

Results NAZ: K-8 Academic Success

Findings from Academic Year 2017-18



Summary

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) is an organization and community-wide collaboration working to close the achievement gap and end generational poverty in North Minneapolis. This report presents 2017-18 academic outcomes for scholars in grades 3-8. Results are shown overall (for scholars who were engaged with NAZ for at least the academic year of the relevant MCA test being reported), for those who have been engaged in at least one of NAZ's Academic Impact strategies for the academic year or more, and, for comparison, for other students who live in the Zone but have not had any involvement with NAZ.

In grades 3-8, results show that NAZ scholars are maintaining the levels of proficiency seen in previous years. NAZ scholars are achieving proficiency at rates higher than their Zone-wide peers, and scholars in the Academic Impact Group are doing so at rates that are statistically significant. Subgroup analyses also show that proficiency rates are significantly higher for scholars who participated in more than one of NAZ's academic strategies, participate in multiple years of NAZ academic strategies, and/or were enrolled in NAZ anchor schools. African American scholars who participated in NAZ academic strategies achieved proficiency rates that are much closer to statewide rates for African Americans (compared to African American scholars who have not participated in such strategies).

Not only are NAZ scholars proficient at rates above other Zone residents, they are also making more academic progress from year to year. Rates of academic growth are computed by comparing individual scholars' MCA scores to their own scores the previous year. These growth scores show that, in both reading and math, significantly more NAZ scholars are making above average growth compared to other students in the Zone. This higher rate of growth means that they are in better position to catch up to district-wide and statewide proficiency levels over time and thereby close the achievement gap.

Participation in NAZ's early childhood strategies are also associated with increased academic performance even several years into the elementary grades. Scholars who participated in a high-quality pre-K program offered by NAZ's early childhood partners were not only more ready for kindergarten but also had higher proficiency rates on the third grade MCA tests.

Background

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) is an organization and collaboration striving to close the achievement gap and end generational poverty in North Minneapolis. This report presents results from the 2017-18 academic year for scholars in kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8). Results for 2017-18 are reported separately for the other results areas (early childhood, high school into college success, parent engagement and education, and family support).

The analysis of results for 2017-18 focuses primarily on the proportion of NAZ scholars who score as proficient in reading and math on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA), administered annually in the spring for students in grades 3 through 8. For insight into kindergarten readiness, we also examine results of the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) earlyReading test, administered to entering kindergarteners in early fall. NAZ scholars are compared to other students who live in the Northside Achievement Zone, a 13 x 18 block area of North Minneapolis bounded by West Broadway Avenue, Penn Avenue, 35th Avenue, and 4th Street. To understand what is most effective, we also compare proficiency rates between groups of NAZ scholars based on their type and amount of participation in NAZ.

Because we would not expect increased academic proficiency immediately upon enrollment in NAZ, “NAZ scholars” in this report includes enrolled students who have had a meaningful amount of contact with NAZ: Family Achievement Coaching for a full year or NAZ academic strategies for the academic year leading up to the spring MCA tests (detailed definition in the Appendix).

In cooperation with NAZ and its academic partners, we are exploring an adjustment to the definition of the Academic Impact Group before next year’s analysis, to potentially include scholars in academic strategies for one full year or more (not just one school year). Starting for the 2018-19 school year, NAZ will have collaborative five-year benchmark targets as a roadmap to reaching 60% proficiency rates in reading and math in five years. Given how far behind most NAZ scholars are, NAZ decided to include scholars in the benchmark population only when they have had a reasonable amount of time in a NAZ academic strategy to have the potential to achieve at higher rates. We will also be exploring with NAZ and its academic partners the best methods for tracking and reporting outcomes for grades 1-2, before MCA tests are used.

Academic outcomes for NAZ scholars in grades 3-8

Data presented in this report include trends for the most recent three years and analysis of differences among scholars who have participated in different kinds and amounts of NAZ strategies. For comparison, data are also shown for students who are presumed to be comparable: other students enrolled in Minneapolis Public Schools who also live in the Zone, but are not enrolled in NAZ. Differences between groups were tested for statistical significance using two-tailed Chi-square tests, and are cited as significant only if the probability of the difference occurring by chance was less than 5 percent ($p < .05$).

Overall reading and math proficiency rates over time

Trends in MCA proficiency rates for NAZ scholars show that achievement levels are holding steady, with no year-to-year changes that can be attributed to anything other than chance variability.

In both reading and math proficiency, NAZ scholars in the Academic Impact Group outperformed their peers Zone-wide. Figure 1 shows reading proficiency trends. Across the three school years, the difference between NAZ scholars in the Academic Impact Group and the comparison Zone-wide group is statistically significant. The year-to-year changes are small and cannot be attributed to anything other than chance. Note, however, that the number of scholars in the Academic Impact Group in 2017-18 is larger than in 2016-17, so that even though the proficiency rate decreased slightly (but not meaningfully) in 2017-18, the actual number of NAZ scholars who scored at the proficient level increased slightly.

