NAZ High School into College Success: Overall Summary

Findings from 2017-18
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Introduction

The following is a compilation of reports and other documents prepared for the evaluation of NAZ’s *High School Into College Success Results Plan*, summarizing findings from 2017-18. These include:

- The overall summary
- The summary of a focus group with High School, OST, and Postsecondary Partner Leaders
- The summary of a conversation with the two original Scholar Coaches
- The summary of a focus group with high school Scholars
- The appendix

The embedded reports can be reviewed together or as separate, stand-alone documents.
Overall Summary
NAZ High School into College Success: Overall Summary

Findings from 2017-18

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)’s High School into College Success Results Plan details strategies for engaging scholars through effective academic programs and supports in high school, supporting college planning and transitions, developing career pathways and work-based learning opportunities, and developing a college-going culture among families and the community in general. The aim of the High School into College Success strategy is to help scholars graduate high school college- and career-ready and enroll in and complete an optimal post-secondary program, successfully enter a career pathway, and be engaged civically in the community. The key strategy areas are:

- A seamless network of supports for scholars in college and career readiness
- Data-driven and continuous improvement
- Academic and financial success
- Matriculation and graduation
- Career pathways and work-based learning opportunities
- Parent and community engagement

The high school into college action area is still under construction. High school Scholar Coaching completed its first year of implementation in the summer of 2017 and is now transitioning into its second year. Postsecondary partners have joined the Action Team to participate in the development of the college part of the pipeline and help consider what is needed for effective transitions from high school into college. Limited data are available at this time for assessment. For this report, we gathered data from: NAZ’s case management database, NAZ Connect, and three focus groups: one with NAZ high school, out-of-school time (OST), and postsecondary partners; one with the two Scholar Coaches who piloted that strategy during 2016-17; and one with six high school scholars who worked with those Coaches. (More detailed information about the results of the focus groups are published separately).

This report summarizes metrics and focus group findings from the previous year (2017-18)
Key findings

Population of focus for this strategy

NAZ serves approximately 350 high school scholars each year (Figure 1). During the past three years, NAZ has served a total of 523 scholars in grades 9-12. Retention rates for high school scholars were fairly high: around three-quarters remained enrolled in NAZ from one year to the next.

1. High school scholar enrollment and retention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolled during each period</th>
<th>Number enrolled</th>
<th>Retention rate</th>
<th>Number retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2016</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2017</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2018</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any of the three years</td>
<td>523</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. NAZ Connect. Data downloaded during April 2018.

Participation in relevant strategies

NAZ has five key strategies to support high school scholars. Two of these primarily engage parents: Family Coaching and Family Achievement Planning. Three directly engage the scholars: Scholar Achievement Planning, anchor school enrollment, and participation in one of NAZ’s partner out-of-school time (OST) programs. More information about these strategies can be found in the Appendix.

Out of the 523 scholars enrolled over the three most recent academic years, most had families participating in the parent-focused strategies (93% Family Achievement Coach, 82% Family Achievement Planning; Figure 2). Fewer had participated in the scholar-centered strategies (37% Scholar Achievement Planning, 35% NAZ anchor school, 31% NAZ partner OST program).

2. Participation in NAZ strategies

- Family Coaching (N=523): 93%
- Family Achievement Planning (N=523): 82%
- Scholar Achievement Planning: 37%
- Anchor school enrollment: 35%
- OST program: 31%

Note. Anchor school enrollment reflects enrollment at either Patrick Henry or North High School.
These five strategies are found in several different “key strategy areas” of the Results Plan. Input from the focus groups with partners, Coaches, and scholars are summarized below, organized by these strategy areas.

