

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**OVERVIEW..... 1**

**NEED..... 5**

**QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN ..... 11**

1. Continuum of solutions aligned with school improvement..... 11

2. Implementation plan to create a continuum leading to college and career ..... 34

3. Existing neighborhood assets and programs used to implement continuum..... 36

4. Implementation plan for leveraging resources and improving systems ..... 37

**QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES ..... 39**

1. Needs assessment and segmentation analysis ..... 40

2. Proposed solutions and their relation to needs assessment..... 43

3. Annual goals and plans for improvement on indicators ..... 44

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN ..... 48**

1. Capacity to work effectively with residents, schools, partners, government ..... 49

2. NAZ Longitudinal Data System: Using data to drive decisions ..... 56

3. Management capacity to solidify partners..... 62

4. Capacity to realign and integrate funding streams and quality programs ..... 63

**FIGURE 5: INDICATOR TABLES 1 AND 2..... i**

**REFERENCES ..... iv**

## OVERVIEW

Minnesota's achievement gap is consistently among the largest in the nation. The negative indicators that produce this gap are most pronounced on Minneapolis's Northside; as we detail in this document, the Northside is a community that is dominated by high rates of violence, poverty, unemployment, and failing schools. The results have been disastrous for far too many Northside residents. For this reason, community organizations and schools began a planning process in 2008 to develop a comprehensive solution to change these seemingly intractable issues. The result was the formation of the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ).

*What is NAZ?* The Northside Achievement Zone is an organization that works collaboratively with over 50 organizations and schools with the mission to improve educational outcomes and build a culture of achievement in a geographic area ("the Zone") in North Minneapolis to ensure all youth graduate from high school college-ready.

NAZ leaders are working to achieve this by creating a comprehensive, multi-level change strategy that addresses the educational and community context on the Northside overall, while implementing a "high touch" process with children and families living in the Zone. As described in the **Quality of Project Design** section, NAZ will create a "cradle to college to career" pipeline with strong schools at the center through "three pillars" of impact:

**Pillar One:** engaging parents to strengthen their ability to support achievement and aligning resources to support their effort, and

**Pillar Two:** improving schools and the educational experience within a continuum of support services to produce academic excellence for all children, and

**Pillar Three:** providing whole family wrap-around support to children and families enrolled in NAZ to stabilize the household and remove external barriers to learning.

With these three pillars in place as NAZ's theory of change, parents have access to information about their child's previous educational path and current and projected academic achievement, and they have information about programs that can effectively address identified needs or gaps to improve achievement. Parents also have skilled mentors and coaches—from their own community—who persistently connect them to this information, to help them make and implement plans of action and resolve challenges as they arise.

At the same time, neighborhood schools will be rising to the challenge of educating Northside children. NAZ has identified nine Target Schools in and around the Zone and has been working for the past year with district, charter, and parochial school leaders on groundbreaking reforms. Principals are working closely together with a shared commitment to assume their role as educational leaders and catalysts for lasting change. Teachers are expanding their instructional expertise, intensifying their instructional efforts, and improving their effectiveness over time. As NAZ partners adopt the belief that every child can and will succeed—regardless of their family background—we concurrently escalate our expectations for academic achievement and attainment. To augment school reform, we are implementing programs such as extended day and extended year, aligned Pre-K, elementary, and secondary programs—all focused on college readiness and lifelong success.

Lastly, the whole family's well-being and the student's academic progress are seamlessly and consistently supported by effective social service programs and strategies which are determined in real time by parent- and child-identified barriers and aspirations. In addition to opening service access to families and children, the schools will have effective connections to these services, enabling them to address issues seamlessly as they arise.

We believe these three pillars—engaged parents with aligned education support, committed and innovating schools within a continuum of support services, and effective whole family support programs—are catalysts for transforming the lives, and life outcomes, of NAZ children.

Who is NAZ? NAZ is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that is designed to replicate the success of the Harlem Children’s Zone. It is both an organization and a collaborative effort that brings together neighbors (including parents and youth), schools, service-providers and government. In 2010 and current year 2011, NAZ operates with a \$1.1 million operating budget and is currently implementing the three pillars described above as a pilot.

Driving work on the ground is the “NAZ Family Engagement Team.” Engagement Team members are from the Northside community and play a critical role in building the culture of achievement within families. Their first charge has been to implement our pilot effort by recruiting and supporting our 133 pilot families with 359 children who are representative of the Zone in their level of need (as described in the **Need for Project** section). The pilot families are both recipients of programming and building blocks for the community-wide change that is underway. They are, quite literally, the “culture-shifters” who will wave through their own neighborhood and solidify the trend toward school success and ultimately college.

NAZ families will be supported by “Target Schools” operating in or near the geographic Zone and NAZ Partners providing services in the Zone. Target Schools include nine neighborhood schools (see list of Target Schools in the **Project Design** section) all committed to improve through an unprecedented convening of public district, public charter, and parochial schools. NAZ Partners include Target Schools as well as community organizations, social services, and non-profits all serving a critical mass of families living in the Zone and all

committing their individual organizations to the NAZ mission of building college and career readiness in the Zone (see full list in Appendix F.2 and F.4).

Before creation of this application to become a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ already created and implemented a detailed plan for a pilot effort in 2011 to scale up over the next five years for Zone-wide impact. All elements described in this proposal begin with our current operating structure as a starting point and depict plans for Zone-wide scale-up through the Promise Neighborhood investment.

NAZ and its program partners are fully committed to transparency and accountability; we will describe what we are doing and the impact our efforts are producing. If we are not effective, we will revise our plans until we get it right. To achieve our desired results, we rely on evidence-based practice and a continual use of data to drive programming.

As described in the **Quality of Program Services** section, we have developed an internal evaluation program performance model, the “NAZ Seal of Effectiveness,” to maintain or move all NAZ partners toward evidence-based practices in all aspects of our continuum of solutions. Action Teams (made up of the program managers and partner organizations responsible for each solution in our continuum) are required to develop detailed, evidence-based plans for NAZ-sponsored interventions. These plans reviewed by peers and receive ongoing scrutiny. Plans that do not embrace available evidence-based practices are marked for further development or justification, and “promising” (best-practice) or “proven” (empirically validated) practices that do not produce expected results are slated for careful review and revision.

As described in the **Quality of Management Plan** section, in order to manage outcomes across the collaboration, NAZ works as an intermediary. NAZ provides the “infrastructure services” necessary for education and nonprofit partners to work effectively together to help

families and students. NAZ engages families and aligns the services of other program partners, providing both additional funding and an organizing framework for comprehensive, aligned, effective, and continuously improving practices. Resources received as a Promise Neighborhood will accelerate, and bolster NAZ's ability to align services for families and children and to foster an environment where all youth, regardless of family background, graduate from high school college-ready and on track for careers.

#### **NEED FOR PROJECT**

*Geographically Defined Area.* The Northside Achievement Zone is a contiguous 13- by 18-block area in North Minneapolis, bounded by 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the north, West Broadway on the south, I-94 on the east and Penn Avenue on the west. We created this Zone to encompass an area with the most concentrated convergence of negative indicators. The geographic area was identified based on a review of data sources (including probation records, police calls and families receiving TANF assistance) and detailed conversations with community members, leaders, and service providers. NAZ is located fully within the boundaries of the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County. The entire Zone falls within the boundaries of Minneapolis Public Schools.

*Demography of the Zone.* Early 2010 Census reports and recent American Community Survey studies from the Census Bureau tell us a great deal about NAZ children and families. According to the 2010 Census, 14,798 people live within our geographic boundaries: 47% are African American, 20% White, 18% Asian, 8% Hispanic, and 7% multiracial, American Indian, or other ethnicities. Based on results from the Wilder Community Survey—a random household survey conducted in the Zone during Summer 2010—we estimate that there are 2,047 families raising children in the Zone with an average of 2.7 children per family. The Zone is estimated to

be home to more than 5,615 children. These children make up 38% of the neighborhood's population (2010 Census, block-level, obtained August 26, 2011 from <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/popmap/>).

### **Indicators of Distress and Disparity**

Data from an array of sources shows a pervasive pattern of racial and geographic disparity in North Minneapolis. NAZ leaders and partners have been gathering and collecting data that follows the Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant criteria, including indicators required under this Request for Proposals. A review of this data (see Indicators Tables 1 and 2 at the end of this document) provides evidence of the level of need.

In 2010, Wilder Research and NAZ jointly developed and completed a survey of a random sample of families in the Zone. With a total of 367 completed interviews, results are representative of the Zone to within  $\pm 5\%$  (confirmed by independent data from Minneapolis Public Schools). Topics include demographics, community climate of support for children's well-being and education, access to and need for services, and children's current educational situations and parents' perceptions of them. Results are posted at <http://www.wilder.org/report.html?id=2441>.

#### *a. Educational Outcomes and Quality of Schooling*

Minnesota's achievement gap ranks among the worst in the nation—with the second largest achievement gap in the country for 8<sup>th</sup> graders in math (49<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states) and the 5<sup>th</sup> highest gap for 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading (45<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states) (Minnesota Children's Action Network, 2011). Recent analysis of National Assessment of Educational Progress data reveal that Minnesota's black and white children differed by 33 scale score points—a difference larger than

the black-white achievement gap for the nation as a whole (Vanneman et al., 2009). This disparity is felt acutely on the predominately African American Northside.

Results focused on residents in the Zone follow this trend: Only 24% of children in the Zone demonstrate grade-level achievement in mathematics in Grades 3-8 (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2011), compared to 51% for all children in 2008, as reported by Minnesota Department of Education (<http://www.accountability.state.mn.us/Departments/Education/Goals.htm>). Using the same data sources, we know that only 28% of children in the Zone are at or above grade-level in reading (compared to 71% in the state). Low achievement at early ages is followed by low rates of high school graduation and enrollment in post-secondary education. Only 54% of students attending North High, the high school most representative of our Zone, graduate in four years (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2011).

While difficult to admit, these poor outcomes reflect the current status of schooling and educational services for school-age children in the Zone. Due to a series of failed desegregation and educational reform efforts, neighborhood schools no longer exist in North Minneapolis. A recent survey of 367 NAZ families indicated that their children were attending 145 different elementary and secondary schools (Wilder Research, 2010). Minneapolis Public Schools has 11 schools in and near the Zone; 10 of these 11 schools (Cityview, Bethune, Jenny Lind, Hall, Hmong Academy, Lucy Laney, Nellie Stone Johnson, and Olson elementary schools; North and Patrick Henry high schools) are either low-performing or persistently low-achieving, and the remaining school (Loring Elementary) is not meeting AYP standards and likely to enter corrective action soon. (These schools are the focus of rigorous and ambitious reform by the district, and four of them are also Target Schools through NAZ's educational reform efforts, described later in the **Project Design** section.)

### *b. Support for Educational Outcomes*

Most children living in the Zone lack formal early childhood education and the achievement gap is evident even before they begin formal schooling. In tests of kindergarten readiness in 2010, only 29% of entering kindergartners living in and near the Zone met literacy benchmarks, compared to 71% of children in the District as a whole (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2010). Based on data collected from families in our neighborhood (see Indicator Table 1, Figure 5), relatively few infants and toddlers (16%), and only slightly more than half of preschoolers (53%), attend formal family- or center-based early childhood programs.

Children in the Zone appear to receive little educational support outside regularly scheduled school day/school year programming. In the random sample of families in the Zone, about 55% of families surveyed reported that a child in their home had participated in an afterschool program, and only one third of families reported that a child in their home had been involved in a mentoring program in the last 12 months. Among the respondents whose children had not participated in an after-school activity, the majority (69%) reported that they had wanted their child to do so. Likewise, the majority of respondents whose children had not participated in mentoring (61%) reported that they want their child to have a mentor (Wilder Research, 2010).

### *c. Whole-Family Health and Well-Being—Housing and Economic Security; Physical, Behavioral and Mental Health*

A variety of challenging family factors—including physical, behavioral health, stability and safety of housing, and economic and financial well-being—have an important relationship with educational outcomes for children and youth.

*Housing and Economic Security.* Children in the Zone are at the crossroads of the most pronounced economic disparities in Minneapolis. Nearly half of the children living in the Zone

are African American, and the 2005-2007 child poverty rate for African American children in Minneapolis was 61%, compared to 8% for white children (Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, 2009). A 2010 study found that African Americans in the Twin Cities are more than three times as likely to be unemployed as whites (Economic Policy Institute, 2010)—the worst disparity in the nation. In 2006, 22% of African American parents, compared to only 5% of white parents, missed a rent or mortgage payment because they did not have enough money (Hennepin County, 2006).

