

Building Assets Reducing Risks: A Proven Strategy to Increase Student Achievement by Improving Teacher Effectiveness

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Spurwink is applying for (i3) Validation funding to replicate the Building Assets Reducing Risks (BARR) Program, an innovative data-driven strategy to increase teacher effectiveness and improve student achievement. The proposed project will address two i3 *Absolute Priorities: 1—Improving the Effectiveness of Teachers* and *5—Serving Rural Communities*, with attention to extending highly effective teachers’ reach to serve more students, as well as *Competitive Priorities 2 (Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices) and 3 (Novice applicant)*.

BARR is a school-based program that is based on Dr. Peter Benson’s Developmental Assets framework and reduces social/emotional barriers to learning through (1) professional development of teachers, staff, and administrators and (2) restructuring of the 9th grade into blocks served by teacher teams. Fundamental elements of the approach are *creating positive, intentional relationships* (staff to staff, staff to students, and students to students), *collaborative problem solving by teacher teams*, and *using existing technology platforms and real-time student data to guide instructional action*. Spurwink is partnering with four other leaders in education — American Institutes of Research (AIR), Search Institute, Hazelden, and Vision Training Associates— to ensure that the project produces outcomes for the highest need students and develops strategies for widespread adoption of the BARR program.

The current BARR i3 Development project has produced significant improvement in course credits earned, grade point averages, and standardized test scores. BARR i3 Validation will enable implementation in 12 more research sites in California and Maine. The project will impact at least 17,123 students and 816 teachers, including the 45 additional schools in Maine testing a broad adoption strategy.