**Academic and financial success**

The *Academic and financial success* strategy area includes four component strategies:

- **Support academic success**, through providing academic supports (i.e., tutoring, study groups, and mentoring) and providing college-level achievement planning
- **Effective classrooms**, through professional development for teachers, instructional leadership of school administrators, courses in ethnic studies and the use of Youth Participatory Action Research
- **Early access**, through dual enrollment (programs that offer college credit during high school years) and college visits and multicultural support programs on campus for NAZ scholars
- **Financial supports**, through targeted and ongoing support for the financial aid process, increased assistance for solving unmet financial need, and scholarship programs for NAZ scholars

**Support academic success**

(Address underlying barriers to academic success)

Partners articulated the need to start early with young scholars to build the soft skills and intrinsic motivation for learning that provide the foundation for academic success. Part of this foundation-building also includes the related efforts to address the belief gap and lift up relatable role models. Through all of this runs the importance of recognizing and addressing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the trauma these cause. These themes were strongly supported by the Coaches, and indirectly by the scholars through their comments about the ways in which they found the Coaches helpful. In fact, Coaches stated their perception that if ACEs and trauma were addressed, it would go a long way to addressing scholars’ academic challenges.

(Provide supports targeted specifically to academic success)

Partners strongly emphasized the importance of focusing on activities that directly address academic success for scholars, though there was debate about the extent to which grades should be emphasized as a measure of this. Recognizing that many scholars reach high school without an internalized love for learning, they also felt Coaches, as well as school staff, employers, and community, could be called on to help scholars to engage more deeply with the existing school curriculum. Partners also expressed a desire for new 9th graders to be helped to identify what classes they should sign up for, and what else they need to bear in mind, to help them prepare for college.)
Offer personal and academic support through Scholar Coaching

In all three focus groups, participants saw Scholar Coaching as an important way to support scholars’ personal (or social-emotional) development and academic skills. Partners suggested increasing the number of Scholar Coaches, and scholars indicated they thought more scholars would want to sign up to work with one if they knew about their availability. (The separate summary of the Coaches focus group includes details about what is working and what is challenging about implementing this role.)

Both Coaches and scholars cited the value of providing coaching in both individual and group formats. The scholars in the OST-based program had a group, led by the Coach, that included structured and unstructured discussions as well as specific action projects. The scholars in the school-based program were part of a three-week pilot of a Youth Foundations course, which was highly valued by the youth but not suitable for the school-day setting in which it was originally offered.

Ensure that support includes role models and support for scholars’ cultural identity

Partners felt strongly that scholars’ achievement planning needed to combine high aspirations with a realistic examination of options based on the scholar’s current state of readiness as well as their interests. Exposure to relatable role models can be helpful for addressing the belief gap. It can also help scholars realize the challenges they may face in meeting their goals, while also encouraging them to recognize the kinds of supports they may be able to draw on. Coaches’ and scholars’ comments indicated how culturally appropriate role models could help scholars strengthen their cultural identity and enhance their motivation to confront and surmount challenges.

Effective classrooms

In addition to their support for authentic learning, partners wanted both high school and postsecondary institutions to ensure that all staff believe in their students and help them engage with the existing curriculum. Staff should have opportunities for professional development to help them work effectively with students from cultures other than their own. College- level faculty and staff should also be offered training in working effectively with other non-traditional students such as those from backgrounds of poverty or families with no prior college experience.

Comments from scholars lend support for the need to build these capacities. Scholars described classes that they did not find safe and supportive and which almost always lacked African American teachers. Although their classes sometimes dealt with issues of social justice that were highly pertinent to them, the scholars felt their white teachers were unable to effectively moderate discussions relating to social justice, due to their lack of the requisite personal experience. Scholars also described school settings that they saw as ineffective due to large class sizes and lack of resources.

One Coach felt that all high schoolers should be given laptops or tablets and taught to use them to do their work as well as communicate with teachers. However, when discussing the resources
within their schools, some scholars felt that technology was not the resource they would prioritize. While this comment from scholars was not in response to the comment from Coaches, it does suggest that scholars should be consulted more specifically about this issue if NAZ or nonprofit partners might consider an effort to provide more technology in the schools.