NAZ strategies included in the analyses

The strategies examined in this report are the following:

- Parent engagement through Family Achievement Coaching
- NAZ academic strategies:
 - Enrollment in any of the four NAZ anchor schools (only if also engaged with a Family Achievement Coach)

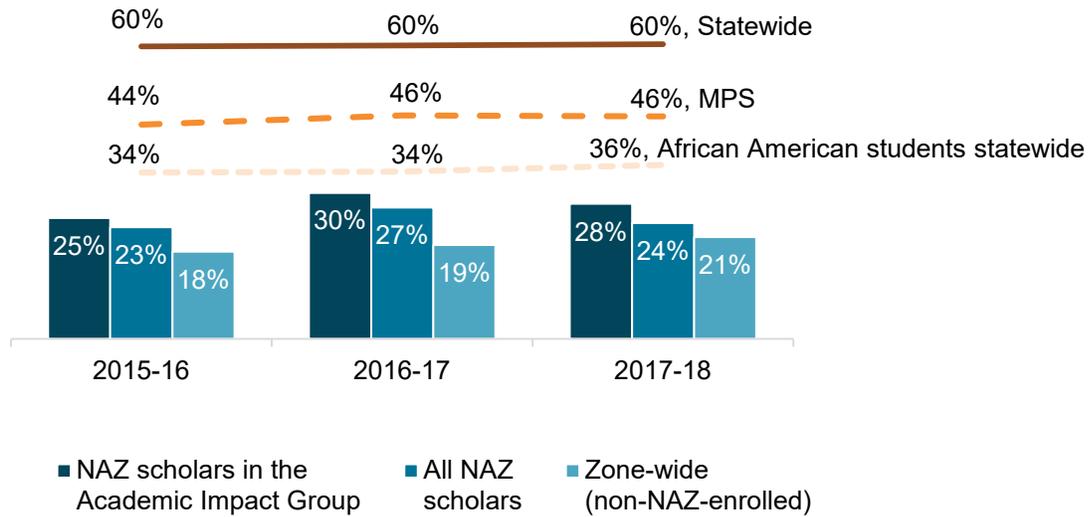
Distinctive features of K-8 anchor schools during 2017-18 include co-location of NAZ Coaches and Family Academy (parent education and empowerment) classes, in-school tutoring and after-school and summer academic and youth development programs, as well as professional development support for staff in a variety of practices appropriate for the Zone's student population. The four anchor schools are:

- Nellie Stone Johnson Community School (K-5)
- Ascension Catholic School (K-8)
- KIPP North Star Academy (K-8)
- Mastery School (K-5)
- Expanded learning (ExL) participation

ExL participation refers to NAZ partners' academic support programs during in-school time (IST) and out-of-school time (OST) programs. OST programs may include either after-school programs during the school-year or full-day programs during the summer. IST programs occur during the school year.

In addition to the ExL programs at the anchor schools, there are two OST programs that are not part of the four anchor schools: Kwanzaa 21st Century Learning Center and Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC).

1. MCA reading proficiency, grades 3-8



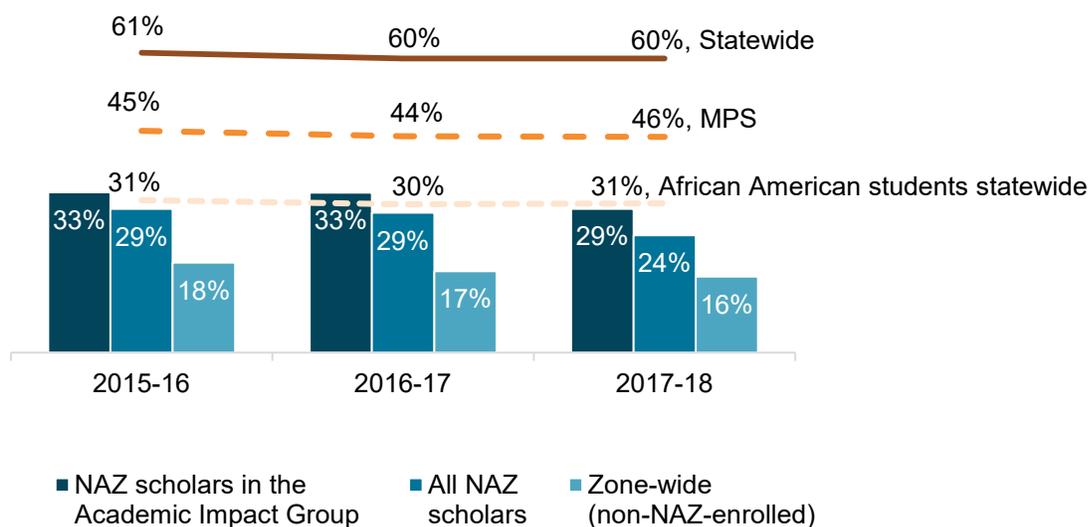
Groups	Number per group		
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
NAZ scholars in the Academic Impact Group	262	217	278
All NAZ scholars ^a	336	312	384
Zone-wide (non-NAZ)	1,035	1,028	890

^a“All NAZ scholars” is a label change from previous reports, but the group has the same definition as was used in prior years. Please see “Enrollment definition” section in the Appendix for more information.

Note. Statistical significance: Results for the Academic Impact Group were significantly greater than for the Zone-wide group in all years (2015-16 * p<.05; 2016-17 *** p<.001; 2017-18 * p<.05).

Figure 2 shows trends in math proficiency rates for the same groups. As with reading, year-to-year changes are not significant. The difference between the Academic Impact Group and comparable Zone-wide scholars for 2017-18 is statistically significant, and, as with reading, the increased number in the Academic Impact Group means that the number testing proficient was larger in 2017-18 than in 2016-17.

2. MCA math proficiency, grades 3-8



Groups	Number per group		
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
NAZ scholars in the Academic Impact Group	259	217	275
All NAZ scholars ^a	330	311	376
Zone-wide (non-NAZ)	1,052	1,045	886

^a "All NAZ scholars" is a label change from previous reports, but the group has the same definition as was used in prior years. Please see "Enrollment definition" section in the Appendix for more information.