Public schools in the Zone identified 25% of students of all races as homeless or highly mobile during the 2008-2009 year (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2011). Fifty-one percent of all Northside children live with a single parent, usually a single mother (Social Explorer, 2007). NAZ has also been the geographic center of foreclosures and housing crises in Minneapolis. From 2007 to 2010, 33% of properties within the Zone were foreclosed, compared to just 8% for all of Minneapolis (Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, 2010). In 2010, Zone neighborhoods had 35% of all the vacant or condemned buildings in the city, but only 4% of properties overall (City of Minneapolis, 2010).

Health. Children living in the Zone, along with all African-Americans in Minneapolis, face significant disparities in health care and have poorer health than the general population. Childhood asthma affects 20% of African American children citywide and 13% in North Minneapolis, compared to 9% of white children citywide (Hennepin County, 2006). Teen pregnancy rates are more than twice as high in North Minneapolis (Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, 2010). Babies born in and around the Zone are also more likely to have a low birth weight (University Northside Partnership, 2006). The infant mortality rate is

three times higher for African Americans than for whites in Minneapolis (University Northside Partnership, 2006).

*Behavioral Health.* Disparities also exist in relation to behavioral and mental health. Northside residents report more days of poor mental health than residents of Minneapolis in general, yet Northside residents saw a mental health provider or counselor in the past 12 months in lower numbers than residents of Minneapolis overall (Hennepin County, 2006). In Hennepin County, African American children are more likely to have physical, behavioral or mental health issues that limit their ability to do childhood activities (8% versus 6% for all races). (Hennepin County, 2006).

*Violence and Crime.* Recent research has documented the acute effect of exposure to crime on children's cognitive performance (Sharkey, 2010), and a disproportionate level of crime in Minneapolis occurs within the Zone and its surrounding blocks. In 2006, Minneapolis Police Department's Northside precinct housed 18% of the city's population but witnessed 48% of its homicides—64% of the victims were African American (Minneapolis Police Department, 2006). For young African Americans in Minneapolis, homicide is the leading cause of death (Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, 2006). This is a poignant and very current issue: In the last two weeks of August 2011, three teenagers (13, 14 and 19 years old) were murdered, and at least four others (including a 12 year old who was shot in the back) were wounded in shootings within or immediately adjacent to the Zone. All the victims were African American. The police and community leaders strongly suspect these shootings are related to youth gang violence (*Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, August 26, 2011). Despite great progress in violence reduction on the Northside in recent years, this remains a pressing problem.

*d. Summary.*

Taken together, academic, social and economic indicators intersect to paint a grim picture of the barriers faced by children living within the Zone. We assert firmly that their odds for success in school will increase as social, health, and economic indicators are improved. Conversely, educational success for North Minneapolis children has been substantially challenged as conditions associated with these indicators deteriorated before the formation of NAZ. Therefore, NAZ has designed a comprehensive strategy to address these barriers and build a culture of achievement to assure that all Zone youth graduate from high school ready for college and life.

## **QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN**

### **1. Continuum of solutions aligned with ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement in schools**

NAZ has a solid, pilot-tested theory of change, referenced in the **Overview**, that defines and drives how we approach the challenge of increasing achievement in the Zone, where children attend over 145 different schools, and as many as 75% of children (see **Need for Project** section) are identified as performing below grade level.

Our **Theory of Change** includes three NAZ pillars: engaged parents with aligned education support, committed and innovating schools within a continuum of support service, and effective whole-family support programs. As described in this section, NAZ is building a “pipeline to college and career” by putting these three pillars into action. By the end of the Promise Neighborhood grant period, this pipeline will include parents who are more engaged and effective at driving their children’s achievement; improved schools and education supports; whole-family support that removes internal and external barriers to learning; and a burgeoning

culture of achievement within the Zone that leads all youth to graduate from high school college and career ready.

The NAZ pipeline to college includes the following eight solutions organized within the three pillars of NAZ as described below.

**Pillar 1—Engage and educate parents, and coordinate solutions**

Solutions 1 through 4 all work together to engage parents in the educational success of their children, to remove barriers to learning, and to create a culture of achievement in the home that helps the child build towards college and career readiness. In fact, these four solutions provide the base of support and infrastructure that all other NAZ solutions work through to align programs and services in support of family and student achievement plans.

**Solution 1: NAZ Connector (neighbor-leader) engagement process with NAZ families**

*Evidence Base for Solution.* Evidence for this cornerstone solution is both historical and logical, and is based on descriptive data and clinical judgment. NAZ is committed to test its efficacy with community colleagues in future years.

Individuals of all backgrounds who do community work assert that residents are more likely to engage, yield initial trust, follow the lead of, and develop close relations with individuals who are similar to them in age, race, sex, and experience (c.f., Bandura, *Social learning theory*, 1977). This can be seen in programs described as effective in the professional literature (Warren et al., 2009) and is supported by data collected by NAZ during initial planning, through a large number of focus groups and directed interviews with parents and community members, service providers, and advocates. Almost universally, community members avowed that to truly and effectively recruit, engage, and impact the trajectory of Northside families, NAZ would have to recruit a staff that represented the neighborhood both

racially and experientially. Early evidence from the NAZ pilot bears out the merits of this approach, as described in the success of Solutions 1 – 4 in this section.

*The Solution.* NAZ implements a “high touch” engagement process with families through the **NAZ Connector** staff role. NAZ Connectors are skilled mentors and coaches who work one-on-one with NAZ enrolled families. They are from the Northside community and are trained neighbor-leaders who work to create an achievement culture within the homes of NAZ families. The NAZ Connector role starts at the beginning of the NAZ process: recruitment. When a potential family is identified for NAZ (either through school or organization referral, or through door-to-door outreach in the Zone) the NAZ Connector engages the family around the potential of their children going to college—and converts that connection into action. Often, repeated invitations over the phone and at the door are necessary to recruit and enroll a family. Each NAZ Connector works with families to build relationships, uncover challenges, and coordinate strategies to support success for NAZ children.

In order to create a peer-support construct, the NAZ Connector team is intentionally comprised of staff members who either live in the community or have personally experienced many of the same challenges as Zone families. As a neighbor-leader and not a social service professional, the Connector brings a key asset with families that most social service providers cannot: they’ve been there themselves. The NAZ Connector’s presence with families increases access to knowledge and decision-making skills to support their children at every age, starting before birth and leading to college and careers.

Concretely, NAZ Connectors help families to build goals and to create action steps that utilize resources from the NAZ solutions. This is done in an online achievement planning and data system called **NAZ Connect** (described as **Solution 3**). The NAZ Connector is one of the

primary driving forces, working side by side with parents, propelling NAZ kids effectively through the NAZ Solutions to college and beyond.

*Current Status – Pilot Tested and Ready for Scale Up.* NAZ now employs three NAZ Connectors working with 133 families. As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ would scale up to 20 full time NAZ Connectors, who would provide engagement support for 1000 families, or 56% of families identified with need for this solution.

Although pilot families were recruited based on general outreach, data on the pilot enrollment shows it is representative of the population most in need of services: families of color with low incomes who are most impacted by the achievement gap. Initial NAZ Connect data for pilot families shows 98% African American enrollment, with average household income-level of \$21,966. Additionally, educational attainment levels of adults in NAZ-enrolled families reveals just over half stopping at high school (only one-quarter graduating) and less than one-quarter participating in any post-high school education. As we scale up implementation, recruitment will be targeted to children most in need based on school achievement below grade level. We are currently developing data-sharing agreements that will enable us to track NAZ children’s achievement through the pipeline.

## **Solution 2: Academic Case Management through NAZ with students**

*Evidence Base for Solution.* NAZ’s Academic Case Management solution rests on three complementary types of evidence. First, moderate evidence exists that language, literacy, and overall school adjustment of kindergarten children can be assessed regularly and improved through supplemental tutoring and low-intensity educational experiences (Fuchs et al., 2002; O’Shaugnessy et al., 2004). Further, emerging evidence shows that similar Response to

Intervention models can be implemented with preschool children, promoting success during the earliest weeks of school (McConnell & Missall, 2008).

Second, strong evidence exists that seasonal assessment and supplemental services—including both teacher-directed and “activity-based” interventions—can promote academic achievement for low-performing and struggling students in the elementary grades (Buzhardt et al., 2007; Compton et al., 2006; Fuchs et al., 2007; Speece et al., 2010). In addition, the concern and interest of a caring adult, like the Academic Case Manager (whose role is explained below, in *The Solution*), is associated with improved engagement and achievement for elementary and middle-school students (Lehr, Sinclair & Christenson, 2004).

Third, strong evidence for both the benefit of early detection and intervention and promoting continued school engagement suggests interventions like this for both elementary and secondary students (Sinclair et al., 1998; 2005). Thus, across the grades from preschool through secondary school, we have moderate to strong evidence that early identification of academic delays and relatively low-intensity monitoring and supplemental intervention services improve academic delays and promote better student engagement.

*The Solution.* While NAZ Connectors oversee whole family support plans, the purpose of the **Academic Case Manager** is to work with NAZ parents, schools, and education partners to support the academic improvements of students. This position is also staffed with team members from the Northside neighborhood.

Whether or not a child attends a Target School, or the school itself delivers interventions to students, each NAZ-enrolled student has an Academic Case Manager who identifies learning challenges and tracks down solutions from the school and extended learning settings. Student progress is tracked quarterly through the NAZ Connect tool, using Academic Case Management

software that analyzes data from Target Schools and NAZ-implemented progress-monitoring assessments. The Academic Case Manager utilizes student data—such as grades, academic growth, tardiness, or behavioral issues—to establish plans and supports through NAZ Connect.

*Current Status – Pilot Tested and Ready for Scale Up.* Academic Case Management has begun initial stages of development, with three full-time Academic Case Managers beginning to work with families of 86 students recruited out of three of our Target Schools (Target Schools are described in detail in **Solution 5**). At the end of Year One as a Promise Neighborhood, Academic Case Management will be fully implemented with 20 full-time staff members serving 500 students who are identified as being a minimum of one year behind based on Average Yearly Progress scores. By 2013, NAZ projects it will be able to serve 1300 students (60% of identified need) with Academic Case Management. Services will be targeted to those most in need through a focus on students most behind in grade level.

### **Solution 3: Implement NAZ Connect across families, schools, and partners**

Many NAZ children and families have complex needs and receive services from multiple agencies. Additionally, the Northside is like many other high-need communities, with a fragmented, uncoordinated service-system. In 2010, Wilder Research, University of Minnesota research staff, and NAZ jointly conducted a network analysis of the service providers in the NAZ Network (full report found at <http://northsideachievement.org/news/naz-publications>). Results show a high level of alignment on NAZ’s guiding principles, good communication, a commitment to the project, and a shared perception that the initiative was making progress. However, the network analysis found that similar groups of organizations (centered around, for example, early childhood or mentoring) were working well together to meet NAZ goals but had not yet coordinated many service-delivery links between organizations serving the same families.

Currently, one agency does not know about services being provided by other agencies, or even how multiple agencies might work together to drive toward the goal of supporting college-readiness. The result is that services are highly fragmented and discontinuous.

*Evidence Base for Solution.* Evidence for this necessary infrastructure element of NAZ is drawn from special education, disabilities, mental health and medical services literatures describing how case management systems promote increased coordination and efficiency. Stanard (1999) provides evidence that case management—activities directly supported by this solution—demonstrated improved quality of life and educational outcomes for mental health clients whose cases were systematically managed. These findings are consistent with results of meta-analyses by Ziguras et al. (2002), and are consistent with empirical, theoretical, and policy-driven arguments by Bruder et al. (2005) and Davies et al. (2002). This data establishes NAZ Connect and the practices affiliated with its implementation as “Promising Practices.”

*The Solution.* Families in NAZ develop one Achievement Plan that is driven by student data and family goals and supported across multiple partners. To coordinate services and track individual progress according to family and student needs and goals, NAZ utilizes an online achievement-planning and data collection system called **NAZ Connect**. This web-based tool is designed and hosted by Community Collaboration Inc., and was pilot tested in 2011. NAZ Connect receives data input from families, target schools, education services, and family support programs. With the support of their NAZ Connector, each family develops an **Achievement Plan** in the system that incorporates both whole family stability and student success.

The family’s Achievement Plan, complete with assessment, goals and steps, and identified resources, is then shared between programs based on family-driven release of information to facilitate more coordinated services across programs involved with families and

students. Additionally, aggregate and de-identified information is generated through reports to track activities, gaps and progress across the entire collaboration. Key information coming directly from family data is downloaded weekly and reviewed to inform effective decision-making in real-time.

