

## NEWS RELEASE

### **NAZ Welcomes National Promise Neighborhoods to North Minneapolis**

MINNEAPOLIS, Thursday, June 19, 2014 – Four Promise Neighborhoods from across the country came to the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) in North Minneapolis June 18. The visitors were interested in learning about how more than 30 partners and nine schools are collaborating through NAZ to close the achievement gap in the community. They also learned first hand how NAZ and its collaborative partners are using data to drive measurable results for more than 600 enrolled families and 1,500 children. The trip was initiated and funded by the Promise Neighborhood Institute and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which have been working directly with NAZ leaders to develop their results-based approach.

“While we work toward the goal of creating a college-going culture in North Minneapolis, we are always simultaneously working to ensure that each of our best-practice solutions can be easily replicated by communities in MN and across the country. Promise Neighborhoods is a national “movement,” to end poverty, community by community. We have to learn what works together in order to transform our Country so that justice and equity prevail.” said Sondra Samuels, NAZ President and CEO. “Because of this, we are especially thrilled to welcome Promise Neighborhoods from across the country to North Minneapolis and build collaboration with them.”

The visiting communities are from Chula Vista CA, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Indianola, MS. Each received a U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhood implementation grant in 2012, similar to the grant awarded to NAZ in December of 2011.

“The progress for children in the NAZ shows the power of results-based leadership in helping community and system leaders use data and collaboration to drive intentionally toward the outcomes they want to see,” said Ashley B. Stewart, a senior associate with the Casey Foundation, who has worked directly with NAZ leaders on their approach.

“I want to thank NAZ for opening their doors to us. It’s great to understand that as a Promise Neighborhood, we are not in this alone. We are moving forward a similar vision in different communities throughout the country,” said Karina Favela-Barreras, Director of Operations for the Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood.

The visiting Promise Neighborhoods will bring home detailed information about how NAZ has built its systems of support since becoming a Promise Neighborhood. “It’s refreshing to see all of the data and tools NAZ shared with us. At one point, their organization was where we are. They’ve taken it to scale and they are willing to share their experiences with us.” Favela-Barreras said.

NAZ recently shared early results from 2013 that show early signs that the NAZ ecosystem of support is helping enrolled scholars make progress academically:

- NAZ scholars are more likely to be kindergarten ready (59% vs. 35% for the entire Zone).
- NAZ scholars improved their reading and math proficiency by 52%.
- 55% percent of scholars made a year or more growth in reading in four months of participation in after school and summer Expanded Learning programs through NAZ partners.

In addition, NAZ partners with parents to support success for the whole family, which is key to the success of the scholar.

- One third of NAZ families who faced homelessness or high mobility were stably housed.
- 55 NAZ Parents secured employment with the help of NAZ.

When asked what she most wanted her fellow Promise Neighborhoods to take away from the visit, Samuels said, “Accountability. NAZ and its partners are accountable to each other, to our families and to the community. When we commit to real, measurable change, we will see a revolutionary shift in closing the egregious disparities that face our communities.”

### **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.

As of June 1, 619 families with 1,550 children are enrolled in NAZ. Their goal is to enroll 900 families by the end of 2014 and reach 1,000 ongoing. This represents nearly half of the families with children living in the NAZ geographic Zone.

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.

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