculum:** content focused on building intentional student-to-student and teacher-to-student relationships that transform how teachers and students interact.
- **Tools:** a collection of processes, protocols, and resources used to develop a strength-based system specific to each school.
- **Network of Schools:** BARR educators across the nation build meaningful peer-to-peer relationships and share ideas to further student success.

“I’ve been teaching for 31 years and for a lot of those years I felt like I was on an island when dealing with students who struggled. I tried to figure it out by myself, there was nothing set up for me to communicate with other teachers, I’d throw something out there and hope it worked, oftentimes it did not. With BARR, teachers communicate and share strategies about how to meet the needs of these students. **We have far more collaboration and direction with helping students.**”

– Kalan Malchow, Social Studies Teacher at Detroit Lakes High School



For more information, contact  
Rob Metz, BARR Center Deputy Director  
at (763) 656-3062 or [rob.metz@barrcenter.org](mailto:rob.metz@barrcenter.org)

[www.barrcenter.org](http://www.barrcenter.org)



Jordan High School  
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**JEFF VIZENOR**  
Principal, Jordan High School  
jvizenor@isd717.org

Senator Mary Kunesh, Chair  
Senate E-12 Finance Committee

February 23, 2024

Re: Support S.F. 3539, Senator Putnam

Dear Chair Kunesh and Senate 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 S.F. 3539, 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 S.F. 3539, 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

## OUR MISSION

Inspire a caring community to ignite learning, innovation, and success for all!



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Senator Mary Kunesh, Chair  
Senate E-12 Finance Committee

February 22, 2024

Re: Support S.F. 3539, Senator Putnam

Dear Chair Kunesh and Senate 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 S.F. 3539 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 S.F. 3539.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Williams".

Jeremy Williams  
Superintendent



## Independent School District 152



1313 30th Ave. S., Moorhead, MN 56560



Phone: 218-284-3300



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Senator Mary Kunesch, Chair  
Senate E-12 Finance Committee

February 22, 2024

Re: Support S.F. 3539, Senator Putnam

Dear Chair Kunesch and Senate 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

Senator Mary Kunesh, Chair  
Senate E-12 Finance Committee

February 23, 2024

Re: Support S.F. 3539, Senator Putnam

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

We are reaching out to you on behalf of the St. Cloud Area Schools to express strong support for S.F. 3539, 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 S.F. 3539 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 Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and "H".

Jason Harris  
Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education



**Senator Mary Kunesch, Chair, Senate E-12 Finance Committee**

February 23, 2024

Re: Support S.F. 3539, Senator Putnam

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

On behalf of the Stillwater Area Public Schools we wish to express strong support for S.F. 3539, 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 2019 video clearly shows the impact it is making: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJASSliSQBk](https://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 S.F. 3539 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



# TWO RIVERS HIGH SCHOOL

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Dr. ALBERT JOHNSON | Principal | [albert.johnson@isd197.org](mailto:albert.johnson@isd197.org)

Senator Mary Kunesh, Chair  
Senate E-12 Finance Committee

March 4, 2024

Re: Support S.F. 3539, Senator Putnam

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

I am reaching out to you on behalf of Two Rivers High School in the West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area School District, ISD 197, to express strong support for S.F. 3539, which allocates funding to expand the BARR model to 36 additional Minnesota schools. We began implementing the BARR system during the 2023 school year, after being selected to receive funding provided by the Minnesota Legislature.

Since Two Rivers began implementing the BARR system, we have seen immediate results in several areas, including:

1. Increased and Streamlined Mental Health Services Access
2. Decreased Failure Rate
3. Increase student to student relationship
4. Increased teacher collaboration and efficacy

Our school is excited about the possibilities that we are seeing through the BARR system, and we believe that BARR would greatly benefit any school in Minnesota. For these reasons, we urge you to support S.F. 3539.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Albert Johnson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Albert Johnson  
Principal