Note. Statistical significance: Results for the Academic Impact Group were significantly greater than for the Zone-wide group in all years (each year *** p<.001).

Dosage analysis: Results for NAZ scholars based on participation in NAZ strategies

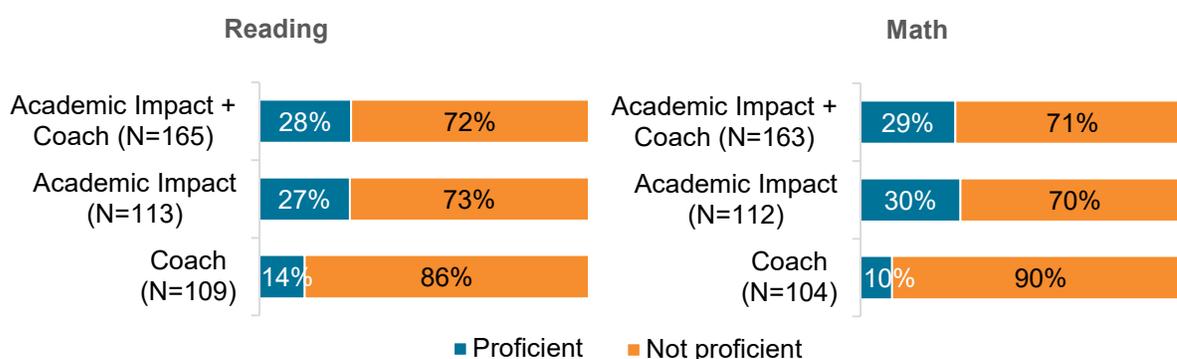
This section shows comparisons among sub-groups of NAZ scholars according to the type and/or number of NAZ strategies in which they have participated. Comparisons are:

- **Type of strategy:** Whether they had a Family Achievement Coach, participated in NAZ academic strategies, or both
- **Number of strategies:** Whether they participated in only one academic strategy or more than one
- **Length of participation:** The number of academic years in which they participated in an academic strategy
- **Anchor school enrollment:** Whether or not they were enrolled in a NAZ anchor school vs. any other school; results are also shown separately for African American scholars

Type of strategy

Scholars in the Academic Impact Group have higher proficiency rates than those who only worked with a Family Achievement Coach. Among Coach-only scholars, 14 percent tested proficient in reading, and 10 percent tested proficient in math (Figure 3). By contrast, NAZ scholars who also participated in NAZ academic strategies for at least the 2017-18 school year had proficiency rates that were twice as high for reading, and three times as high in math. The Academic Impact (only) Group consists of scholars working with one of two Expanded Learning partners that are not located at anchor schools. This group also had proficiency rates that were at least twice as high as those of Coach-only scholars.

3. 2017-18 MCA reading and math proficiency by extent of participation in NAZ strategies, grades 3-8



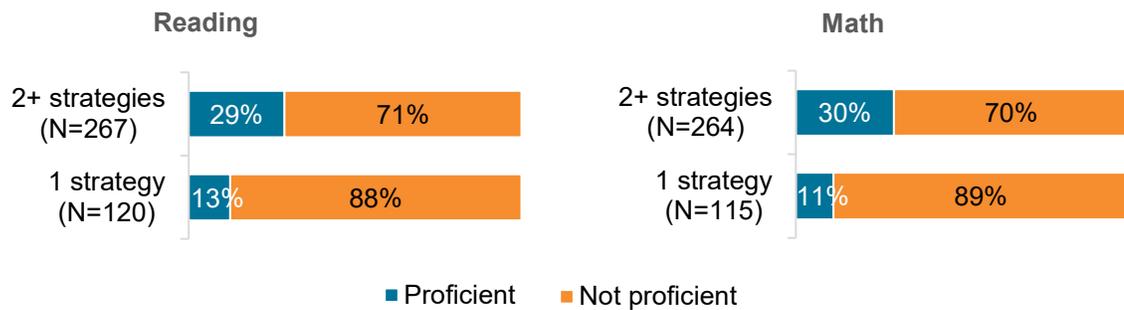
Note. To be included in each group, a scholar must have participated to a meaningful degree in that specific strategy, as described in the sidebar above and more fully in the Appendix. Scholars in the Academic Impact Group may have received some Family Achievement Coaching (fewer than 12 months) and scholars in the Coach Group may have some participation in NAZ academic strategies (summer Expanded Learning or partial-year anchor school enrollment).

Statistical significance: In both reading and math, results for the Academic Impact Group and for the Academic Impact + Coach group were significantly greater than for the Coach-only group (reading ** $p < .01$; math *** $p < .001$).

Number of strategies

Scholars who participate in two or more NAZ strategies have better outcomes in both reading and math. As shown in Figure 4, NAZ scholars are more than twice as likely to be proficient in reading and math when they participate in two or more NAZ strategies, compared to only one strategy. Strategies counted in this analysis include enrollment in a NAZ anchor school, participation in an Expanded Learning program that is not part of an anchor school, and participation in Family Achievement Coaching.