***Current Status—Pilot Tested and Ready for Scale Up.*** The initial 133 active pilot families in NAZ, the Engagement Team and an initial group of partner organizations have begun using a beta version of NAZ Connect to test and upgrade the system’s ability to facilitate shared use and drive progress. During this pilot phase, families were enrolled centrally through NAZ. After pilot completion and as a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will decentralize the process, with at least 21 NAZ partner organizations and nine Target Schools that will directly enroll and support families who live in the Zone. This will significantly increase the capacity for NAZ to grow to scale, with a projected 1250 families to be enrolled in NAZ Connect by 2014.

Because NAZ Connect is the service-coordination and data collection tool that connects the school and partner work together with families, NAZ will rely on segmentation of need through the other solutions to determine enrollment. For example, if a child is identified for extended learning support (Solution 7.1) because they are below grade-level, NAZ Connect will then be used to enroll the child into NAZ services.

#### **Solution 4: Parent Education with School-, College-, and Career-Readiness Curriculum**

***Evidence Base for Solution.*** Parenting and the family environment is the single most important predictor of children’s outcomes in the early years (Collins et al., 2000; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001) and is amenable to change (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Ample research demonstrates that direct intervention and parent training can improve the language environments children experience at home, thereby improving children’s language outcomes (e.g., Peterson et

al. 2005; Taylor et al., 1998; Dishion & Stormshak, 2008), with promising effects found for NAZ families specifically (Rafdal, 2011).

*The Solution.* NAZ is developing a parent education curriculum, called **Family Academy**, implemented through existing services and supported by the NAZ Engagement Team. Family Academy focuses on supporting parents to raise school, college and career ready children. This curriculum provides much more than standard early childhood and parenting education classes. The program design (developed in partnership with NAZ, Minneapolis Public Schools, University of Minnesota, and Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board) bridges content expertise with the peer expertise of the Engagement Team to deliver high-impact strategies that parents use to support their children's readiness for college and the workforce. To rigorously support attendance, NAZ provides participating families with free transportation, sibling care, a healthy breakfast, and a monetary stipend for successful class completion.

The knowledge conveyed by the curriculum comes to life in the families' ongoing Achievement Planning process through the NAZ Connect tool. For example, at a Saturday morning Family Academy session, families might learn about school success strategies, which are then incorporated into the goals and steps of their own Achievement Plans. Throughout this learning and planning process, each family's progress is consistently supported by both their NAZ Connector and Academic Case Manager.

The earliest stage of the parent curriculum, *Family Academy Infant and Toddler*, has been successfully implemented with two cohorts of 15 families in the last year and is currently being validated by the University of Minnesota Center for Early Education and Development.

The initial two Infant and Toddler curriculum offerings exceeded all expectations in participation and impact. NAZ Connect and other program data indicate enrolled participants

included 95% African American families with more than 75% making less than \$10,000 annual income, and the completion rate for the first two cohorts was over 80%. Families were engaged in learning new ways to think about brain development, discipline, and word count as first steps to map their children's pathway to college and careers.

*Current Status—In Development with initial curriculum offering pilot-tested.* The earliest stage of the parent curriculum, *Family Academy Infant and Toddler*, has been successfully implemented with two cohorts of families in 2011. The session currently being offered has full enrollment with a waiting list. As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will build a full curriculum that will serve approximately 650 families annually across all curricular levels starting in 2013.

**Pillar Two—Improve Target Schools within an education continuum.**

NAZ will improve schools and the educational experience to produce academic excellence for all children within the Zone. As noted in our **Need for Project** section, children living within the Zone currently attend 145 different schools, so implementing school-based solutions for all neighborhood children is not an option. Instead, our plan calls for developing an effective continuum of education services that runs through selected Target Schools that are located in and near the Zone. This solution will be coordinated using the NAZ Connect tool and supported by the family engagement services of NAZ and education services of NAZ Partners. Currently NAZ operates as a pilot with three Target Schools. As a Promise Neighborhood, this will scale up to nine Target Schools (Figure 1). These Target Schools are operated by Minneapolis Public Schools or one of our public charter or parochial school partners and currently enroll 25% of the school-age children in the Zone (Wilder Research, 2010). Each has

demonstrated an actionable commitment to NAZ’s shared vision of “cradle to college to career” academic success.

As a Promise Neighborhood, all Target Schools described in this application will: 1) integrate the work of assigned NAZ Connectors and Academic Case Managers into the school process, 2) identify families most in need of NAZ services and work with the NAZ Engagement Team to enroll those students and their parents into NAZ, 3) provide progress data for the NAZ Connect tool (with release of information) to inform each NAZ student’s achievement plan, and 4) participate as a full user of NAZ Connect for families in NAZ to support achievement plan goals and steps in real-time. Additionally, as a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will facilitate Target Schools to build a teacher effectiveness infrastructure within each school and develop extended learning opportunities that support the learning that takes place during the school day.

*Figure 1: Target Schools (see Appendix F.4 for list with school improvement plans)*

<b>Target Schools</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b><u>Elizabeth Hall Elementary,</u></b> MPS, Grades K-5	<b>Low Performing</b> , Not Making AYP
<b><u>Nellie Stone Johnson</u></b> MPS- Grades K-8	<b>Low Performing</b> , Not Making AYP, School is Restructured
<b><u>Harvest Prep/SEED Academy</u></b> Public Charter, Grades Pre-K-8	<b>Making AYP</b>
<b><u>Ascension School</u></b> Private Parochial, K-8	<b>Making AYP</b>
<b><u>Sojourner Truth</u></b> Public Charter, K-6	<b>Making AYP</b>
<b><u>WISE Academy</u></b> Public Charter, Grades K-8	<b>Low Performing</b> , Not Making AYP, School is Restructured
<b><u>North High School</u></b> MPS, Grades 9-12	<b>Low Performing</b> , Not Making AYP, School is Restructured
<b><u>PYC Arts and Technology</u></b> MPS Grades 7-12 (Contract Alternative)	<b>Low Performing</b> , Not Making AYP, School is Restructured
<b><u>Patrick Henry High School</u></b> MPS, Grades 9-12	<b>Low Performing</b> , Not making AYP, Preparing for Restructure

## **Solution 5: Building a Teacher Effectiveness Infrastructure**

In 2009, NAZ did something that had never been done before: We assembled and facilitated meetings among a cohort of school leaders representing public district, public charter, contract alternative and parochial schools on the Northside that together educate a large share of Zone students. This gathering of diverse school leaders marked a major culture shift in North Minneapolis.

Working closely with Dr. Bernadeia Johnson, Superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools, eight school leaders across public district, public charter, and parochial schools were identified based on their commitment to the values and mission of NAZ and the improvement strategies they had in place to yield higher achievement rates. These principals, representing eight of the nine currently identified Target Schools, joined the **NAZ Principal Learning Community** and participated in a year-long instructional leadership learning community with the assistance and direction of Dr. Steven Fink and the Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) at the University of Washington.

*Evidence Base for Solution.* Educational experts agree that the single most important factor in a school age child's academic achievement is the *quality* of his or her teacher, not his or her family background, community context, or economic status (Education Trust, 2006). Our instructional consultant, Dr. Steven Fink, brings a history of positive results with 80 other school districts and organizations in 12 states, in his tenure at the CEL located in the College of Education at the University of Washington in Seattle—a “top-ten” school of education with world-renowned faculty doing cutting-edge research.

Two bodies of evidence support this focus on teacher quality. First, accumulating evidence (moderate in strength, due the preponderance of descriptive research and the small

amount of recent experimental studies in this area) demonstrates that leadership and the development of leadership skills, focused specifically on coaching teachers towards increased effectiveness, positively affects teachers' behavior (Marks & Printy, 2003; Quinn, 2002; May & Supovitz, 2010). Further, moderate but consistently accruing evidence suggests that purposeful observation, professional development, and coaching of teachers produce significant improvement in instructional practices in both preschool and grade school settings (Desimone et al., 2002; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009). In this context, NAZ's approach of developing principals' capacity to observe, evaluate, and coach their faculty's teaching—and the resulting coaching and related professional development for teachers—improves instructional practices in classrooms.

*The Solution.* As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will expand the scope and reach of the teacher-effective learning community within all NAZ Target Schools. CEL will help the Target School principals acquire reliable skills for observing, analyzing, and coaching teachers to provide high-quality instruction. This teacher-effectiveness analysis leads to direct intervention and coaching with classroom teachers, focused on CEL's *5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (5D)*, an evidence-based framework comprised of the core elements of high-quality teaching.

The NAZ Principal Learning Community sets the stage for significant, transformative change within the Target Schools. Dr. Fink and his colleagues were excited by the possibilities offered by the Principal Learning Community and the implications for achievement in the Zone overall, having never in their careers led an intact professional development group of district, charter, and parochial school leaders.

The development of a Teacher Effectiveness Infrastructure in the Zone is being introduced in two phases. The first phase was the initial instructional leadership work done through the Principal Learning Community. In phase one, NAZ Principals met monthly during the 2010-11 school year and participated in customized professional development sessions that included a baseline assessment and instruction in the components of the 5D framework. Guided walk-throughs facilitated by CEL brought principals into classrooms in each of their schools to practice the 5D framework and gather evidence of teacher practice and student learning to assist in their analysis of instruction to develop improvement plans. A sophisticated assessment is also used to measure improvement in teaching and learning, specifically by measuring the growth in the principal's expertise. The school leaders who participated reported a marked improvement in their ability to observe, identify, and support high-quality teaching, rating their development experience overall a 4.5 out of 5 possible points.

Phase two will continue in 2012 and beyond. CEL will work with the principals to focus specifically on enhancing their skills and knowledge in high-quality instruction. CEL will train principals to facilitate walkthroughs in their schools and administer the 5D Teaching and Learning On-line Assessment to their staff. This will provide a baseline of the teachers' knowledge and skills, focus the principals' future training, and provide a solid measure of staff growth. The principals then execute personalized leadership coaching with teachers to provide feedback and analyze data to create professional development plans for improving student learning. Teachers will also bolster their knowledge of best-practice teaching methods through online modules.

We expect these efforts to produce several measurable outcomes toward building teacher effectiveness, including: more direct teacher observation and coaching by principals, a shared

framework for effective teaching, and improved quality and increased dosage of effective teaching and student learning—all of which result in improved educational achievement for enrolled students.

*Current Status—Phase 1 Complete; Ready to implement Phase 2.* Eight school leaders participated in phase one of the Principal Learning Community. To implement this work as a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will reengage the CEL to continue the Principal Learning Community with all nine Target Schools into 2012 and beyond. School leaders will continue to deepen their knowledge, skills, and ability to observe, analyze, and coach their teachers in high-quality instruction. This work will impact 1230 students living in the Zone by 2013, which is 40% of segmented need.

#### **Solution 6: Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network**

NAZ will expand and enhance a comprehensive **Early Learning Network**, meeting all requirements for the Promise Neighborhood Competitive Preference Priority 4. Our comprehensive Early Learning Network is based on the work of the NAZ Early Childhood Action Team. This team has been convening for the last two years and building a network of coordinated services to ensure that NAZ children start kindergarten ready to learn.

*Evidence Base for Solution.* Early literacy experiences are directly linked to later school success (Hart & Risley, 1995; McConnell & Missall, 2008; Walker et al., 1994). Long-term evaluations of randomized control trials demonstrate both short- and long-term effects of high-quality early education (Reynolds et al., 2011; Barnett et al., 2011). Several decades of research on these interventions demonstrate: 1) strong evidence of immediate effects on language, assessed intelligence, and reading achievement; 2) mid-term reductions in achievement problems, grade retention, and need for special education; and 3) long-term effects on levels of

educational attainment, reduced criminality, and increased earning and participation in civic life (Barnett, 2011).

More recently, moderate evidence has been gathered that shows providing scholarships and other enrollment supports increases parents' selection of, and participation in, high-quality early care and education programs (Minnesota Early Learning Foundation, 2010). Finally, moderate evidence exists that links early screening (both developmental screening and more focused pre-academic screening) to early support for identified needs and later achievement (Glascoe, 2000; Squires et al., 1996; Wilson & Lonigan, 2010). Taken together, these three sets of evidence suggest that early screening and access to supports increases and sustains enrollment in high-quality early learning settings, which will promote short- and long-term academic, employment, and behavioral benefits to individual children, their families, and the community.