**Early access to college**

**Offer college credit during high school**

Partners were supportive of options for students to earn college credits while still in high school. This could be at either the high school or college campus. They pointed out that college-based experiences could help scholars more easily acclimate later to whatever college they chose to attend. College-based dual credit experiences, however, should have provisions in place to maintain good communications with the scholar’s high school, to ensure that they are kept aware of how the scholar is doing and what support they might need.

**Organize targeted college visits**

Partners discussed the importance of having colleges host opportunities for scholars and their families to visit the campus, and to have such experiences be specifically tailored to Northside interests and needs. One suggestion was for college tours to include an opportunity for scholars to hear from a panel of peers from their own or a comparable community, where they could hear an honest description of the likely challenges, coupled with an emphasis on how they can expect to be supported to surmount them. This realistic perspective should blend support for high aspirations with a tough-minded appraisal of what it would take to make them happen, and the encouragement that suitable supports would be provided.

**Raise the profile and acceptability of alternative pathways**

Partners strongly urged that scholars be given help to plan, not only for the traditional pathway of a diploma followed by a four-year college, but also for alternative pathways that might be best suited for the scholars’ interests and/or current reality. They urged that the GED, vocational education, and two-year programs be de-stigmatized, and that information about these be presented as part of NAZ’s program of supports for post-high-school planning. Coaches also supported the inclusion of vocational education as part of the high school part of the pipeline, not only a postsecondary option. Some scholars indicated that they felt not all students were ready for college immediately after high school graduation, whether due to lacking awareness about college, having other interests, or lacking financial resources.
**Financial supports**

Support the process of applying for financial aid

Partners advocated for starting the financial aid planning process early. Supports should include help to identify and select among different options for paying college costs, as well as help completing financial aid forms. They recommended that financial aid counseling be included as part of the high school college counseling process, and that scholars also receive counseling on basic financial literacy (such as understanding long-term implications of debt). Coaches verified that these are needs, and that these are kinds of support they currently offer, along with the social-emotional support some scholars need when this process becomes overwhelming.

Help scholars address gaps between college costs and available aid

Coaches pointed to the very tangible role scholars’ jobs can play in helping them pay part of their college costs. They also pointed out the need many NAZ scholars have for help getting some of the basic supplies they need – such as a laptop or a room fan – to equip them to transition successfully to their college setting.

**Matriculation and graduation**

Partners discussed the importance of colleges having visibility (such as through information events) in the high schools, to inform scholars about college, including what college is like, what it can offer, and what scholars can do to prepare. They also mentioned the need to work closely with organizations such as College Possible to promote visibility.

Coaches felt that most scholars need more support than is currently available for navigating the pathway into college. The supplemental support they are providing for this pathway includes helping scholars with identifying potential colleges, figuring out finances, and getting through the transition into college. In particular, they mentioned scholars’ need for support during the adjustment immediately after college matriculation, including adjusting to living away from family.

Partners also stressed the need for colleges to provide general and targeted supports for Northside scholars throughout scholars’ time in college. In addition to the traditional counseling and financial aid services that are available to all students, they felt that colleges that will be welcoming NAZ scholars should also offer supports that are more specialized to the needs of first-generation college students and students of color. These more customized supports would offer more individualized services that include more ongoing communications where there is the opportunity to build a trusting relationship. Partners also recommended that colleges take responsibility to track the progress of low-income students and students of color, and be prepared to step in as needed to ensure success.
Partners said that part of the work to support scholars should include ongoing communications between the high school and the college about the scholar’s progress, building on prior relationships and helping to assure continuity for the individual. Continuity should be maintained not only about academic planning and progress but also financial aid processes.

