

How BARR works in Schools

The BARR system starts with a school adopting BARR's eight interconnected strategies that fundamentally change the way not just teachers, but administrators, counselors, and the rest of the school staff interact with students.

The strategies are:

1. Focus on the whole student
2. Provide professional development for teachers, counselors, and administrators
3. Use BARR's curriculum to foster a climate for learning and relationship building
4. Create cohorts to cultivate connections
5. Hold regular meetings of the cohort teacher teams to discuss each student
6. Conduct Community Connect meetings that engage the community
7. Engage families
8. Engage administrators

The BARR Center supports schools with adoption of the model. Specifically, we provide an initial two day in-person BARR implementation training, with two trainers, one of which typically becomes the school's dedicated BARR coach. Through weekly planning, coaching and on-site visits, the BARR coach guides school staff to ensure they get the initial lift towards high fidelity implementation and achievement of their identified school goals.

In secondary schools, BARR's model brings teachers together from core academic areas to form a team that works with many of the same students. A large middle or high school may have multiple teacher teams, each with their own student cohort. In elementary schools, there are both horizontal and vertical teams that meet to discuss students. In all cases, BARR shifts the conversation to a whole-student perspective.

That more complete view of students takes place in weekly team meetings, called block time, where teachers share observations of each student's strengths and challenges. Block time centers on real-time data – both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The team works off a spreadsheet that builds a picture of each student by reviewing a variety of in-school factors, including progress in class, attendance, and behavior. The team also discusses factors outside the school, such as extracurricular interests, personal health, issues with other students, or troubles at home. All this data collection allows the team to flag challenges early and work together to solve problems. Importantly, teachers track not just problems but student strengths to identify achievable goals to get or keep students on track for success.

For students coping with the toughest situations in and out of school, BARR's model requires a weekly Community Connect meeting that involves more specialized staff, such as the school nurse and school psychologist along with school administration. They consider the need for tapping community resources to assist with a range of issues that are not solved in the classroom.

In secondary schools, team teachers also take turns facilitating a weekly class activity called I-Time that focuses on relationship building among classmates and between teachers and students. In elementary schools, classroom teachers deliver U-Time activities weekly. BARR coaches them on how to facilitate conversations that tap into social and emotional skill development.

