

NEWS RELEASE

Partnership Supports North Minneapolis Children this Summer

In Historic Move for State, Teach for America Alternative Licensure Pathway Approved

MINNEAPOLIS, Wednesday, June 18, 2014—Two hundred North Minneapolis youth will spend the summer in high-quality learning environments through a partnership between Teach for America, the University of Minnesota, and the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ).

Teach for America corps members are taking part in a summer residency program in North Minneapolis. They are participating in a new teacher education program through the University of Minnesota's college of Education and Human Development. They are also gaining on-the-ground teaching experience in North Minneapolis through academic-focused summer programs at two NAZ partner sites, 21st Century Academy and Beacons.

“The achievement gap in Minnesota is the second worst in the nation. Teach for America offers a creative way to efficiently expand the pool of talented and unrelenting teachers into the classroom. Our NAZ scholars are benefitting significantly from a low teacher to student ratio in summer programs that are designed to accelerate reading and math performance,” said Sondra Samuels, NAZ President and CEO

This first-of-its-kind alternative teacher preparation program, created by the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) and Teach For America, in partnership with NAZ, was granted conditional approval by the Minnesota State Board of Teaching (BOT) last week. The program seeks to take the best of what traditional teacher preparation programs provide aspiring teachers and combine it with best practices of programs tailored to train and support teachers for schools in low-income communities.

“We are excited to work side by side with the University and NAZ in a program that shows collaboration in working to solve our most complex challenges in education for the benefit of students and teachers,” said Crystal Brakke, executive director of TFA-Twin Cities.

Teach For America recruits a diverse pool of professionals and recent graduates that have demonstrated the commitment and leadership ability needed to teach in low-income public schools. The organization is a significant source of diverse talent for local principals who are eagerly looking for teacher candidates that share racial, ethnic, and/or socio-economic backgrounds with the students they teach. Forty percent of teachers in summer residency are people of color, and 55% identify as people of color or coming from a low-income background.

About the Northside Achievement Zone

NAZ is a partnership of more than 30 organizations, nine schools, and hundreds of Northside parents who are working together to improve outcomes for our community. NAZ works with families who live in a geographic “Zone” of North Minneapolis to prepare children for college, beginning at birth.

Summer Expanded Learning Programs

NAZ has 450 student scholars enrolled in seven partner sites over the summer, each using the same best practice approach to improve reading and math proficiency. Teach for America corps members will provide high-quality instruction at two of these locations, working with approximately 200 student scholars.

Through NAZ, North Minneapolis is beginning a community-wide transformation toward a college going culture. Parents are now making college a top family priority and taking effective action to support the success of their children, starting at birth. Nonprofits, public institutions and schools are adopting evidence-based practices and working collaboratively to support the shared goal of college readiness. Together, the NAZ collaborative is leading innovative efforts to close the academic achievement gap for low-income children of color. Each NAZ solution is designed to deliver measurable progress toward eradicating educational and social disparities—and to be easily replicated by communities across the nation.

Results from summer 2013: Of the 170 scholars who completed summer programs last year, only one had “summer slide”, 64% gained at least half a grade level in reading, and 45% of that group gained a full grade level or more in reading in three months. During the 2013-2014 school year, 55% of scholars made a year or more of progress in reading in just four months.

These after school and summer Expanded Learning programs are just one way that NAZ partners with North Minneapolis children and families from the cradle to college to career. For more details, please visit the-naz.org.

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