Career pathways and work-based learning opportunities

In addition to partners’ and Coaches’ support for vocational education as a pathway to be valued in achievement planning, Coaches and scholars agreed that work training and job experience can help build college readiness as well as broader life (and employment) skills. They cited employment’s role in developing self-regulation, communication and teamwork skills, time management, and a variety of other soft skills. One Coach also pointed to opportunities an OST partner provides for networking with a variety of employers to explore potential career paths; however, scholars felt that brief, one-time visits from employer representatives were not effective for this purpose. The scholars also described certain employers, including the NAZ partners Cookie Cart and Juxtaposition Arts, as particularly helpful in providing work preparation and experience, due to their explicitly developmental approach that teaches skills and does not hold teens to standard job performance expectations from day one.

For income-earning opportunities as well as vocational preparation, Coaches especially emphasized a need for more year-round employment opportunities for Northside youth.

Several themes already mentioned touched on the importance of culturally-relevant role models, and how Coaches are helping to fill this need. Recognizing how few African American teachers and other licensed school professionals NAZ scholars encounter, partners suggested that NAZ scholars be encouraged to enter education and counseling professions themselves.

Parent and community engagement

Partners and Coaches endorsed the involvement of parents in scholars’ college planning and transitions, though Coaches pointed out that family dynamics may complicate this involvement for some.

Partners suggested that parent involvement should include parents’ visits or tours to colleges, as well as including them in financial aid planning and, more broadly, financial literacy training. In particular, families should be supported through the college decision-making process, including a realistic examination of the financial implications of the different choices. This would include understanding how college costs may influence the family’s own finances (such as through the loss of one of their earners), as well as help to foresee the long-term financial consequences of taking out loans. The FAFSA was mentioned as a particular point for connecting with parents, and one partner suggested holding a “FAFSA night” at NAZ as soon as the forms are ready each year, to help parents and scholars with the application.
Coaches also advocated for NAZ to be prepared to help support parents through their scholars’ transition to college. This would include help to maintain contact, such as through college visits on family weekends, as well as coaching to help them be supportive in new ways during this transitional period for their scholar.

Collaborative and data infrastructure

Two other strategy areas of the Results Plan describe the collaboration and data infrastructure to support, manage, and continuously improve the rest of the plan. Focus group findings relevant to these areas are summarized below.

A seamless network of supports for scholars in college and career readiness

Partners’ suggestions for building new or stronger links in the college pipeline included:

- Working with elementary schools to start early in offering authentic learning experiences to build scholars’ intrinsic motivation for learning
- Working with middle schools to help them prepare scholars for a successful transition to high school
- Encouraging OST partners to develop programs to work with scholars who do not meet standard program criteria based on GPAs, or finding alternative providers to offer programs to help build “on-ramps” for the standard college pathway
- Maintaining ongoing communication between high school and college partners about programs as well as about specific scholars

Partners placed a high priority on aligning partners and bridging gaps between programs and across education levels. Some felt that the use of the Coach model could help to bridge the communications gap between partners.
Data-driven and continuous improvement

Partners felt strongly about the need to use data to identify challenges and improve programs. There was no consensus, during the focus group, on priorities for what data to use. Suggestions included data for individual partners’ use, such as colleges to use their own student data to identify patterns of success or gaps for scholars, and to take steps to strengthen programs and supports according. Other potential data sources and uses across the NAZ collaborative were more varied, and the reader is referred to the summary of the partners’ focus group for the full picture. However, the following list illustrates the many kinds of data partners felt would be of value to collect to help shape strategies:

- Identify the number and characteristics of scholars who need or are eligible for support in the high school into college/career pipeline
  - Identify number and characteristics of scholars participating, by type of program
- Identify the academic status, strengths, and gaps of scholars at the start of high school
  - Track progress of scholars, ideally by type of participation/support
- Identify where NAZ high school graduates attend, and what success they have there
  - Compare destinations and success rates by scholar characteristics (e.g. compare poor vs. middle class and affluent graduates)
  - For those who are successful, what helps them? (Collect directly from scholars)
- Identify which colleges are effectively helping black and brown young men to succeed, and identify what those colleges are doing that could be replicated by NAZ partners
- Ask NAZ scholars what they want to do after high school, and compare that with what they actually do

The Appendix to this report includes a discussion of some of the data challenges that were identified during this Results NAZ reporting process, and suggests some potential approaches that could be considered in a data development plan for the next stages of the development of this action area.
Information from Partner Leaders
Eight organization leaders participated in the focus group, including four from two anchor high schools, two from two OST partners, and two from two postsecondary institutions. This summary includes all suggestions made during the conversation, regardless of whether or not they were echoed by other participants. The most commonly cited themes are shown as high-level headings, with related but less common themes after them.