4. 2017-18 MCA reading and math proficiency by number of NAZ strategies, grades 3-8

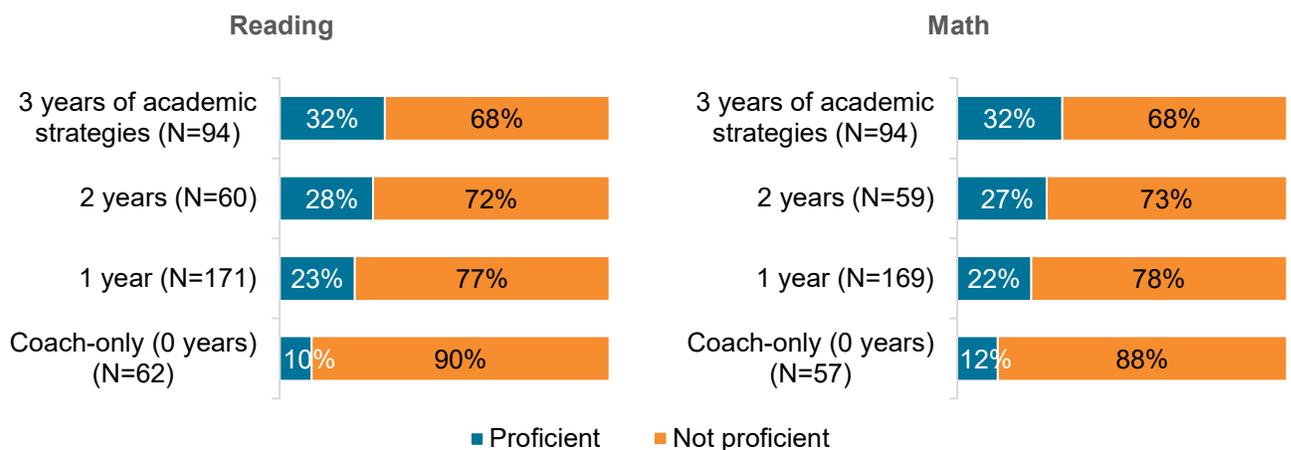


Note. Statistical significance: In both reading and math, results for scholars with 2+ strategies were significantly greater than for scholars with 1 strategy (both reading and math *** p<.001).

Length of participation

Two or more years of participation in NAZ academic strategies is associated with higher proficiency rates in both reading and math. Figure 5 again shows proficiency rates for all NAZ scholars, this time grouped according to the number of years they have participated in a NAZ academic strategy. For both reading and math, both two years and three years of NAZ academic strategy participation are associated with proficiency rates that are significantly higher than zero years.

5. 2017-18 MCA reading and math proficiency by years of participation in NAZ academic strategies (since 2015-16), grades 3-8



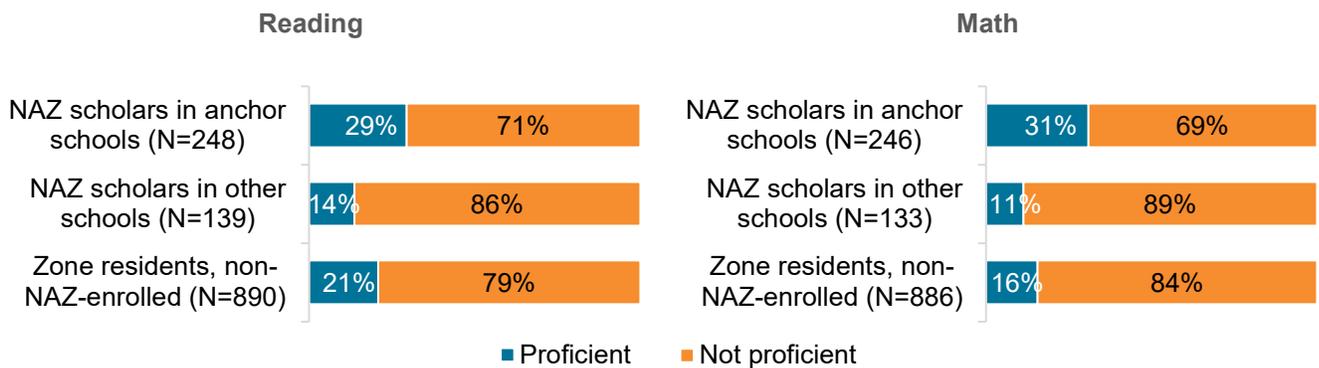
Note. Statistical significance: In reading, results for each of the years of Academic Impact were significantly greater than for the 0 years group (3 years and 2 years ** p<.01; 1 year * p<.05). In math, results for the 3 years group and the 2 years group were significantly greater than for the 0 years group (3 years ** p<.01; 2 years * p<.05).

Anchor school enrollment

NAZ scholars have higher proficiency rates in anchor schools than in non-anchor schools.

Figure 6 shows reading and math proficiency rates, comparing NAZ scholars in anchor and non-anchor schools as well as non-NAZ scholars in the Zone-wide comparison group. NAZ scholars in anchor schools have significantly higher proficiency rates in both reading and math than NAZ scholars in non-anchor schools.