*The Solution.* NAZ leaders believe three critical pieces need to come together to ensure that each child receives the maximum benefit from the NAZ Early Learning Network: 1) parent intent and action to navigate the complex, myriad available child care resources; 2) enough available “slots” in early learning programs to meet needs; and 3) early childhood screenings used to identify needs and drive supports. As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will build on the substantial existing early childhood assets in the neighborhood and use NAZ infrastructure services to bring these three elements together for children enrolled in NAZ.

A hallmark feature of NAZ is to combine parent intent with a solid plan of action, and then connect high-quality services to support plans. To achieve this, the NAZ Connect tool is embedded within high-quality programs and strategic partners on the NAZ Early Childhood Action Team that support early learning (**NAZ Partners Table** in Appendix F.5). The Engagement Team works with families to set early learning strategies as goals and steps in their

NAZ Connect Achievement Plan, and then works to link them to identified services.

Additionally, content expert and engagement staff come together to utilize strategic knowledge.

For example, the Hennepin County Child Care Assistance Fund typically has a wait list, and awareness across partners of the need to register infants in a timely way ensures access to the resource by the time the resource is needed.

Once family intent and action is solidified through the NAZ Engagement process, the next barrier is to secure adequate “slots” at 3- and 4-Star rated programs and key service providers (quality ratings provided by Parent Aware, described below under Current Status). NAZ will connect families, according to need, to home-visiting nurses who provide critical health and developmental services to pregnant mothers and new mothers with infants; early education services for parents struggling to encourage school-readiness; and services to address behavioral needs associated with the high level of trauma experienced by many NAZ families. All of these critical supports must be available to respond in real time to needs revealed by NAZ Connect assessment tools.

To tackle the obstacle of early learning program access, NAZ is employing two strategies. First, we will partner with Resources for Child Caring to identify and promote quality enhancements and Parent Aware ratings for programs in and adjacent to the Zone. In these ways, we are expanding the available “slots” for young NAZ children.

Second, we will replicate and continue the promising **Early Childhood Scholarship Program**, which is currently being implemented as a pilot in Minnesota. This scholarship program was developed by NAZ Board member Dr. Art Rolnick and the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation. Dr. Rolnick is a former senior vice president of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, and now serves as a scholar in the University of Minnesota. He is completing an

extraordinary pilot program that provides low-income parents of three year olds with support and two-year scholarships to be used at 3- and 4-Star Rated early learning centers. While final evaluation of the Scholarship Program's effects is just being completed, the model has already shown very promising results (Gaylor, 2009).

The Minnesota Legislature authorized scholarships for eligible children—including those in NAZ—beginning in 2012. These scholarships will provide a resource for implementing this strategy in the Zone. As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will leverage resources to create Early Childhood Education Access and Bridge Scholarships. These bridge scholarships will serve to fill gaps in the state program and retain children in high-quality child care settings.

Lastly, children living in the Zone are screened on an ongoing basis between birth and age five, with an emphasis on screening at age three. This screening is conducted by the Early Learning Network and is provided to all children, regardless of their enrollment in NAZ. This early screening will provide key information on needs and will drive services and strategies through NAZ Connect's Achievement Plan. Then, the NAZ Connector team member will work with the family to identify goals and steps to connect them with the right resources to address these needs.

*Current Status—Early Learning Network Plan Complete.* With over one million dollars from our Early Childhood Action Team partners in solutions matches for this proposal, NAZ is positioned to increase our current pilot number of 108 children under five in NAZ to 550 children under five annually by the end of the second year as a Promise Neighborhood. NAZ will designate our Early Childhood NAZ Manager, Maureen Seiwert (Minneapolis Public Schools Early Childhood Education Executive Director), as Early Learning Network Director.

Note About Resources and Assets for Implementation: Minnesota is moving aggressively to expand and improve its early care and education system through *Parent Aware*, a standards-based Quality Rating and Improvement System administered by Minnesota Department of Human Services in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Education. Parent Aware uses a quality rating system to identify “high-quality” programs, which are those receiving 3 or 4 stars in the Parent Aware 4-star system.

### **Solution 7: Out-of-School Time Network**

This NAZ Solution has three active components: 1) extended learning focused on strengthening and retaining academic skills; 2) mentoring to provide encouragement, support, and positive attention for engagement in and valuing of school success; and 3) participation in arts and humanities programs.

#### **Extended Learning**

Evidence Base for Solution. A rich and deep base of evidence exists to support the efficacy of tutoring programs (including those conducted by paraprofessionals and non-school personnel) to extend the learning day or school year, and in turn to promote or sustain academic achievement. In fact, multiple program options are listed in *What Works Clearinghouse* and other evidence-based practice portals. Strong evidence also exists on the positive effect of tutoring on academic achievement for low-performing and high-risk students (e.g., Baker et al., 2000; Landberg et al., 2006; Morris et al., 1990; Vadasy & Sanders, 2008), and for complementary effects on academic achievement and behavioral competence (Autust et al., 2001).

The Solution. As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will work with Target Schools and Out-of-School Time Partners to expand effective extended learning programming and connect it to

what is learned during school day. Our lead Out-of-School Time partner, Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC), is our **Anchor Partner** for this strategy (in addition to running one of NAZ's Target Schools). Anchor Partners are one of 21 organizational partners playing a lead role with NAZ families across the Action Areas.

The PCYC After School & Summer Enrichment Program serves K-6<sup>th</sup> graders year-round from over 13 neighborhood schools, including many NAZ Target Schools. PCYC's annually collected data clearly indicates that their mix of youth development and academic strategies increases achievement outcomes for participating youth. PCYC's assessment results are strong. For example, at the beginning of summer math programming, only 43% of participants were at grade-level, but by August, 95% of participants were at grade-level—a remarkable 120% increase.

As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will expand the reach of this opportunity from 20 youth in the Zone to our target of 500 enrolled NAZ youth. This will be achieved by: 1) expanding within PCYC's current location, and 2) offering these services within Target Schools after the regular school day.

### **Increasing Quantity and Quality of Mentoring**

*Evidence Base for Solution.* Similar to evidence for extending learning time, evidence for academic and behavioral effects of mentoring is strong and robust (see DuBois et al., 2002, for more detail). In particular, strong evidence exists for the benefits of long-term (more than one year) relationships between mentors and mentees (e.g., Grossman & Rhodes, 2002), particularly for older students living in poverty (Gordon et al., 2009). The positive effects of these relationships replicate across program types, mentors, and demographics of mentees (DuBois et al., 2002; Herrera et al., 2011).

*The Solution.* Because of the high crime rates and poverty in the Zone, recruiting mentors and sustaining matches for North Minneapolis children is more challenging than in the rest of the region. Yet, the Northside is in greatest need of mentors. NAZ intends to ensure eligible children in the Zone receive mentoring opportunities that support academic progress. This will be accomplished through our **Mentoring Action Team**, including the three largest community-based, best-practice mentoring programs in the area. Through this unprecedented collaborative—which includes collaborative mentor recruitment, combined with the NAZ Engagement Team’s support to help families follow through with the mentee enrollment process—NAZ is nearly doubling the number of matches made in the Zone in 2011.

### **Increasing Reach of Arts and Humanities Programs (Competitive Preference Priority 6)**

There are four arts and culture institutions that are gaining considerable momentum in the Zone. All of these are partners with NAZ: the Capri Theater, Juxtaposition Arts, Lundstrum Center for the Performing Arts, and the Minnesota Children’s Museum at the public library. As partners, these organizations prioritize reaching and enrolling NAZ children in and aligning services through the NAZ Connect tool. The partner arts and humanities service providers all offer out-of-school opportunities for engagement with the arts to NAZ enrolled youth.

Two programs are working to build a broader cultural context for the arts in the Zone: 1) the FLOW Northside Arts Crawl takes place annually along the southern boundary of the Zone and attracts neighbors and visitors from across the Twin Cities, and 2) the Minnesota Children’s Museum is establishing an interactive program in the public library in the Zone.

Through NAZ, these programs have become integrated and aligned; they have a higher profile within the neighborhood; and more Northside adults, children and youth are able to actively participate in the arts.

*Current Status—Full Out-of-School Time Plan Complete.* As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will coordinate out-of-school time solutions through NAZ Connect, significantly expand the extended learning solution (from 20 students to 500 students), continue to increase the number of best-practice mentor matches made in the Zone, and expand the reach of the arts and humanities offerings with NAZ students.

**Pillar Three—Provide whole family wrap-around support services**

Whole family support solutions in service to student learning include the anchor service providers identified in the **Partners Table** in Appendix F.5. These providers use the NAZ Connect to drive family stability supports—so that children can show up ready to learn—by focusing on needs in housing, health, behavioral health, and career/finance.

**Solution 8: Track key barriers to family health, well-being, and stability, and connect families to necessary services**

The correlation between education and social indicators is strong. For example, in Minnesota in 2009, only 45% of low-income 8<sup>th</sup> graders were reading proficiently compared to 77% of non-low-income students. Math scores portray a similar gap: only 36% of low-income 8<sup>th</sup> graders reached proficiency in math, while 69% of non-low-income students tested at or above proficiency (Center on Education Policy, 2010). While many in the field get trapped into a “chicken and egg” discussion about the causal relationship between poverty and educational outcomes, the strength of NAZ lies in our belief that both should be addressed in tandem.

*Evidence Base for Solution.* Evidence for work in this area is expanding and is based on rather sophisticated and complex studies, but is still provides somewhat indirect support for evidence-based practice (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). A series of recent studies focused on relocation to neighborhoods with higher stability and less dysfunction indicate improved

educational and behavioral outcomes for children (e.g., Kling & Liebman, 2001). Similarly, effective educational programs show moderate but clear effects on health and well-being of children and families (e.g., Reynolds et al., 2007). In general, this evidence suggests that interventions stabilizing family housing, improving the conditions of surrounding neighborhoods, and providing access to coordinated and sufficient health and behavioral health services leads to improved outcomes for children and youth (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Rosenbaum, 1995; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

*The Solution.* The NAZ planning process began in 2008 largely with nonprofit organizations on the Northside challenging themselves to work together to build a Harlem Children’s Zone-inspired collaborative, designed to yield better achievement outcomes in North Minneapolis. Three years later, NAZ has an actionable continuum of housing, career and financial pathways, health, and behavioral health organizations serving as a venue for a community of practice driving improvements to whole family support services.

As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ collaborative partners will build on the process already begun to coordinate services through the NAZ Connect tool to better respond to family and student needs. The **Housing Action Team**, including Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, is developing a system to align resources to provide housing opportunities in the Zone that will reduce high mobility among NAZ families so they can remain connected to NAZ and decrease mobility in Target Schools. NAZ housing partners and NAZ management are creating a plan to determine the physical and social infrastructures that lead to stability—and leveraging systems change to more effectively remove barriers to stability. Linkages with the **Career and Financial Pathways** team guide NAZ families toward improved income and financial stability—specifically for those who have been chronically highly mobile or underemployed. Of

the 133 families currently active in the NAZ pilot, 34 are working on stabilizing their housing circumstances and 17 have already stabilized through the work of the Housing partners. NAZ plans to sustain this success rate as family enrollment in NAZ scales up.

The **Health and Behavioral Health Action Teams** are lead by key health and behavioral health service providers, including the Director of Student Support from Minneapolis Public Schools. These teams will work with NAZ partners to plan, assess and align existing health and mental health services, and public health systems with a focus on bringing resources to scale to meet needs of children and families in the Zone, and coordinating with services in schools.