**Main takeaways**

- There was consensus among the group on the importance of bridging gaps among programs, partners, and grade levels and aligning all programs around a common understanding of what is best for the scholars. Continuity throughout the pipeline was stressed.

- An overriding theme of the discussion was that college preparation and success will be challenging for many NAZ (and Northside) scholars, and that it will be important for them to have strong, trusting, relationship-based coaching based on an honest assessment of their current situation (including grades), combined with an understanding of and strong support for their authentic aspirations and capacities.

- Cohort models were mentioned frequently, often in addition to individual coaching support.

- Other than current Action Team leaders, most partners have limited familiarity with NAZ and hence were not always able to offer informed suggestions about what NAZ could do. However, there was strong interest especially in two roles for NAZ: helping to bridge gaps (between partners and/or levels of schooling), and helping to engage scholars’ families.

The participants had many closely interrelated ideas about what needs to happen and be available for scholars before and through high school and into college. These are briefly summarized and set in relationship to each other in the graphic on the next page, with further details in the narrative that follows.
1. Overview of main themes in focus group about experiences and supports to strengthen college readiness and success

- **Start early**
  - Address belief gap
  - Authentic, high-quality learning experiences

- **Middle school and high school**
  - Strengthen academic skills
    - Esp. reading, writing, math
  - De-stigmatize GED and non-4-year postsecondary pathways
  - Include them in discussion of students’ options

- **Postsecondary level**
  - Provide realistic info about college
  - Offer postsecondary credits during high school
  - Offer college information and experiences tailored to nontraditional students
  - WRAPAROUND HELP INCLUDING COACHING AND/OR COHORT
  - Faculty and staff ready (check bias)
  - Specialized help for non-traditional needs

- **Ongoing communications between high school and college**

- Alignment (ongoing communication and harmonization of supports among partners and other providers)
- Continuity (no gaps for scholars)
What could be done before scholars are in high school

Address the belief gap

Participants strongly agreed on the importance of helping students develop high aspirations, connected with reality. This should be supported by belief in the students on the part of all the adults who interact with them, including their families. This theme was closely related to others, including helping scholars identify realistic pathways to their goals, and develop intrinsic motivations for reaching them as well as the soft skills to follow through successfully.

Promote high aspirations and realistic planning

Participants stressed the need to blend high aspirations with realistic expectations about what is required to meet them. This includes an exploration of both postsecondary and career options and how those relate to each other:

> This involves making sure my team believes in all our students, and that high schools do too. It also needs to be paired with a dose of reality and honesty with students; that is where counseling comes in. — Postsecondary representative

These purposes are also supported by being able to see people who look like the scholars themselves who are succeeding in the academic or career that they are interested in. Participants would also like to see more encouragement and support for scholars to become educators and/or counselors (licensed staff, not just support staff).

Develop a love for learning

Also related to the belief gap is the importance of developing intrinsic motivations about learning and future opportunities:

> The belief gap, at least part of that, it’s more about learning because you should be wanting to learn for the rest of your life, because it opens up avenues for all kinds of things that you might do. To me, that is more inspiring and a more motivating message (than a focus on grades or test scores). — OST representative

This can be promoted by offering authentic learning experiences (that are standards-based and student-led) beginning in the early grades.
Develop (and model) soft skills

The development of soft skills (including such academically useful habits as turning in assignments, being on time, and asking for help when needed) was also mentioned in close connection with the belief gap, likely because of the contribution of the intrinsic motivation that helps both.