6. 2017-18 MCA reading and math proficiency by anchor school enrollment, grades 3-8

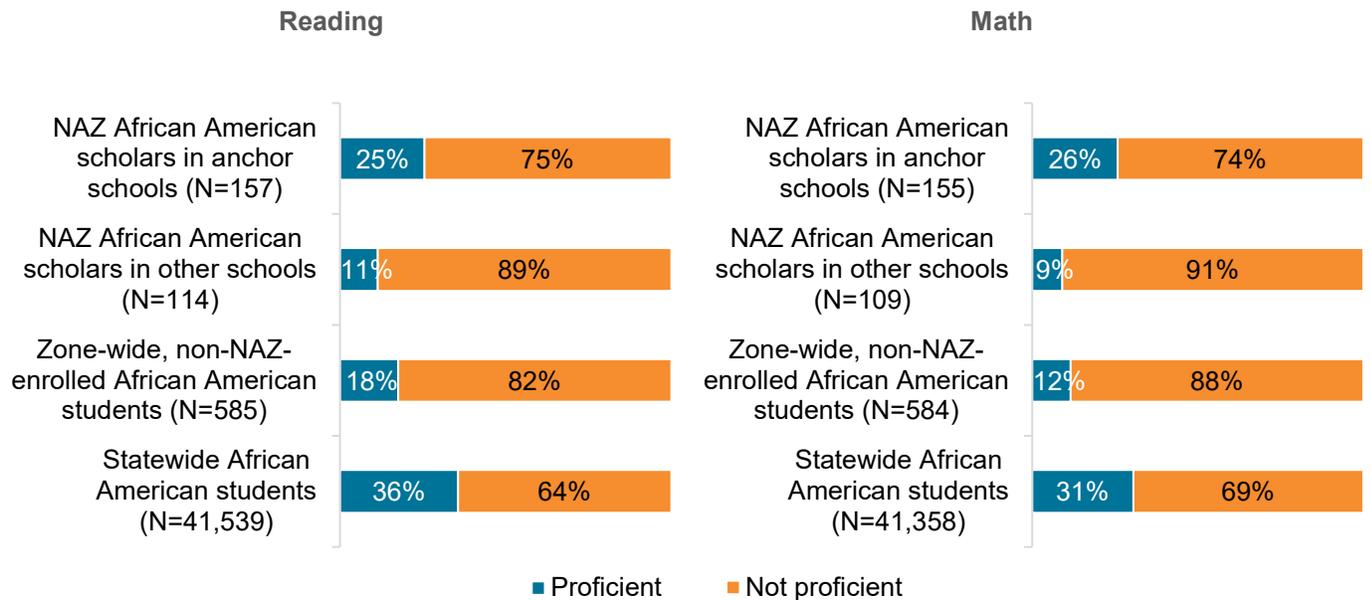


Note. Statistical significance: In reading, results for NAZ scholars in anchor schools were significantly greater than those for NAZ scholars in non-anchor schools (** $p < .01$) and approached significance compared to results for Zone-wide residents ($p < .10$). In math, results for NAZ scholars in anchor schools were significantly greater than those for NAZ scholars in non-anchor schools (***) ($p < .001$) and also significantly different than those for Zone-wide residents (***) ($p < .001$).

Proficiency rates for African American scholars

For NAZ scholars who are African American, those enrolled in anchor schools have proficiency rates that are more than double those in other schools. Seventy percent of NAZ scholars in this analysis are African American. Figure 7 shows results for these scholars in NAZ anchor schools, compared to NAZ African American scholars in other schools, and also compared to Zone-wide African American students who have not participated in NAZ. In math, the difference between NAZ African American scholars in anchor schools and comparable non-NAZ African American students is larger than can be attributed to chance. The proficiency rates for NAZ scholars at anchor schools are considerably closer to the statewide proficiency rates for African American students in grades 3-8.

7. 2017-18 MCA reading and math proficiency by anchor school enrollment, African American scholars only, grades 3-8



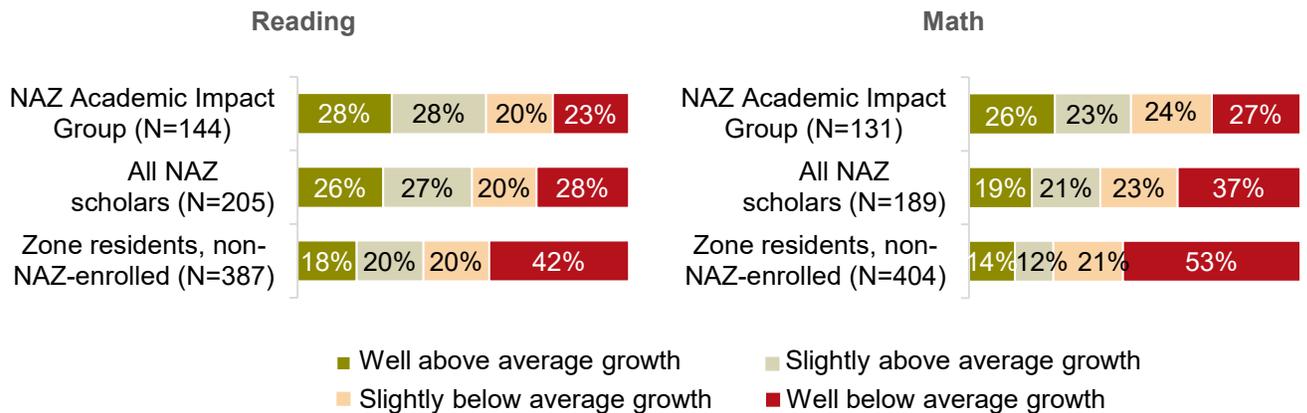
Note. Statistical significance: In reading, results for African American NAZ scholars in anchor schools were significantly greater than those for African American NAZ scholars in non-anchor schools (** $p < .01$) and approached significance compared to results for African American Zone-wide residents ($p < .10$). In math, results for African American NAZ scholars in anchor schools were significantly greater than those for NAZ scholars in non-anchor schools (***) ($p < .001$) and also significantly different than those for African American Zone-wide residents (***) ($p < .001$).

Analysis of growth

Because NAZ enrolls a high proportion of scholars whose starting point is considerably below grade level, it is likely that most will require several years of help and accelerated progress before they test as proficient. Measures of growth allow us to examine whether they are making progress to close the gap in the meantime. Growth scores show how much students' scores changed from one MCA test to the next, compared to other students who started at the same level of proficiency.