**2. Implementation plan with clear annual goals to create a complete continuum that leads children to college and a career with increased proportion of students participating**

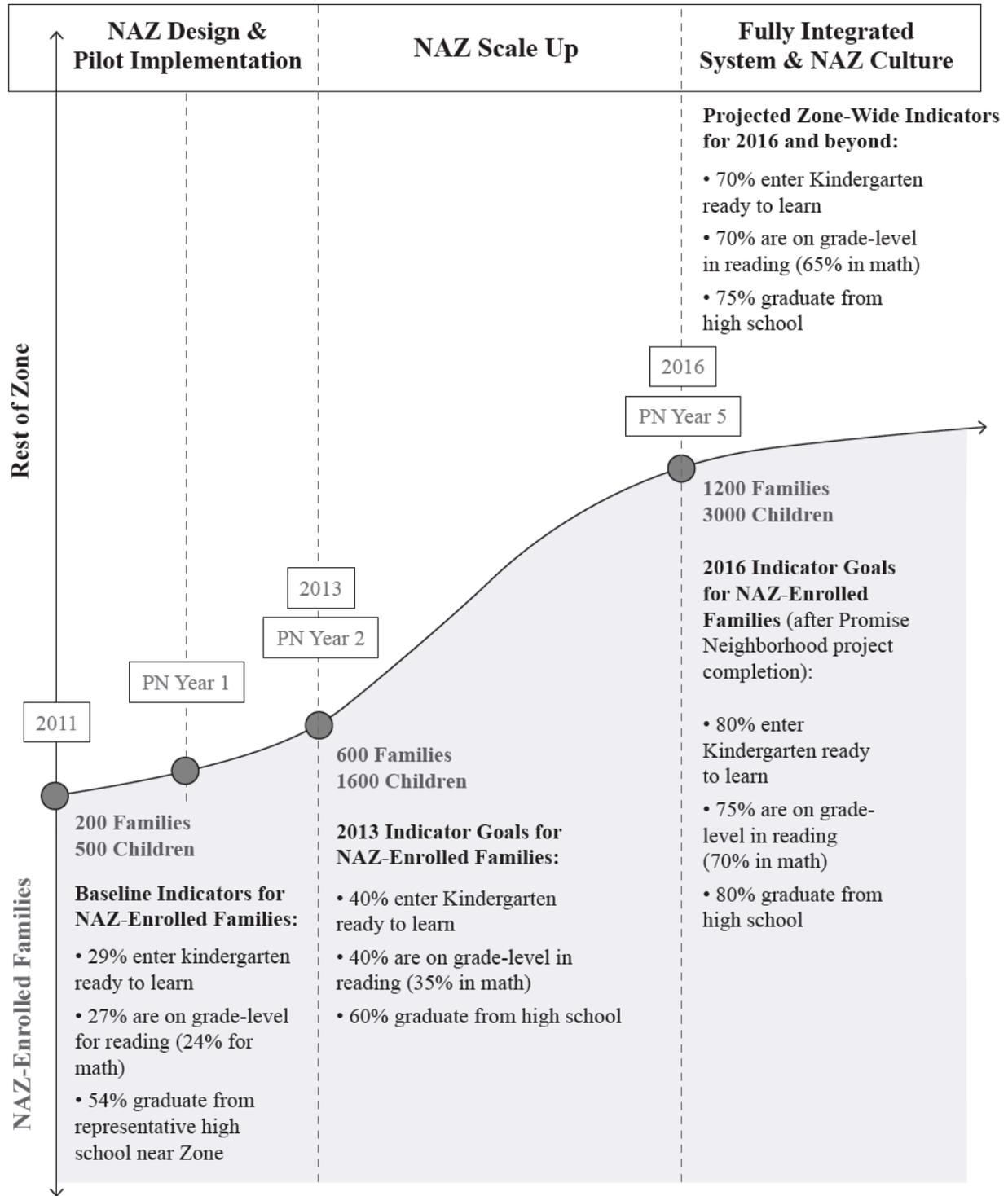
The services supporting achievement and family support solutions have been built around initial data (including *Indicators Tables 1 & 2* below) for North Minneapolis and the direct work with 133 pilot families with 359 children recruited through targeted outreach within the Zone. The result is a pilot-tested implementation plan that is positioned to yield early results in pilot families and scale up over the next five years to produce Zone-wide achievement results (see Appendix F.2 for full plan).

*Scaling Up Infrastructure Services.* In order to reach our goal of sustained community-wide transformation, the 133 families currently enrolled in NAZ will scale up to over 1250 families and 3000 children who are most in need of service.

Figure 2

**NAZ Model for Scaling Up as a Promise Neighborhood**

2000 Families with 5500 Children 0-18 years



— Indicators in the Scale up Model were selected from *Indicators Table 1 and 2* as most representative of desired end outcome of project.

The reach of NAZ must create a “tipping point” in the Zone. While we will directly impact a significant number of NAZ-enrolled children, the *Scale Up Model* (Figure 2) above represents improvement in the whole Zone based on our belief that a critical mass of improving families and children will yield improvement even in those not directly enrolled in NAZ. The Harlem Children's Zone believes that the collective programs offered by a non-profit must reach 65% of the total number of area children to shift from destructive patterns towards constructive goals (Harlem Children's Zone, 2009).

*Program Implementation—Scaling Up and “Decentralizing” the NAZ Process.* NAZ will grow to scale by decentralizing the enrollment process so that Target Schools and NAZ Partners can enroll families directly through the NAZ Connect tool. As a Promise Neighborhood, we will also scale up the Engagement Team staff from eight program staff to over 60 program staff, including 20 NAZ Connectors and 20 Academic Case Managers all working to support families and students enrolled through Target Schools and NAZ Partners.

NAZ will work with Target Schools and NAZ education continuum partners (refer to *Partners Table*, Appendix F.5 for Partner match information) to identify, recruit and sustain high-need families. Annual goals for improvement on all the indicators, as represented by the three banner indicators shown on the *Scale Up Model*, are described in the in Appendix F.2.

### **3. Existing neighborhood assets and programs that are used to implement continuum**

As previously stated, NAZ was created from a coalition of over 50 neighborhood programs and services intending to reach children and families better through collaboration. Of these 50 programs connected to NAZ, 21 have emerged as lead organizations, playing a pivotal service-provision and strategic partner role in the Action Areas of NAZ. These lead organizations are referred to as **Anchor Partners**. All of the Solutions described in the Project

Design are implemented either through NAZ, Target Schools, or these neighborhood-based programs. A complete list of programs, services provided, evidence for their solutions, solutions match amounts, and number of current children and families served from the Zone can be found in Appendix F.

#### **4. Implementation Plan for leveraging resources and improving systems**

As already stated, NAZ currently raises \$1.1 million annually (for the past two years) and projects increasing new or re-aligned funding streams as the evidence-based strategic plans of the Action Teams begin to show results with NAZ-enrolled families. Commitments from funders, as demonstrated in match letters, illustrate NAZ's developing function as an intermediary and "lens" on the Northside, focusing funders and their resources on what works. As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will have the capacity to develop infrastructure for a full scale-up. The private funding match for this proposal exceeded our 10% requirement totaling \$630,000, which demonstrates our capacity to tap existing resources to support NAZ.

Projected expenses from the Promise Neighborhood resources, requested at \$5,600,000 in year one, will be invested in expanding infrastructure services and solutions for families and students (such as scaling up the Engagement Team or expanding the effective extended learning program). NAZ will work with key funders to develop plans to replace any Promise Neighborhood funding for direct and infrastructure services that are still needed with new or re-aligned funding streams. This new funding will sustain the infrastructure after the Promise Neighborhood investment is complete. Additionally, NAZ leaders project that program expenses will begin to reduce modestly after five years of operating as a Promise Neighborhood, due to the culture of achievement that will begin to take root in the Zone, requiring fewer direct services to support whole family stability and learning.

*Education Systems Impact through NAZ.* Key aspects of systems change have already begun as a direct and indirect result of the NAZ Principal Learning Community work. The Superintendent, once reluctant to allow her school leaders to participate in this work due to time constraints, has now signed a year-long contract with the CEL to support efforts to transform her Central Office, with a focus on great instruction at all her schools. Dr. Fink will work monthly with the Superintendent and her staff to help them develop policies, practices, and structures to support principals and teachers in delivering high-quality instruction throughout the city.

In addition, the Gates Foundation awarded funding to the City of Minneapolis, along with only eight other cities, to execute a District-Charter Collaboration Compact. This initiative shares best practices among traditional public schools and their neighboring public charter schools. This designation will allow Minneapolis to apply to the Gates Foundation for millions of dollars to support its collaborative work in the future. City officials and education leaders who are involved in the Compact credit the NAZ Target Schools for leading the way and demonstrating the city's commitment collaboration to improve educational outcomes for underserved students.

Additionally, Minnesota is increasing state authority, commitment, and capacity to expand and improve early child care and education through several policy innovations. Governor Dayton has created an Office of Early Learning; a Children's Cabinet to coordinate policies, programs, and funding within and across administrative units; and an Early Learning Council, charged with advising him and key commissioners on design and evaluation of a comprehensive early care and education system. Dr. Art Rolnick, a NAZ Board member; Dr. Scott McConnell and Dianne Haulcy, NAZ Management Team members; and two NAZ Early Learning Network partners serve on this Council. Additionally, Minnesota is submitting a Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Application that, if funded, will accelerate these efforts.

*Implementation Plan to Leverage Systems.* NAZ plans to use experiences and findings revealed through our internal and external evaluation and data systems to attract resources and impact systems change. The **Quality of Project Services** section articulates an internal data system that connects individual-level needs and change with broader evaluative process. Through the NAZ Connect tool, we will be able to review and analyze family data in ways that can be packaged and effectively communicated to show results (to drive continued funding for what works) and expose gaps or flaws that impact educational achievement in existing systems. Our Memorandum of Understanding with all levels of government demonstrates a commitment to utilize NAZ findings to drive systems change.

#### **QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES**

NAZ ensures quality through a rigorous and ongoing process of data collection, analysis, and action. This body of research has provided NAZ with a detailed understanding of the needs of children and families in North Minneapolis and is the basis of our needs assessment, segmentation analysis, and continuum of solutions. Our use of data is guided by four principles: 1) focus on children and families—outcomes are measured by how children and families are faring, not how agencies are functioning; 2) identify and lift up excellence—supporting existing agencies and initiatives to achieve the results we collectively desire; 3) maintain initiative relevance—our data must support the action planning of NAZ foremost; and 4) be participatory and context-relevant— evaluation methods and data collection are something we do with people, not to them.

NAZ's planned solutions are all based on careful, collaborative, and ongoing review of available and purposefully collected data on educational indicators, as well as family and community support indicators, including: Target Schools, solutions supporting achievement,

family engagement and service coordination, and family support solutions for enrolled children and families. This data helped establish clear Action Areas in our continuum of solutions and will become the basis for ongoing assessment, evaluation, and continuous program improvement. In this section of our application, we will describe the general procedures for our needs assessment and segmentation analysis; explain how the selected solutions (both in general and as applied in NAZ) are based on this needs assessment and segmentation analysis, as well as based on scientific evidence; and demonstrate how these services and supports will be continually improved over all years of operation.

### **1. Needs Assessment and Segmentation Analysis**

As shown in *Indicators Tables 1 and 2* (Figure 5), NAZ and its research and evaluation partners, Wilder Research and the University of Minnesota, have completed several specific needs assessment studies and gathered administrative data that determined specific needs of Northside children and the number of children with the highest need. This work was completed over the past four years and included substantial input from the individuals most relevant to these analyses—the residents of North Minneapolis—as well as the individuals, organizations, and systems who serve them.

Throughout this work, we have committed to a set of organizing principles designed to ensure that neighborhood children receive appropriate services. These include: 1) careful analysis of education and related health, social, and economic factors to ensure a rich, broad, and sufficiently powerful analysis that will identify all areas of needed intervention; 2) transparency in design, collection, analysis, and interpretation of all needs assessment data, ensuring that multiple constituencies (i.e., parents, service providers, policy makers and advocates) have

confidence in our analyses and commitment to the actions these analyses suggest; and 3) reliance, to the greatest extent possible, on evidence-based procedures.

NAZ segmentation analysis and solution planning has rested on at least nine primary sources of needs assessment data. These data sources include:

Data collected by NAZ Engagement Team Members. 1) The 133 pilot families with 359 children have completed the family individual needs assessment through the NAZ Connect tool. This has provided the finest-grained data to date, giving NAZ an accurate understanding of individual-level needs and guiding our continuum of solutions. In addition, NAZ Connect enables progress tracking on a detailed level and in rapid time.

Administrative data on school achievement, including 2) Minneapolis Public Schools data on Beginning Kindergarten Assessments, Measures of Academic Progress, and behavioral/social outcomes; 3) Minnesota Department of Education analyses and reports on Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in Reading and Mathematics from grades three to 11; 4) Minnesota Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics reports on educational achievement and graduation; and 5) Hennepin County and Minnesota Departments of Health and Human Services reports on child care, child maltreatment, health and wellness.

Wilder Research reports on children and families, including 6) *Early learning conditions among low-income families in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Blue Earth and Nicollet counties* (Wilder Research, 2008); and these reports developed specifically for NAZ: 7) *Northside Achievement Zone: Community baseline survey results*, and 8) *Baseline Community Indicators for NAZ*.

Quantitative and qualitative studies by staff from the Center for Early Education and Development at the University of Minnesota, including 9) surveys of health and physical activity

for young children, as well as focus groups and participant observations of family interactions and service provider perspectives for children and youth.