High school partners could do:

- Work with middle schools to help them know what kinds of help rising high schoolers are most in need of to be better prepared for a smooth transition to high school.
- Ensure that teachers both teach and model soft skills and communicate high expectations for all scholars.

OST partners could do:

- Continue current programming to develop soft skills, and communicate with NAZ and high schools about scholars’ needs and progress.

Postsecondary partners could do:

- Have visibility in the schools through programs to inform students about what college is like, what it has to offer, what they can do to prepare, etc.
- Host opportunities for students (and their families) to come to the campus, with realistic information provided by a panel of students with comparable backgrounds.
- Ensure that all staff believe in all their students.

NAZ could do:

- Bridge the communications gap between other partners; the coach model helps with this.

Note about GPA and related measures of progress: There was strong disagreement between two participants about whether or not partners should focus scholars’ attention and efforts strongly on their GPA (as opposed to more intrinsic interests or the arc of how the GPA is trending) during the middle school and high schools years. There was not enough time in the session to fully explore the bases for disagreement, or to get others’ views on the merits of the different positions. However, there was strong consensus in the group about the importance of authentic learning experiences early enough to build and support intrinsic motivations (which are seen as likely to help support higher GPAs), as well as consensus about the importance of having honest, even tough conversations with youth about their interests and aspirations and the paths available to them given their current starting points (whatever those might be and at whatever point in time).
Strengthen basic academic skills

Participants generally described the strategies described above (including early authentic learning experiences to build buy-in and intrinsic motivation, development of soft skills, and exposure to relatable role models) as likely to help develop and support academic skills. Other more directly related strategies for doing this were:

- More people able to provide one-on-one academic coaching, especially in reading, writing, and math.
- Help for students to engage with curriculum that they do not find intrinsically motivating, through coaching (academic or more counseling-related), provided either by high school counselors and social workers or by business members, community members, or NAZ staff.

What could be done during high school

In addition to the themes already identified (addressing the belief gap, promoting a love of learning and high expectations, strengthening academic and soft skills, and having honest conversations about how the scholar’s current level of progress can be built on to lead to their goals for the future), the following activities were suggested that are specific to the high school years.

Offer scholars opportunities to earn college credits during high school

Participants described a variety of ways scholars could earn college credits during high school, including Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), concurrent enrollment, and others. Some of these may take place on the high school campus while others may take place on the college campus. Participants felt that in addition to getting head start on credits, a successful PSEO experience on a college campus could help students navigate any college later with more success, even if they do not end up attending the same one where they took their PSEO.

Value and plan for alternate pathways as appropriate

- In addition to strengthening scholars’ academic performance, participants also emphasized the importance of giving scholars honest information about alternative pathways to college and careers, including the GED instead of a diploma, and vocational and two-year colleges instead of – or as initial steps toward – four-year colleges.
- De-stigmatize the GED. Several participants supported increasing the general perception of the value of a GED and of what it implies about the person who earned it. It was suggested that the GED today takes at least as much motivation to earn as a high school diploma.
For students who are very far behind, sometimes a GED is the best way forward. It can be a great way forward to a 2-year steppingstone program and then maybe there’s a 4-year program after that. Can we de-stigmatize the GED; can universities think about how they view the GED over a diploma?

It’s my understanding that the GED is now very difficult to get – that you have to be motivated to get it. – OST and high school representatives

- Similarly, there was support for raising the profile of two-year and vocational programs, either in their own right or as alternative pathways to four-year programs. This includes helping students include such programs in their consideration when thinking about their postsecondary futures, especially if they represent a realistic match to their future aspirations and their current state of preparation.

Provide realistic information to scholars about postsecondary programs

Several interrelated themes stressed the importance of realistic, honest information about what college is like for students like those from the Northside.