In both reading and math, significantly more NAZ scholars make above average growth compared to their Zone-wide peers. Figure 8 shows growth from 2016-17 to 2017-18 for scholars who were not proficient in 2016-17. Just over half of NAZ scholars made above-average growth in reading, compared to 38 percent of Zone residents not involved with NAZ. The percentage with above average growth was smaller in math than in reading, but the advantage for NAZ scholars remained significant. This higher rate of growth means that NAZ scholars are in better position to catch up to district-wide and statewide proficiency levels over time and thereby close the achievement gap.

8. 2017-18 MCA reading and math growth, grades 4-8, scholars who were not proficient in 2016-17



Note. Statistical significance: For both reading and math, combined “above average” growth rates for both NAZ groups (Academic Impact Group and All NAZ scholars) were greater than for the Zone residents group (***) p<.001).

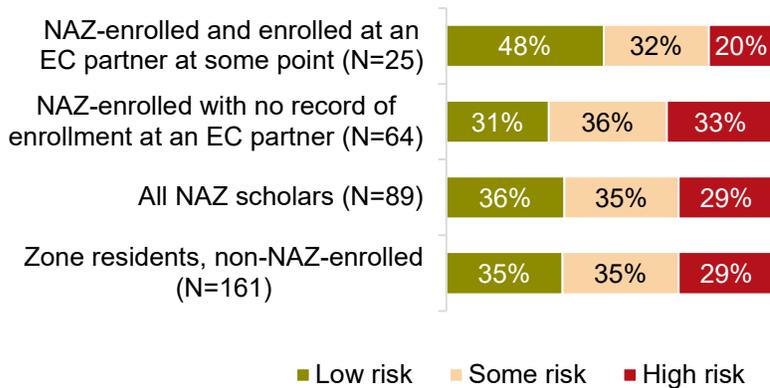
Impact of enrollment in a partner early childhood center

The 2017-18 kindergarten readiness findings resemble those from previous years. Figure 9 shows entering kindergarten scholars’ performance on the FAST earlyReading assessment. This assessment, which measures level of risk for future reading problems, was administered to kindergarteners at the beginning of the school year. We refer to those who score in the low risk range as “kindergarten ready”.

NAZ scholars entering kindergarten (“All NAZ scholars” in Figure 9 below) had the same levels of risk for future reading problems as their peers in the Zone (“Zone residents, non-NAZ”). A higher percentage of NAZ scholars who had attended a NAZ partner early childhood program were kindergarten ready compared to scholars who had not attended partner programs and non-NAZ kindergarteners living in the Zone, although these differences were not statistically significant.

When interpreting these results, readers should consider that scholars who were not enrolled at a NAZ partner program may have been enrolled at a *non-partner* high quality early learning center. Likewise, early childhood center data are based on records available in NAZ Connect, which may not accurately capture data for all scholars.

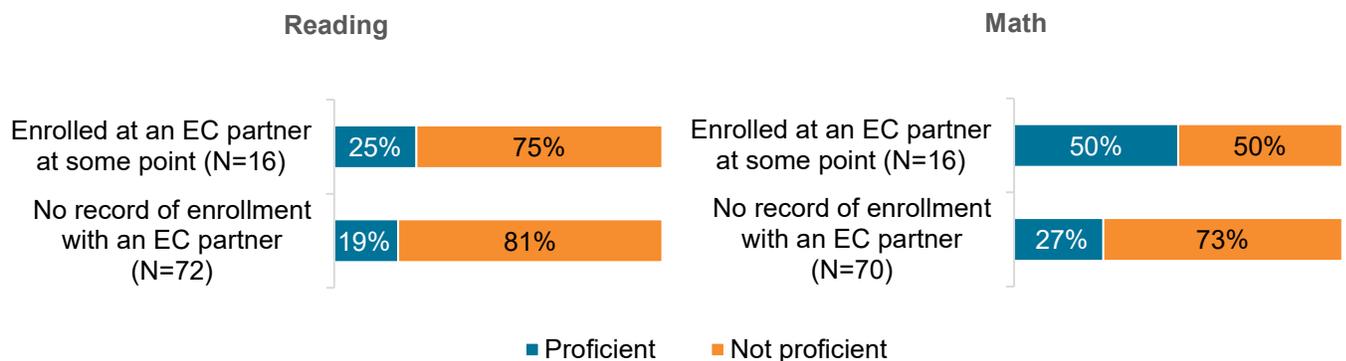
9. Fall 2017-18 Early FAST reading performance by prior enrollment in a NAZ partner early childhood program, kindergarten



Note. NAZ partner early childhood programs are listed in the Appendix.
 Statistical significance: Differences in the proportion at Low Risk were not statistically significant.

NAZ is interested in whether scholars who attended early learning partners experience lasting effects from early childhood enrollment in terms of third grade reading and math proficiency. Results for 2017-18 third-graders show that those scholars who had attended an early childhood partner program had slightly higher rates of proficiency than those who had not, especially in math (Figure 10). The numbers for whom these data are available are small enough that these differences may have occurred by chance (i.e., there is not a statistical difference between the groups).

10. 2017-18 MCA reading and math performance by prior enrollment in a NAZ partner early childhood program, NAZ scholars, grade 3



Note. Statistical significance: In reading, the difference between groups were not statistically significant. In math, the difference approached significance ($p < .10$).

