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SUCCEED.**



**NEWS FROM THE  
NORTHSIDE ACHIEVEMENT ZONE  
ISSUE 3, SEPTEMBER 2010**

**THE NAZ  
CONNECTION**

[northsideachievement.org](http://northsideachievement.org)



## WHAT WE'RE DOING

Minnesota's achievement gap is consistently among the largest in the nation. While Minnesota's white students largely benefit from one of the nation's best educational systems, black students on the Northside succeed only by beating the odds. They face a fragmented public school system with reduced expectations, a concentration of isolated poverty, one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the nation, and an epidemic of youth violence. Currently, the odds in Minneapolis are that only three out of ten black students will graduate from high school (*Minnesota Department of Education, 2010*) and even fewer will go to college. **These odds will change.**

## CREATING A CULTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT

In 2008, community organizations began gathering to apply the promise of the Harlem Children's Zone to North Minneapolis. After a preliminary needs assessment, strategic conversations among stakeholders, and analysis of lessons learned from previous collaborations of this kind, the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) was formed. Its collaborative mission is **to build a culture of achievement in a geographic Zone in North Minneapolis to ensure all youth graduate from high school college-ready.**

In 2010 the PEACE Foundation, with expertise in grassroots community organizing, violence reduction and successful collaboration building, merged as the NAZ lead organization. As over sixty committed local organizational and school partners develop plans to execute the on-the-ground work of NAZ, the PEACE Foundation, now doing business (DBA) as Northside Achievement Zone, has transformed its organizational structure and now functions solely to manage this initiative. It will facilitate collaboration, execute fundraising and financial management, oversee evaluation processes and operate family engagement solutions.

NAZ has laid its foundation and is ready to fully plan and create a continuum of solutions (see NAZ Continuum on opposite page) that will ensure all children residing within the Zone are prepared to succeed in college and life. In order to achieve such an ambitious goal, NAZ has defined three areas of strategic focus:

- 1. Education Pipeline:** A convening of district, charter and alternative schools, undergirded by a strong partnership of early childhood providers, will co-construct with NAZ leadership a new educational experience for children on the North side.
- 2. Family Engagement:** By engaging families in children's success and empowering neighbors as leaders in the effort, NAZ will create a culture of achievement in the Zone.
- 3. Opportunity Alignment:** By building a coalition of existing service providers, NAZ will revolutionize the way organizations work together and refocus their service delivery around clear achievement outcomes for families and children in the Zone.

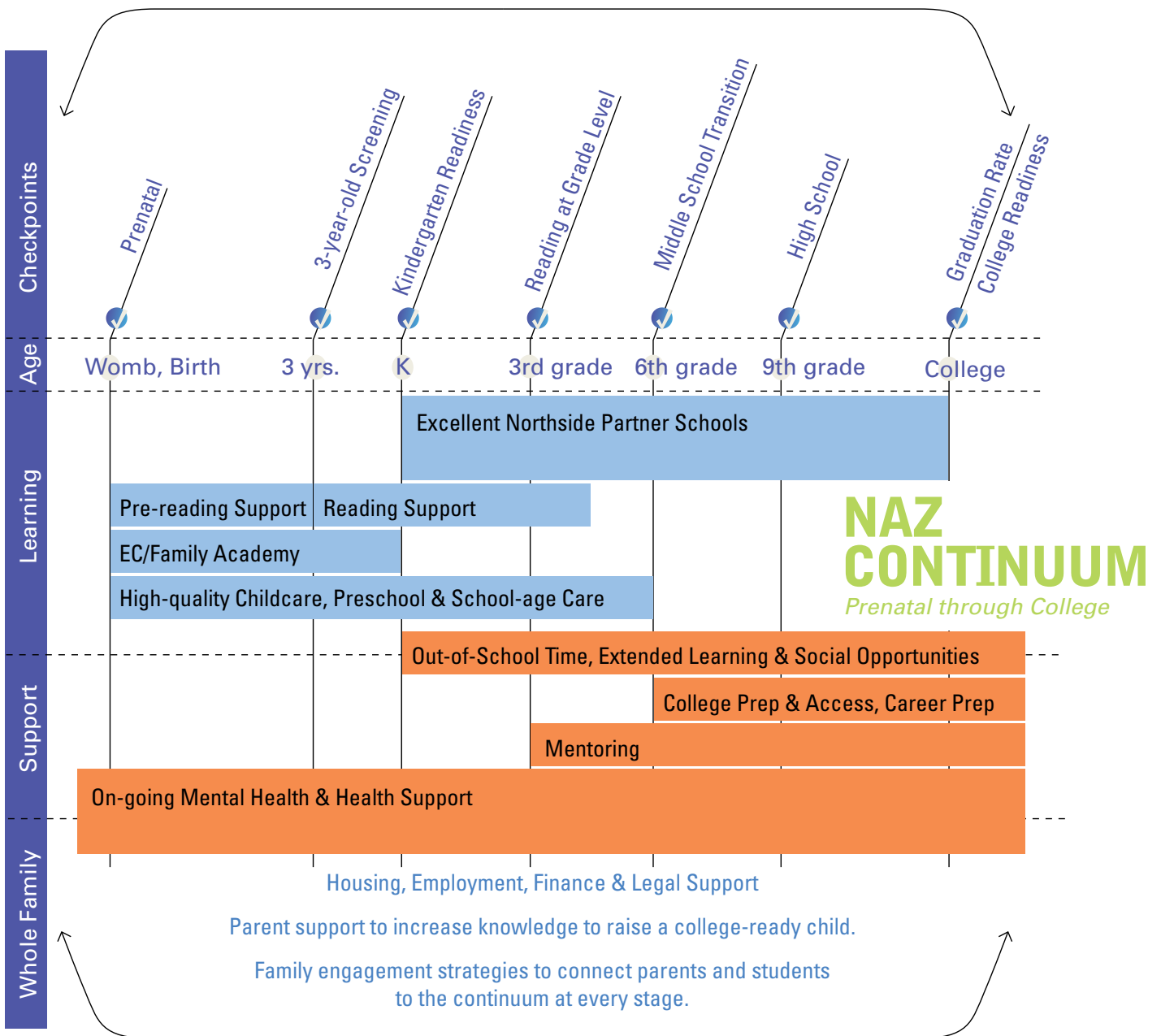
Within this integrated system, every organization, family and neighbor is focused on children's education and success. This effort will result in children entering kindergarten ready to learn, students demonstrating proficiency at or above grade level in reading and math, and children graduating from high school prepared for college and life success.

### Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)

1200 W. Broadway, #180 | Minneapolis, MN 55411 | 612-521-4405



# WHAT WE'RE DOING

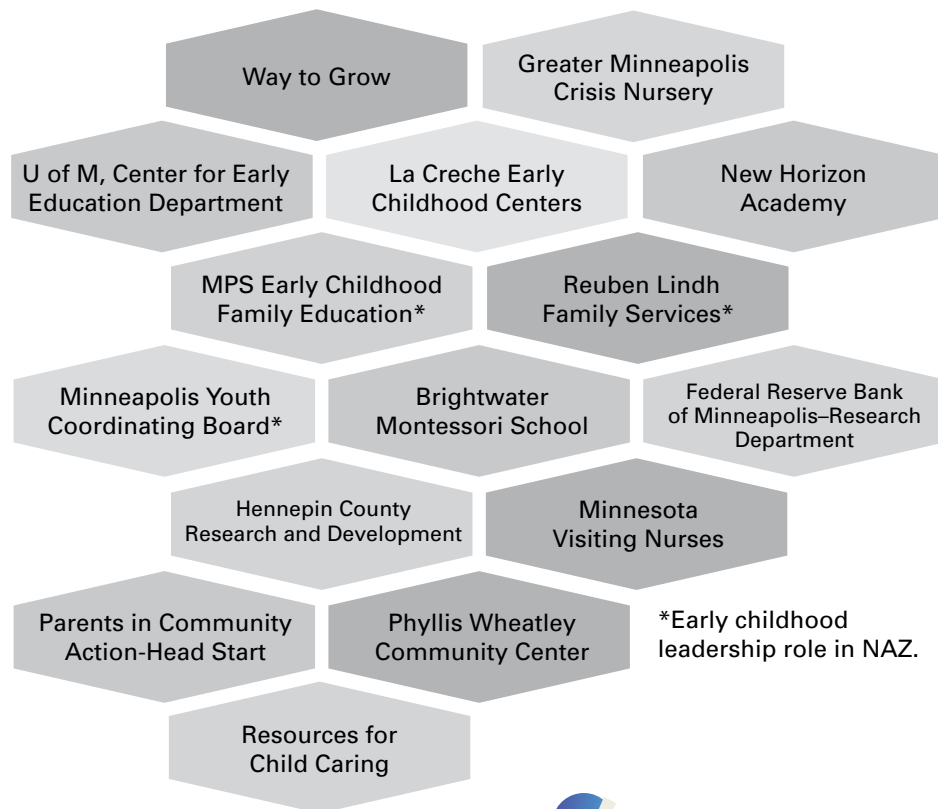




**NAZ  
EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
PARTNERS**

*According to Art Rolnick, Former Senior Vice President and Director of Research at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, advocate for quality early childhood education and member of the NAZ Board of Directors,*

*“The research shows that investing in children early in communities like the Northside yields a high public return. This is in contrast to the 0% return on public subsidies to private businesses. Less crime and a well-educated workforce lead to the long-term payoff of economic growth and development.”*



**ALL KIDS KINDERGARTEN READY!**



Early childhood is a critical window of opportunity to stop the achievement gap before it starts. If children and families have access to quality early childhood education experiences, success will follow. Unfortunately today, too many of our children are arriving at kindergarten unprepared to learn, which can result in a lifetime of challenges. NAZ is committed to ending this cycle and will set an achievement course for families at all stages of their children’s development, beginning as early as in the womb!