Review and analysis of data from these sources has been conducted by three interlocking groups of NAZ leaders: First, Sondra Samuels (NAZ CEO) and Michelle Martin (NAZ COO) review reports, consult with policy-makers and community members and leaders, and identify broad areas of focus for NAZ analysis and program development or improvement. Second, NAZ leaders work with evaluation partners—Drs. Scott McConnell and Lauren Martin from the University of Minnesota, and Dr. Greg Owen and Ellen Shelton from Wilder Research—to identify appropriate administrative data and, when necessary, design and direct purposeful sampling and data collection to more fully describe and analyze broad identified trends. Third, the NAZ Management Team, directed by Ms. Samuels and Ms. Martin and including representatives from the evaluation group, NAZ staff, and NAZ partners leading major areas of service, critically review available data and preliminary analyses, direct and review additional analyses, and develop program-based solutions to identified needs, trends, or issues.

Segmentation analysis has proceeded at three levels of detail and evaluation. First, we have compared educational, behavioral, health, and economic/social outcomes for children and families in North Minneapolis with those of adjacent and surrounding communities, including Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and Minnesota as a whole. This first analysis, segmenting at the level of place, helped determine that North Minneapolis generally, and NAZ particularly, was significantly marked by both educational-achievement and educational-services challenges, and that these educational outcomes co-occurred with high rates of economic, behavioral, health, and other social indicator concerns.

Second, NAZ-collected, administrative, and indicator data were analyzed to identify specific areas where needs exist and solutions are required. This level of analysis (described in our **Need for Project** section) identified areas where NAZ children and families were disparate from either existing *a priori* standards (e.g., Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment results related to NCLB), or from other children and families in Minnesota (e.g., health and wellness indices related to asthma, exercise, and housing stability). Identified disparities from expected or normative standards led to identification of **Action Areas** and the formation of **Action Teams** (described in the **Capacity to Manage** section) charged with further analysis and the planning of NAZ-supported interventions and supports. Note that Action Areas are defined as critical areas of focus for NAZ (Target Schools, Early Childhood, Out-of-School Time/Mentoring, Health and Behavioral Health, Career and Financial Pathways, and Housing); and Action Teams are groups of organizations that are working together to implement solutions in each of these areas, as well as coordinating across different areas to ensure the pipeline has no gaps.

Third, segmentation analysis proceeded within identified Action Areas to specifically identify needed solutions. This analysis explored the specific needs of children and families within narrower areas of concern (e.g., early childhood, teacher effectiveness) and the likely solutions to address these needs. These analyses varied across Action Areas as a function of the existing service delivery systems. The analysis included participation at all levels but was driven by members of content or solution expert teams.

## **2. Proposed Solutions and their Relation to Needs Assessment**

NAZ's eight proposed solutions ensure that enrolled children and families receive appropriate services to address their individual needs. These solutions, described in the **Project Design** section, work across Target Schools, infrastructure services, and direct services. They

were developed and selected following analyses described here. All solutions were developed with an eye toward innovation and based on the segmentation analysis and review of evidence about effectiveness. Themes gathered from administrative data or scientific evidence were combined with NAZ leaders' on-the-ground connection to families and students in the Zone and their understanding of families' real-life, daily challenges and aspirations. With the backing of data and evidence, and the relational context directly from families in the Zone, we believe our solutions will produce measureable results.

### **3. Annual Goals and Plans for Improvement on Indicators**

NAZ will scale up, as described in the **Project Design** section, and will systematically and continuously improve services and supports across the period of requested federal funding—and throughout its operation beyond that funding. To ensure quality, multiple complementary strategies will be employed.

*Program Improvement—Doing Better.* NAZ has designed and implemented a rigorous internal evaluation and program performance management system to ensure that all aspects of the continuum of solutions feature elements of known, effective practice *and* will improve systematically and continuously over time. This system will help us monitor our work and measure our impact across all aspects of our continuum of solutions. Evaluation and measurement are infused into all aspects of our work as a source of continuous quality improvement and a mechanism to direct future work. We are truly a “learning collaborative,” with all partners and stakeholders driven by family data and progress toward our outcomes.

Our internal evaluation process will completely describe the status, implementation, and short-term effects of NAZ solutions. These data will also forecast results on educational achievement and child/family well-being that are the ultimate program goals. Our internal

quality evaluation and program performance management system is designed and managed by University of Minnesota colleagues, in close coordination with Wilder Research (who will conduct the summative evaluation). Internal (formative) and external (summative) evaluations are designed to create a seamless system, with program services integrated fully into the internal evaluation system, and the internal evaluation focus and measures specifically aligned conceptually and empirically with external evaluation measures.

Our internal, formative quality evaluation proceeds in three stages: 1) selection and documentation of known, effective practices; 2) ongoing evaluation of implementation; and 3) short-term effects and systematic practice improvement to build on lessons learned.

*Selection of quality solutions and practices: NAZ-Tested Seals of Effectiveness Process.*

The NAZ Action Areas are led by teams of managers and leaders of Target Schools, Early Childhood, Out-of-School Time/Mentoring, Health and Behavioral Health, Career and Financial Pathways, and Housing. As a result, NAZ begins the continuum design process with knowledgeable educators and clinicians who share NAZ's theory of change *and* direct program resources that can be devoted to NAZ's work.

Each Action Team has been charged with conducting segmentation analysis and service planning in their own area of expertise and focus. They are charged with drawing from proven or promising scientifically validated procedures (i.e., those with moderate evidence of effectiveness, including empirically evaluated curricula and intervention procedures, as well as professionally accepted best practices) to develop the **Action Teams Strategic Plans**.

Working with our internal evaluators, Action Team Strategic Plans are then submitted to peer review by individuals who have complementary expertise but no direct involvement developing the Plan. These individuals provide a systematic review and independent judgment of

both the scope and details of each Plan, focused particularly on the degree to which the Plan incorporates evidence-based practices. The peer analysis is then given a professional vetting by Action Team members and NAZ leaders. Where needed, each plan will be revised, refined, or adapted to meet rigorous standards of proven and promising practice. The result is that each Action Area is driven by an empirically supported Plan that is tailored to the needs and conditions of NAZ children and families.

*Ongoing Evaluation of Implementation and Short-term Effects.* Once a practice or program is reviewed by peers and finally adopted by an Action Area team, our internal evaluation team prepares data collection procedures to answer three questions: Is this practice being implemented as intended (i.e., fidelity)? Are we engaging enough children and families (i.e., scale)? Is this practice effective at doing what we hoped to achieve (i.e., efficacy)? These data points document the extent to which Action Team Strategic Plans are being implemented as intended and are producing effects as expected.

To the extent possible, data is collected through the NAZ Connect tool. Additional procedures are under development to have NAZ Connectors and Academic Case Managers complete seasonal assessments of school readiness development (for pre-schoolers) and reading and mathematics progress (for elementary and secondary students) to further inform this process.

All internal evaluation data will be reported monthly, in aggregate, to Action Teams, NAZ leadership, and the community. Action Teams will review the data and, when needed, make mid-course corrections in service provision or content. Internal evaluation data will also be used to promote best-practices—called **NAZ Proven Practices**—and will be shared with others for replication and expansion.

*Systematic Program Improvement.* Semi-annually (or as appropriate, given a particular intervention), our internal evaluation team will review summary reports of fidelity of implementation, scale, and short-term effects *across Action Areas*. In those areas where implementation or scale is not at expected levels, Action Team members will take corrective actions. These actions may include expanded professional development to improve implementation of adopted practices, program analysis, and revision to increase coordination or expansion of services; or management and funding discussions to ensure sufficient reach of intervention services.

When this review indicates that practices are being implemented with fidelity and at desired scale, but progress data indicates the practices are not producing desired effects, a more systematic and programmatic review and revision will be initiated. In this case, Action Team members and NAZ leaders and management will conduct a thorough, systematic review of current needs and conditions of children and families being served; an alignment of appropriateness of all intervention practices being used with these children and families; and an analysis of gaps or needed program variations and improvements that appear likely to initiate expected changes in child or family achievement. These revised practices will be disseminated systematically to related NAZ partners. With this, the review cycle will begin anew.

*External and Summative Evaluation.* Our team of external evaluators, led by Dr. Greg Owen at Wilder Research, will measure outcomes to document annual and cumulative effects of NAZ services. This team, in consultation with NAZ leadership and internal evaluators, has identified well-accepted measures of the overall goal and the intermediate checkpoint indicators of success, as well as indicators required by the funding of this initiative, to document the overall effects of NAZ's effort. The evaluation team will work with the national evaluator and the

director of the Minneapolis Public Schools Research, Evaluation and Assessment (REA) office to identify a credible comparison group. Wilder Research and the Minneapolis REA have worked together in the past in the construction of statistically valid comparison groups based on prior level of academic achievement, relevant demographic and service characteristics, and the relevant time period of program intervention.

### **QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The history of the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) is important to understanding its current efficacy and overall strength as a Promise Neighborhood. The idea of NAZ was conceived in 2008 during a series of meetings co-chaired by the PEACE Foundation (now DBA the Northside Achievement Zone). These meetings, which involved approximately 50 organizational partners on the Northside, were held with the purpose of identifying a way that they, as a collective, could replicate the success of the Harlem Children’s Zone.

The PEACE Foundation was identified as a natural leader of this proposed collaborative because: 1) it had a lengthy track record of grass-roots and community-driven work in North Minneapolis; 2) it had in place a staff infrastructure—complete with a highly effective community-led outreach team—which was capable of serving as a central meeting point for all NAZ organizations; and 3) it had a strong history of influencing public policy and partnering with government. In 2010, the PEACE Foundation refocused its entire effort to leading and providing infrastructure for NAZ and became The PEACE Foundation DBA Northside Achievement Zone (now known only as the Northside Achievement Zone).

Together, NAZ partners have developed a shared infrastructure to streamline systems focused on families and children in NAZ and to drive achievement outcomes in the Zone. The capacity for NAZ to manage this work is supported by shared values and college and career

readiness goals across schools, organizations, neighbor-leaders, and pilot families who are at the core of the work. As described in this section, NAZ has already demonstrated in its pilot work the capacity to manage in the domains described here.

### **1. Capacity to work effectively with residents, schools, partners and government**

NAZ is an organization that anchors a collaborative of over 50 partners. NAZ now operates with multiple levels of leadership: families at the center, as represented by the Engagement Team and a family advisory board; a NAZ Board of Directors; “NAZ Central” leadership and operations staff; and collaborative partner leadership through NAZ Managers who lead Action Teams in each of the key solution areas.

The Northside Achievement Zone Board of Directors is responsible for governance and fundraising. The Board was transformed in June 2010 to include members able to bring high-profile leadership, oversight and resource development leadership to NAZ. The Board includes highly respected local and national leaders such as former Federal Reserve Bank Vice President and national leader on early childhood policy, Art Rolnick; former Metropolitan Council Chair, Peter Bell; Head of the Minneapolis Public Housing Agency, Cora McCorvey; Minnesota State Senator Linda Higgins; and Senior Vice President of the Greater Twin Cities United Way, Frank Forsberg. Between the Board of Directors and Family Advisory Board, over 35% of members live within the Zone’s boundaries, or represent constituents who do.

NAZ Central refers to the organizational body governed by the Board of Directors within the collaborative process. In order to lead the initiative effectively, NAZ Central employs leadership, administrative, and “infrastructure services” program staffing. Many NAZ staff members are recruited from and are still living in the boundaries of our Zone. The key functions of NAZ Central are: 1) operating infrastructure services, including Family Engagement

strategies, service coordination, and the NAZ Connect data system; 2) leading the collaborative effort through the NAZ Manager and Action Team structure; 3) developing shared materials and processes across NAZ, including communications and college and career readiness parent education curriculum; 4) resource development functions for organization and collaborative efforts, which will be bolstered as NAZ solidifies its role as an intermediary in North Minneapolis (as described below in **Capacity to Realign and Integrate Funding** section); and 5) evaluation and data management for the purpose of using family and student outcome data to drive collaborative and partner work.

The Chief Executive Officer (serving as Promise Neighborhood Project Director), Sondra Samuels, is 15-year resident of the Zone. She provides top-level leadership, vision, and oversight for the overall NAZ effort, as well as serving as an inspirational leader and advocate for the Northside in the broader community. In her role as CEO, Ms. Samuels has broadened funding relationships with individuals and organizations, more than doubling NAZ's operating budget in one calendar year. As a spokesperson for NAZ, she has established the organization as a recognized brand throughout Minneapolis and the region, which has increased the number of supporters and volunteers from a few hundred to over 3500 individuals, representing hundreds of organizations.