Conclusions

As in previous years, results show NAZ scholars with higher rates of proficiency than their Zone-wide peers, with increasingly significant differences as the extent of their participation increases. Overall grade 3–8 trends in reading and math proficiency are holding steady. Participation in NAZ strategies that directly address reading and math is strongly related to higher proficiency rates. Moreover, higher levels of participation, either in combination during the same year or for a protracted duration over multiple years, is associated with higher proficiency rates than lower levels of participation. NAZ scholars in anchor schools, where these Academic Impact strategies are concentrated, have proficiency rates that are twice those of scholars in other schools.

NAZ scholars are also significantly outperforming their Zone-wide peers in the rates of academic growth they are achieving from one year to the next. This is important because NAZ scholars most often start at considerably lower proficiency rates than their schoolmates, which means they would need higher-than-average academic growth for several years before they achieve proficiency.

We also examined performance of NAZ kindergarteners and third-graders based on whether or not they had participated in the high quality early childhood programs of NAZ’s pre-K partners. Those with such participation had higher rates of kindergarten readiness (on a test of reading proficiency). They also had higher rates of proficiency on the MCAs in third grade, although those differences were not statistically significant.

These results support a continued emphasis on NAZ’s partnership with anchor schools and support for the academic enhancements made possible by this partnership. They also support efforts to increase scholars’ retention in these schools and in multiple NAZ academic strategies, to realize the greater benefits that are associated with extended participation.

Appendix

Comparisons to previous reports

Over time, this analysis has been revised to capture the evolution of NAZ strategies. Most of this year’s analysis resembles the 2016-17 report. As before, all scholars included in this report have engaged with NAZ in a meaningful way during the year prior to the assessment in question (e.g., the MCA): that is, one or more year of Family Achievement Coaching or school-year participation in academic supports.

As part of its continuous improvement process, NAZ’s understanding of meaningful enrollment changes as it collects, reflects, and acts on new data. This year, in addition to showing the results for the same group of scholars included in the 2016-17 report (labeled as “All NAZ scholars”), we have added an Academic Impact Group to further refine the definition for meaningful engagement

with respect to academic outcomes. In essence, scholars in the Academic Impact group participate in at least one core NAZ academic strategy: in-school or out-of-school support and/or enrollment in a NAZ anchor school (the complete definition of Academic Impact group is available below). During the past year, revisions to NAZ processes have increased the number and proportion of scholars enrolled at the Academic Impact level. NAZ is exploring additional focus on this group moving forward, at least with respect to academic outcomes.

Wilder Research completed a wide variety of analyses on these data, but, in the interest of length, time, and clarity, this report highlights the most relevant analyses. We selected analyses that were consistent with previous years of reporting. However, not all analyses completed in previous years were included in this report. These analyses have been provided to NAZ for continuous improvement purposes. Inclusion of these analyses would not have changed the conclusions of this report.

Data sources, assessments, and measures

This report summarizes key strategies and metrics from the previous year (2017-18). It relies on data from the following sources:

- Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) and NAZ's three non-MPS school partners in the K-8 grades (Ascension, KIPP, and Mastery), who provided academic data for NAZ scholars and students living in the Zone.
- NAZ Connect (NAZ's comprehensive data platform across the collaborative), which was the source for programmatic data for NAZ scholars, such as academic support, coaching, and early childhood enrollment.

Though NAZ examines a variety of academic data and measures, the data included in this report stem from two assessments:

- The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tests are administered to all public school students every year in reading and math in grades 3 through 8, as well as grade 10 (reading only) and grade 11 (math only). The MCA is a standards-based assessment, which means it measures proficiency with respect to education standards developed by the Minnesota Department of Education. The MCA was administered by teachers and/or school staff in March, April, or early May 2018.

- The Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) is an assessment designed by FastBridge Learning that measures reading, math, social, emotional, and behavioral skills.¹ FAST has developed different assessments (e.g., aReading, aMath, earlyReading) for different content areas and grade levels. This report utilizes the FAST assessment administered to kindergarteners, the earlyReading, as a measure of kindergarten readiness. The Fall 2017 administration of the earlyReading assessment measured early literacy skills in four areas – Concepts of Print, Onset Sounds, Letter Names, and Letter Sounds – and provides a composite score of all four areas. Our analysis is based on the composite score of all four areas. The test is administered in both English and Spanish. The earlyReading was administered in September and October 2017. Assessments were coordinated and administered by teachers and/or school staff at MPS; trained Wilder Research employees administered assessments at two of NAZ’s three non-MPS anchor schools (Ascension and Mastery).²

This report examines outcomes for three primary types of academic data:

Reading and math proficiency: Proficiency reflects a student’s ability to meet the state standards in either reading or math. Our primary source of data for reading and math proficiency is the MCA. The Minnesota Department of Education groups MCA scores into four categories: does not meet the standards, partially meets the standards, meets the standards, and exceeds the standards. Students who meet or exceed the standards are considered proficient, and those who partially meet or do not meet the standards are not proficient. The tests and scoring criteria have been consistent since 2013-14, allowing us to report four-year trends.

Reading and math growth: Growth, or progress, refers to how a student’s MCA score improved or worsened compared to their score the previous year. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) uses statewide data to compute the average growth rate for students who scored at a given level the previous year, then computes normalized growth scores to compare each student’s progress to the average progress for a child who scored at their level the previous year. For the purposes of this report, growth is then broken into four levels: well above-average progress, above-average progress, below-average progress, and well below-average progress.³

Growth does not necessarily correlate with proficiency. For example, a scholar who performed very poorly last year may achieve above-average progress, but not make enough progress to achieve proficiency. We consider above-average growth to be an important outcome for closing the

¹ More information available online from Minneapolis Public Schools at <http://rea.mpls.k12.mn.us/fast>.