The Early Childhood Action Team of NAZ has been meeting since 2009, and has developed partner commitments and a shared work plan. Each partner organization brings a wealth of experience and expertise in the area of early childhood education and services, and they have committed to helping all NAZ children start kindergarten ready to learn. Together, the partners will create a coordinated, seamless-system of early childhood programs and services including:

- Prenatal supports
- A comprehensive plan for early childhood screening and assessments
- Parent education through access to a Family Academy curriculum customized to North Minneapolis
- Access to quality child care and preschool options, and
- Linkages to kindergarten through 3rd grade

In addition, through NAZ, families will be given information and incentives to take effective action right in their home to start their children on a college path early. Simple actions based on well researched concepts will be supported, such as reading to kids every day to increase word count. And if books are needed, NAZ will provide them.

The team will learn from the NAZ pilot work happening in 2010 and develop a comprehensive strategic plan, based on the prior work of 500 Under 5, for all solutions to be brought to scale. Together, we will assure school readiness for children and families living in the NAZ zone.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACT



### MEASURING THE IMPACT

NAZ will be using evaluation and outcome-based measurements to check regularly how we are doing. All of our work will be planned and implemented to impact three key indicators:

- █ The percentage of NAZ children starting kindergarten ready to learn
- █ The percentage of NAZ children at grade level for reading and math
- █ The percentage of NAZ youth graduating from high school ready for college.

These indicators will be measured through a variety of strategies. We are establishing an accurate kindergarten-readiness baseline in the Zone and estimate it will be similar to the kindergarten-readiness rates for zip code 55411, as shown below:

In the fall of 2009, 26 percent of children\* met readiness standards for math indicators and 54 percent for reading indicators.

\* Children included in this statistic are those who entered a MPLS Public School Kindergarten in the fall of 2009, lived in zip code 55411, and received a Beginning of Kindergarten Assessment. 55411 is the zip code that best approximates the Northside Achievement Zone.

—*Beginning of Kindergarten Assessment, May 2010, Minneapolis Public Schools.*  
More detailed results information available at [northsideachievement.org/results](http://northsideachievement.org/results).

*"I have a 5 year old who has been diagnosed with ADHD and I need child care for my 18 month old. I would like to be a part of this organization. I really think they can help with a lot of my problems such as schooling, working, programs for my kids, housing, etc. I am working with my NAZ Connector and I think she will do very well.*

—*Tina McCombs, NAZ Family Member*

**NAZ  
FAMILIES**



## NAZ LEADERSHIP & KEY PARTNERS

### NAZ Leadership Spotlight— Diane Haulcy

“Early childhood providers, Minneapolis Public Schools and Hennepin County are all coming together in an historic convening with one agenda: to ensure that every child in the Zone receives quality early childhood education and experience to prepare them for college starting in the womb.”

#### Northside Achievement Zone Leadership:

**Sondra Samuels**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Michelle Martin**  
Chief Operating Officer

**Andre Dukes**  
Engagement Director

**Michelle Palo**  
Opportunity &  
Project Coordinator

**Bruce Murray**  
Engagement  
Coordinator

#### Partners on Management Team:

**Maureen Seiwert**  
Mpls Public Schools,  
Early Education Early  
Childhood

**Dr. Scott McConnell**  
University of MN, CEED

**Al Fan**  
Charter School Partners

**Mark Bonine**  
MPLS Public Schools,  
Associate Superintendent

**Karen Goodenough**  
Plymouth Christian  
Youth Center

**Chad Schwitters**  
Urban Homeworks

**Nancy Torrison**  
Kinship of Greater  
Minneapolis

**Dianne Haulcy**  
Reuben Lindh Center,

#### Additional Key Collaborative Partner Leads:

**Dr. Lauren Martin**  
University of MN, CEED  
*Accountability and  
Standards*

**Darlene Bell**  
Big Brothers Big Sisters  
*Mentoring*

**Darrell Thompson**  
Bolder Options  
*Mentoring*

**Kristina Lemmer**  
Youth Coordinating Board  
*Early Childhood*

**Dan Hunt**  
Urban Homeworks  
*Housing*

**Jenny Wright Collins**  
YMCA Beacons  
*Out-of-School Time*

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