As an advocate for school reform, she has successfully led partnerships among the business community, foundations, and education organizations that have secured unprecedented support for education reform legislation in Minnesota from both legislators and citizens. One example of this is her work in establishing the Hope Collaborative, an education reform movement that brings school leaders to Minneapolis who have demonstrated success in transforming education for low-income minority students across the country. Their presentations

have been credited for the Minneapolis Public School district's creation of an Office of New Schools, which is focused on school innovation, and an openness to explore effective charter models.

As a leading voice on the reduction of violence on the Northside, she partnered NAZ with the city of Minneapolis and other organizations to successfully pass legislation designating youth violence as a public health issue in the State of Minnesota. Ms. Samuels was appointed to serve on the Governor's Judiciary Selection Commission to represent her district (and the Zone). She is also a member of the African American Leadership Forum's Education Committee and is a member of the Advisory Boards of KIPP Stand Academy Charter School and MinnCAN.

Along with her husband (Don Samuels, Minneapolis City Council Member representing the area of the Zone), Ms. Samuels has emerged as an important voice and tireless advocate for clear understanding and effective actions to promote transformational change in North Minneapolis. Ms. Samuels leads as an African American neighbor and mother of two children enrolled in a NAZ Target School.

The Chief Operating Officer, Michelle Martin, has played a leadership role for the past decade in North Minneapolis, developing effective strategies that change systems and build power in this historically disenfranchised community. She is a former community organizer and licensed social worker who builds strong collaborations among service organizations, government, schools, and neighbors to realign service delivery within North Minneapolis.

Ms. Martin founded the PEACE Foundation in 2003 and served as its Executive Director. As the operational lead, she developed the organization's infrastructure and built collaborations throughout the Twin Cities. Under her leadership, the PEACE Foundation was recognized by the Minneapolis Police Department as having contributed to a three-year decline

in crime in North Minneapolis. Additionally, Ms. Martin led the two-year planning process with a wide range of collaborative partners who worked together to build the Northside Achievement Zone. As a NAZ leader, she works to build community change designs through active input from Northside neighbors. Listening and responding to community feedback repairs broken systems by shifting power back to the community, enabling neighbors to drive their own positive change on the Northside.

NAZ Management Team Partner Members. A tightly woven body of leaders from NAZ Anchor Partners make up the Management Team. The Management Team gives direction for central operations and collaboratively manages and coordinates action area implementation strategies.

In 2011, NAZ formalized appointments and responsibilities for NAZ Managers who come from key partner organizations in each Action Area. Managers operate under a memorandum of understanding with NAZ to secure a portion of their time for planning and implementation within their identified area. NAZ Managers have a clear leadership role within the collaborative process and their specific Action Area, as well as natural opportunities to connect NAZ’s work with the services already provided by their “home” organization. NAZ Managers carry responsibility for specific deliverables for their Action Area, including strategic planning, building shared use of NAZ Connect at anchor organizations, tracking outcomes for NAZ families, and executing the NAZ-Tested Seal of Effectiveness processes.

*Figure 4: NAZ Management Team (partner leaders under MOU with NAZ)*

<b>NAZ Manager &amp; Role</b>	<b>Organization and Position</b>
Michael Thomas, <i>Target Schools Strategy Lead</i>	Minneapolis Public Schools, Associate Superintendent
Maureen Seiwert, <i>Early Childhood Lead</i>	Minneapolis Public Schools, Early Childhood Executive Director
Dr. Scott McConnell, <i>Evaluation Lead</i>	University of Minnesota, Center for Early

	Education Department, Professor
Dianne Haulcy, <i>Early Childhood and Behavioral Health Lead</i>	The Family Partnership, Chief Operating Officer
Al Fan, <i>Target Schools Strategy Lead</i>	Charter School Partners, Executive Director
Karen Goodenough, <i>Out-of-School Time Lead</i>	Plymouth Youth Center, Out-of-School Program Director
Nancy Torrison, <i>Mentoring Lead</i>	Kinship of Greater Minneapolis, Communications Director
Chad Schwitters, <i>Housing Lead</i>	Urban Homeworks, Executive Director
Lance Knuckles, <i>Career and Finance Lead</i>	Emerge Community Development
David Peoples, <i>Career and Finance Lead</i>	Twin Cities RISE!, Director
Brian Dejewski, <i>NAZ Connect System</i>	Community Collaborations, Inc., Director

Qualifications for Management Team selection. NAZ Managers are selected because they hold leadership roles within partner organizations or schools that align with Action Areas in NAZ, and are professionals recognized throughout the Twin Cities as being at the top of their field.

NAZ Engagement Team. The NAZ Engagement Team (described in **Solutions 1 and 2**) plays the critical role of recruiting and directly partnering with families. These individuals are “neighbor-leaders” who were recruited from the North Minneapolis community. Each has a solid reputation and track record of grass-roots leadership in the African American community, and many of them have overcome the same challenges faced by families who live in the Zone.

As a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ will significantly scale up the Engagement Team and hire multiple positions to add capacity, allowing NAZ to develop effective programs, manage collaborative process, raise resources and lead evaluation strategies to bring the effort to scale according to the implementation plan.

Leadership Development and Driving a Results-oriented Performance Culture. NAZ demands and nurtures a results-oriented performance culture from staff and partners and prioritizes leadership development at every level of the organization. In 2010, NAZ lead staff

and management team members visited the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) Practitioners Institute. One of the pivotal experiences of this visit was observing capable, articulate, and structured leadership at every level of the organization. A culture of effectiveness thrives throughout the departments and strategies in the HCZ, which inspires action from families in the programs. Moved by this experience, NAZ leaders have committed to intentionally developing what they call “collective charisma” throughout NAZ. With an end product of our work to drive change in people, it is necessary for staff and leaders to embody strong positive interpersonal characteristics. NAZ expects these qualities to grow within the context of each individual role, from the Engagement Team, to the Target School leaders, to the NAZ Managers leading Action Teams. Thus, a collective charisma will thrive in every organization and school, and ultimately will live in relationships with NAZ families.

*Forging Policy-Level and Systems Change through NAZ.* NAZ is creating transformational systems change on the Northside. For the first time in a low-income community in Minneapolis, all levels of social systems are positioned to work together in response to needs and goals of families. When a student enrolled in NAZ is not reading at grade-level, his or her Academic Case Manager will work collaboratively with the NAZ Connector, teacher and parents to uncover reasons and solutions within a responsive continuum of programs supporting academic achievement. For example, NAZ Housing providers who work to end high mobility in the Zone have struggled to find decent housing for NAZ families and discovered that this is caused, in part, by a large concentration landlords with highly questionable rental practices. In response, the team has scheduled an upcoming meeting with the local City Councilman and the Head of the Cities’ Regulatory Service to discuss the issues and determine potential policy changes to address the problem. The result of efforts like this one throughout all NAZ

partnerships is alignment and effectiveness at every level—from the families that raise their children to the schools and services that educate them to the programs and policies that support them. Achievement outcomes are now truly driving the resources.

Sondra Samuels, NAZ CEO and Promise Neighborhood Project Director, plays a pivotal role in forging effective government partnerships and impacting policy-level changes necessary to facilitate educational improvements. Multiple government entities and individuals have committed to partner with NAZ in the MOU—and to utilize us as a lens for evaluating urban public policy, including the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and the Governor—because of the promising work NAZ has done to date and our track record under Ms. Samuel’s leadership to advocate successfully for sound public policies.

*Examples of Systems-Change Successes.* Two-years ago, NAZ partnered with the City to have Youth Violence designated a Public Health Issue in the state. This year, the NAZ collaborative worked tirelessly to get Alternative Certification and Teacher Effectiveness legislation passed. And, in support of the Governor, NAZ rallied to help pass legislation expanding our quality rating system statewide for Early Childhood Centers. With Ms. Samuels, the NAZ Collaborative, and our elected officials working together, we create the commitment and the capacity to identify and eliminate service silos and policy barriers to coordination and alignment, both in the individual case and at the systems level. Ms. Samuels currently serves as an appointed or elected member of governmental and non-governmental organizations that provide foundation for this effort.

As evidenced by letters of support signed by elected officials—City Council members, the Mayor, the Governor, Congressional delegates—under Ms. Samuels’ leadership NAZ is situated to promote cross-jurisdictional discussion, analysis, and action to promote improved

outcomes for urban children, youth, and adults. North Minneapolis is an effective focus for these discussions that will affect similar communities throughout the country. The critical edge here is that elected officials and their staff have already established a successful partnership with Ms. Samuels and NAZ, and have expressed their commitment to deepen that effort.

## **2. NAZ longitudinal data system: using data for decision-making, continuous improvement, and accountability**

At its core, NAZ is a data-driven and accountable collaborative. We demand data-driven accountability of our partners and promise similar accountability to NAZ parents, partners, and funders. Further, we are committed to starting strong and continually improving over time. We believe that well-crafted data systems that are carefully and fully implemented will drive impact and continuous program improvement. In addition, we support regular review of implementation and impact.

To help maintain an environment of continuous improvement, NAZ currently relies on three related sources of data, including: 1) annual household surveys to assess changes in community and family needs and conditions; 2) internal evaluation data related to program implementation and short-term outcomes to assess ongoing contributions of NAZ-sponsored solutions; and 3) links to school district, local, and state datasets to create a robust, longitudinal assessment of the effects of NAZ efforts.

*Annual Household Surveys.* As noted earlier, much of our initial assessment of program need and direction for solutions was based on a survey of households within the NAZ boundaries. To ensure that we continue to address relevant needs of our community members in ways they find acceptable, we will update this survey annually.

The 2010 neighborhood survey showed that the partnership between NAZ, its community members, and Wilder Research is capable of planning and carrying out a rigorous, scientifically valid survey of a representative sample of households in the Zone. In order to assure the quality and representativeness of the sample, the results of the 2010 survey were compared to other data sources, including data available independently from the school district on enrollment of NAZ children in the Minneapolis schools. On the variables available for comparison, community survey results produced estimates very similar to school data sources and well within the survey's 5% margin of error.

If awarded the Promise Neighborhood implementation grant, NAZ will conduct the neighborhood survey annually to ensure regular updating of critical measures that are not available through public data sets. As in the 2010 survey, residents from the Zone will carry out the field work and will be overseen by Wilder Research data collection specialists who have substantial experience in achieving high response rates with hard to reach populations. Wilder will build on oversight procedures developed in collaboration with the University of Minnesota during the 2010 survey and strengthened by lessons learned during initial stages of NAZ's work.

As before, a random set of addresses will be selected, and interviewers will visit them in person to screen for eligibility (defined as the presence of a child or children 18 or under) and complete interviews with those who are eligible. Survey questions will be jointly developed by research staff, program staff, NAZ Action Teams, and the Engagement Team.

The survey will be designed to provide not only the required Promise Neighborhood indicators, but also information needed to identify and segment children's and families' needs, to assess their barriers to service access, and to gauge their satisfaction and the benefit derived from the use of NAZ services. These data will be reviewed by NAZ leaders and members of the

Management Team, shared and analyzed in depth by relevant Action Teams and NAZ Partners, and shared annually with NAZ residents and other stakeholders (including government partners).

*Internal Evaluation Data to Ensure Program Quality and Assess Promising Results.*

NAZ's internal evaluation system will address three main questions: Are individual NAZ practices being implemented as intended (i.e., fidelity)? Are these practices being implemented with enough children and families (i.e., scale)? Is this practice producing expected short-term effects (i.e. efficacy)? These three questions, and the data that address them, form the core of ongoing continuous improvement work. As noted earlier, these data points will be reviewed at least semi-annually by NAZ leaders, Action Area managers and partner organizations, as well as other interested parties.

Gaps in the results from any individual question will prompt remedial action by partners or their NAZ managers. Problems of implementation fidelity will generally lead to expanded and improved supervision, additional training, or other professional development activities to promote wide-scale and high-fidelity implementation of all planned services. Problems of scale will lead to analyses of factors contributing to observed issues (i.e., lack of resources, policy-level barriers, cultural barriers), and appropriate actions will follow. Problems of efficacy will be addressed by redirecting Action Teams and, when necessary, content-area consultants to review and revise plans for the operational components of each solution. In this way, NAZ will continually review, reflect on, and, when needed, revise our practices to assure that services and supports to children and their families are being provided in the manner expected, and to ensure they are producing results consistent with Promise Neighborhood goals.

*Links to Other Data Systems.* NAZ has identified the following groups as holders of public data that can help provide information on child and family needs as well as progress on

specific educational and social outcomes sought for the Zone. They are governed by federal and state privacy laws, which Minnesota administrators and legislators generally interpret with considerable strictness. These include student performance, participation, and behavior data from Minneapolis public and charter schools, comparative school performance data from the Minnesota Department of Education, adult employment outcomes data from the wage detail records of the Department of Employment and Economic Development, child and family welfare data from the Department of Human Services, and enrollment and completion data from postsecondary institutions from the National Student Clearinghouse.