² KIPP was in transition in the fall of 2017-18 and, despite strong efforts, was unable to complete the earlyReading assessment during the September testing window.

³ MDE breaks student growth into three categories (low, medium, and high, corresponding to more than 0.5 standard deviations below the mean, between 0.5 standard deviations below and 0.5 standard deviations above the mean, and at least 0.5 standard deviations above the mean, respectively). In order to distinguish above-average from below-average growth, we divide the medium growth category in half, split at the mean, to get the slightly below average and slightly above average growth categories. MDE’s low growth category corresponds to the “well below average growth” shown in this report, and MDE’s high growth category corresponds to the “well above average growth” category in this report.

achievement gap, especially when NAZ scholars are typically recruited due to poor academic performance, making it difficult for them to move from “not proficient” to “proficient” in a year’s time. For example, scholars selected to receive in-school supports are often referred for this help based on their academic performance, behavioral challenges, or poor attendance, and thus may start far behind their peers.

Growth scores supplement what we can learn from MCA proficiency rates in two important ways.

- A scholar who starts far behind his or her classmates but makes a lot of progress in a year may actually be showing greater academic gains than another who is proficient to begin with and merely maintains the same level of proficiency. Growth rates allow us to see how many scholars are closing the gap, even if they have not yet reached the level needed to be rated as proficient.
- If two groups are compared with each other, but some start from a higher initial proficiency level, looking at growth instead of proficiency helps make the comparison a more equal one, because growth scores are computed in comparison to other students statewide who started with the same initial level.

Enrollment definition and criteria for inclusion in analysis

According to NAZ, a total of 1,579 scholars age 5 through 13 engaged with NAZ during FY2018 (July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018). However, for reasons described below, only a portion of those are included in this analysis. Of these 1,579 scholars in the K-8 age range, NAZ reports:

- 967 scholars (61%) participated in Expanded Learning programs, including
 - 918 scholars (58%) in out-of-school time programs, and
 - 171 scholars (11%) in in-school programs at anchor schools
- 813 scholars (51%) were enrolled in a NAZ anchor school
- 505 scholars (32%) participated in Scholar Coaching

Many of these scholars also benefitted from Family Achievement Coaching, though the exact number of scholars impacted by Family Coaching is unavailable for this group of scholars.

Throughout this document, unless otherwise specified, “NAZ scholars” include those who had participated in NAZ strategies *for a meaningful amount of time* before the spring MCA tests. This requires involvement in at least one of the following:

- Family Achievement Coaching for 12+ months prior to the 2018 MCA
- A NAZ academic strategy, which could include:
 - Expanded learning participation during the 2017-18 school year (in the form of either in-school (IST) or out-of-school time (OST) support), OR

- Enrollment in an anchor school for the majority of the 2017-18 school year.⁴ (Note that, for the school years shown in this report, anchor school enrollment only qualifies as “Academic Impact” when paired with 12+ months of Family Achievement Coaching. As NAZ continues to develop its anchor school strategies, anchor school enrollment on its own may qualify as “Academic Impact” in future analysis.)

Note: in earlier years, the primary NAZ group has been labeled as “NAZ scholars (12+ months)”. We have simplified the label to “NAZ Scholars” or “All NAZ Scholars,” but this is a change in label only; the underlying definition remains unchanged from prior years.

In many figures, we highlight outcomes for NAZ scholars with Academic Impact, which is the group of scholars for whom NAZ expects to see changes in their academic outcomes.

To be included in the analysis, scholars must also have academic data on file. This requires that they attend either a NAZ anchor school or a Minneapolis public school, and have a valid Release of Information at some point during the relevant school year. This, in combination with the enrollment criteria outlined above, means that the number of scholars in the academic analysis is lower than the total number of scholars participating in NAZ.

NAZ includes eight early childhood programs that are anchor partners. All of them have been rated as high quality by the Parent Aware organization, in their star rating system to identify program that use best practices to prepare children for kindergarten. These programs, referenced in the analysis for Figures 9 and 10, are:

- La Crèche Early Childhood Centers, Inc.
- Minneapolis Public Schools Early Childhood Education
- New Horizon Academy
- Northside Child Development Center
- The Family Partnership
- Think Small
- Way to Grow
- YWCA Early Childhood

Unless otherwise specified, the “Zone-wide” group includes any student who resided in the geographic footprint of the Zone in the relevant school year but was not (and had never) engaged with NAZ.

⁴ Anchor school enrollment for the majority of the school year may be defined in either of the following two ways, based on data availability:

- Enrolled in an anchor school as of 10/1/17 and completed a Spring 2018 assessment (MCA, MAP, or FAST) in an anchor school.
- Enrolled in anchor school for at least 115 school days during the 2017-18 school year.

Statistical significance testing

Between-group differences in proficiency rates were tested using two-tailed Chi-square tests. Because this is a descriptive study, there are no controls for selection bias between the NAZ-enrolled and non-NAZ-enrolled Zone groups. Typically, one assumes the potential for a participant-based selection bias favoring a voluntary program like NAZ based on families' interest in participation and/or achievement. However, this bias is felt to be counterbalanced by a systematic recruitment bias by NAZ and its anchor school partners based on their selective recruitment into NAZ of scholars who are seen by their teachers as being in greatest need of help to catch up with their peers.

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