NAZ and Minneapolis Public Schools have developed initial elements of a data sharing agreement. Dr. David Heistad, Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment for Minneapolis Public Schools, has been an active member of our research, evaluation, and data analysis team and has provided Zone and school-specific indicator, needs, and achievement data required for our planning. Along with NAZ's evaluators (led by Dr. Scott McConnell from the University of Minnesota and Dr. Greg Owen from Wilder Research)—and with the approval and direction of Dr. Bernadeia Johnson, Minneapolis Public School Superintendent—Dr. Heistad and his colleagues are working with NAZ to develop an appropriate, acceptable, and logistically feasible way to link these Zone and school-specific data with other information already contained in the NAZ Connect tool.

During 2011, NAZ has also begun to develop plans for accessing other data and for linking data elements across key state data sets to assemble a comprehensive, child- and family-level picture of conditions specific to the geographic boundaries of the Zone. The University of Minnesota Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW) is home to a unique program called MinnLInK (for Minnesota-Linking Information for Kids). With approval by its

institutional review board for a qualifying research study, university researchers can link and analyze individual-level data from MDE (children’s school attendance and performance, for children in any public school in the state, including public charter schools) and DHS (child welfare and TANF, including employment and wage data). There is significant potential for partnership with DHS research staff in a collaborative study of the “cradle-to-caseload pipeline” and effective strategies to address it, with a particular interest in the effectiveness of community-based and integrated services.

Through partnership with DHS and CASCW in such a study, NAZ researchers expect to be able to track individual child-level information for all children living in the Zone, regardless of which school or school district they attend. This information can then be linked to information on family well-being, including child maltreatment, use of TANF, use of the Basic Sliding Fee or TANF child care programs, and employment status and wages.

*Building a Longitudinal Data System.* A longitudinal data system of student-level data is already in place through NAZ and will be expanded with resources described in this section in order to provide a comprehensive picture of individual children’s development, achievement, and experiences as they move from infancy to college in NAZ. At the core of this longitudinal system is the NAZ Connect tool (see **Solution 3** for a description of the online tool). NAZ Connect provides data on all program enrollees; this data source will grow exponentially in value as we enroll more families (as described in the Implementation Plan, Appendix F.2) since it will represent a greater proportion of the Zone’s families and children. Further, as we establish partnerships and data linkages (described above) with Minneapolis Public Schools, Hennepin County, and the Minnesota Departments of Education and Human Services, we will be able to look at both NAZ-enrolled participants and Northside residents who are not enrolled.

As the data sharing agreements described above are completed, NAZ will link relevant child and family measures (e.g., results of State academic achievement tests, access to child care, parent job training and employment) to individual child and family records. Linked data will include both case management information (e.g., child enrollment in high-quality preschool; parent completion of jobs training program) and outcome data (e.g., assessed score on Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment—Reading and Mathematics in grades 3-8, 10 and 11), and will be sorted and stored at the individual case level.

To assure compliance with all federal and state laws, as well as to preserve the confidentiality and privacy of NAZ children and families, multiple protections will be implemented, including careful selection of data elements, formal consent from NAZ parents and youth over age 18 to use data, and controlled access for specific data elements according to family release (e.g., elementary teachers will not access family employment information without express parent consent).

While details await completion of data sharing agreements and review by all relevant institutional review boards, the resulting data system will provide a comprehensive and longitudinal perspective on individuals' and groups' experiences with NAZ—detailing both what they do and how those experiences contribute to long-term outcomes. We expect this data to be useful to NAZ as measures of implementation and accountability (and, thus, a basis for continuous program improvement) and to be a truly useful and unique resource for our research and evaluation partners and others interested in the effects of comprehensive education and family support initiatives.

### **3. Management capacity to solidify partners**

Because NAZ evolved from a grassroots collaborative process into an effort with an organizational management structure, significant commitment to the mission and process exists across our partners (as has been shown from the baseline collaboration assessment). The vast majority of key leaders in NAZ were heavily involved in building the program design. NAZ partners work in Action Teams made up of key service providers that deliver direct services to NAZ families, organizations or systems that control resources, or systems that impact the service-area.

Action Teams are a vehicle for organizations providing similar services to develop a new system of solutions for families—solutions that promote school success and readiness for college and career. Organizations in Action Teams commit to: 1) use evidence-based practices to design comprehensive plans to meet the needs of their focus area and can scale up in the Zone; 2) align services and strategies around family Achievement Plan goals through the NAZ Connect tool, combined with and/or validated by the community survey and other data; and 3) participate in NAZ evaluation processes to assess and strengthen programs continuously.

*“NAZ Partner” Designation within Action Teams.* Partners are bound by the NAZ Memorandum of Understanding, and now by the Promise Neighborhood MOU, to commit to the NAZ theory of change. This is a commitment to work together towards achievement outcomes, ultimately resulting in the college and career readiness of children in the Zone. Within the partner MOU, organizations commit to maintain high expectations for youth, to use the shared achievement-planning and data system with NAZ families, to give high priority to serving families enrolled in NAZ, and to participate in the evaluation process that will continually drive

improvements. If partners are not achieving effective implementation of solutions, shared data from the NAZ Connect tool will reveal areas for program improvement.

#### **4. Capacity to realign and integrate funding streams and high quality programs**

NAZ is well positioned to impact resource- and service-delivery systems that touch North Minneapolis. In our first operational year of 2010, NAZ established a \$1.1 million dollar revenue stream. Projections for 2011 show continued, increased revenue capacity, despite the general decrease in philanthropic dollars. NAZ has also executed its first contribution as an intermediary: contracting with organizations to execute our mentoring strategy. Through an investment from a local corporate foundation, NAZ has developed the protocols and processes to serve effectively as an intermediary—a role that is expected to expand significantly in 2012.

To anchor the NAZ community-wide change process and operate the infrastructure services to scale as defined in this application, we project that the NAZ operating budget need to only expand from \$1.1 million to approximately \$2.5 million. With the investments from the local funding community, a robust and expanding major gifts program, increasing corporate investors, and NAZ's first gift from a national foundation (W.K. Kellogg Foundation), we believe this revenue reach is attainable and sustainable after the Promise Neighborhood investment is complete. Additionally, to achieve our long-term revenue goal, NAZ will need to serve as a vehicle for re-aligning existing government and foundation sources to fund proven-effective solutions and drive the integration of pilot-tested services and schools. NAZ plans to secure this process in late 2011 through long-term strategic and business planning.

To support this scale-up and sustainability process, the majority of key local foundation and corporate funders who are already supporting NAZ joined together to form a **NAZ Resource Team**. This team explores ways to increase investments to meet operations needs, aligns existing

funding streams to support NAZ partners in playing key roles in the Action Areas, and attracts new revenue, including national funders. The \$630,000 match NAZ obtained from foundations, individual and corporate investors for the Promise Neighborhood application represents the “tip of the iceberg” of NAZ operating and program support and funders’ intentions to align their giving around the NAZ plan. Through Ms. Samuels’s leadership, large corporate and family foundations that fund philanthropic activities in North Minneapolis (including the General Mills Foundation, Northwest Area Foundation, and the McKnight Foundation) are rethinking how they support the Northside. Conversations are taking place to align efforts around NAZ for greater and more targeted impact.

This discussion will benefit NAZ as it scales up work as an intermediary for improving educational and other outcomes. These efforts will also contribute to broader, more general, and more important rethinking how philanthropists, government and non-governmental organizations, and neighbors can work together to substantially revitalize communities in need of support.

In summary, as a Promise Neighborhood, NAZ’s pilot-tested theory of change will be fully accelerated. Through quality processes, strong collaboration and innovation, NAZ will impact resource and service-delivery systems that touch North Minneapolis—and drive transformational change for youth and families. Simply stated, if you ask any one of the NAZ-enrolled families today, they will tell you that NAZ is increasingly becoming for them the proverbial “village” that supports and nurtures the youth of our community by ensuring that opportunities rise to meet their promising future.

Figure 5. Report on Required Indicators for NAZ Promise Neighborhood

**Table 1—Education Indicators and Most Recent Results**

Indicator	Number (Percent)	Estimate of NAZ Population	
		Met Indicator	Have Need
<b>1.1</b> Children, from birth to kindergarten entry, who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health.	183/199 (92%) <sup>a</sup>	1,679	146
<b>1.2</b> Three-year-olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning			
1.2.1 Three-Year Olds	112/127 (88%) <sup>b</sup>	328	45
1.2.2 Kindergartners—Meet 3 criteria for K readiness (language, phonemic awareness, alphabetic principles)	55/189 (29.10%) <sup>b</sup>	100	244
<b>1.3</b> Children from birth to kindergarten entry participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or preschool.			
1.3.1 Infants and toddlers (Birth-2)	13/83 (16%) <sup>a</sup>	132	696
<b>1.4</b> Students at or above grade level according to State mathematics and reading or language arts assessments.			
1.4.1 Mathematics proficiency, Grades 3-8, 11	263/1,107 (23.76%) <sup>b</sup>	984	3,157

	1.4.2 Reading proficiency, Grades 3-8, 11	315/1,092 (27.39%) <sup>b</sup>	1,134	3,007
<b>1.5</b>	Attendance rate of students in 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , and 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	92.42% <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA
<b>1.6</b>	Graduation rate	65.74% <sup>c</sup>	NA	NA
<b>1.7</b>	Promise Neighborhood students who graduate with a regular high school diploma and obtain postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates-, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation.	NA <sup>f</sup>		

**Table 2—Family and Community Support Indicators and Most Recent Results**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Number (Percent)</b>	<b>Estimate of NAZ Population</b>	
		<b>Met Indicator</b>	<b>Have Need</b>
2.1 Children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily (NAZ Item: “Children who were physically active for at least 30 minutes per day in each of the previous 7 day”).	73/603 (<12%) <sup>d</sup>	497	3,644
2.2 Children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily; or possible third indicator, to be determined (TBD) by applicant.	86/609 (14%) <sup>d</sup>	580	3,561
2.3 Students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate needs assessment (as defined in this notice), or possible second indicator, TBD by applicant.	503/614 (82%) <sup>d</sup>	3,396	745
2.3.1 Percentage of parents who think the neighborhood is a safe place to raise a child (Agree” or “strongly agree”)	145/347 (45%) <sup>a</sup>	1,216	1,486
2.4 Student mobility rate; or —possible second indicator, TBD by applicant.	(25.3%) <sup>b</sup>		
2.5 Parents or family members who report that they read to their infant, toddler, or preschool child three or	157/192 (59%) <sup>c</sup>	903	628

	more times a week			
2.7	Parents or family members who report talking with their ninth through twelfth grade children about the importance of college and career; or			
	2.7.1 Percent of parents or family members who discuss their child's report card with the child "all" or "most" of the time	263/284 (93%) <sup>a</sup>	2,176	164
	2.7.2 Percent of parents who report they expect their child to complete a post-secondary program	250/283 (88%) <sup>a</sup>	2,059	281
	2.7.1 Percent of parents who judge their neighborhood to be supportive of school success			
	• Very supportive	63/330 (19%) <sup>a</sup>	513	2,189
	• Somewhat to Very Supportive	209/330 (72%) <sup>a</sup>	1,945	757
2.8	Students who have school and home access (and % of the day they have access) to broadband internet and a connected computing device	32/106 30% <sup>e</sup>	1,242	2,899

**Data sources:** <sup>a</sup> **Zone-specific data** from household survey of households with children in the Zone—random representative survey, N=367, margin of sampling error <5%, conducted summer 2010; <sup>b</sup> **Zone-specific data** from Minneapolis Public Schools Research, Evaluation and Assessment office data on ONLY children living within the Northside Achievement Zone (as of October 1, 2010) and attending schools anywhere in the Minneapolis School District; <sup>c</sup> From Minnesota Department of Education computation of 4-year cohort-based graduation rates, for North Side schools (North High School and Henry High School); <sup>d</sup> **Data specific to North side schools:** From 2010 Minnesota Student Survey, surveys of students in grades 6, 9, and 12 in NAZ partner schools; <sup>e</sup> **Data specific to North Minneapolis**—Richard Chase & Christopher Moore, 2008. *Early learning conditions among low-income families in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Blue Earth and Nicollet counties*; <sup>f</sup> NAZ has not operated for sufficient time to collect data here; NAZ will work with MPS and National Student Clearinghouse to track college attendance and completion

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