- Recognize areas in which the student may not have all the academic skills that are expected, and have honest conversations with the student to discuss their aspirations, what it would take to attain them, and the realistic options available for getting there.

- For those struggling with the traditional pathways, include the GED, vocational, and two-year programs as options.

- Offer campus tours, and college days at the high schools, that avoid unrealistically rosy or generic information and let students know honestly how challenging they may find college. Involve panels of college students who are genuine peers who can describe their experiences and how they are navigating it, and who can sell the value of doing it. End with the assurance that “we’ve got your back” and the students can expect to find help when they need it.

- Begin financial planning early, involve families, help them figure out options for how to pay, and provide help with the paperwork including the FAFSA. Make sure families, as well as scholars, understand how college will affect any financial responsibilities scholars have in their current family finances.
High school partners could do:

- Provide more academic and non-academic coaching, or arrange for more of it from other providers; this should include guidance to scholars about what is needed to be ready for college, such as what classes a 9th grader should take.
- Include financial literacy counseling as part of college counseling – including long-term implications of college loans of different sizes, in the context of other costs they will have after college.
- Provide opportunities for scholars to earn postsecondary credits while in high school through PSEO, concurrent enrollment, or other options.

OST partners could do:

- Take on a cohort of less-prepared scholars (not meeting their standard program criteria), and adjust their program to better meet their needs.
- When helping scholars make postsecondary plans, include nontraditional pathways.

_They really only counsel and support students in 4-year programs, and really do shy away from even having conversations with students about 2-year programs or other options, even though one-third of their students end up in 2-year programs (and they do support them when they’re there)._ – Postsecondary representative

- Include financial literacy coaching to participants.

Postsecondary partners could do:

- Work with high schools on the availability of concurrent credit programs.
- Offer support to students in concurrent credit programs (example: D3 program at MCTC).
- Stop seeing the GED as a lower level of preparation than the diploma.
- Bring parents to campus for tours/visits.

NAZ could do:

- Help high schools navigate the bureaucracy of getting concurrent credit programs approved.
- Help scholars access concurrent credit programs; provide support for those doing so on college campuses; help bridge communications between high schools and colleges about how the scholars are doing.
- Fill gaps where coaching is not available, or where scholars’ GPAs do not allow them to qualify for programs that are available.
- Influence partners to change criteria and/or program design to better serve scholars who are further behind
- Help high schools and colleges engage families in the college planning and decision-making process, including financial impacts of decisions.
- Help create stronger links between high school and college level counseling and financial aid processes.
- Hold a FAFSA night to help parents and students complete the FAFSA as soon as the forms are released in October

**What could be done while scholars are in postsecondary institutions**

- Offer financial literacy counseling in addition to standard financial aid help.
- Offer specialized academic and financial counseling to low-income students and students of color (in addition to counseling available in the traditional counseling and financial aid programs). Provide more individualized support, with more ongoing communications, to ensure that students perceive that someone they trust “has their back.”
- Combine one-on-one or cohort-based counseling with wraparound supports.
- Ensure that all staff (faculty and support) are ready for non-traditional students: have professional development to recognize and check any biases.
- Use data to identify patterns of success or gaps and take steps to strengthen programs and supports accordingly.

**High school partners could do:**

- Maintain contact with scholars in college; provide continuity to help them navigate the transition to college.

**OST partners could do:**

- Continue work begun during high school; provide continuity with the scholar into and through the college experience.

**Postsecondary partners could do:**

- Begin working with scholars while they are still in high school (tailored recruitment process as described above) and maintain continuity during the transition and college years
- Work closely with OST providers such as College Possible to help with continuity.
- Take responsibility to track progress of low-income students and students of color and be prepared to step in as needed to ensure success

*We have all that data, we know about the students who are entering our institutions, and most places have resources, but we’re not looking in the mirror to see: Are those resources effective, are the people who are running the resources the right people, how are we making sure they are accessible to students, what percent of students have computer access, how are we meeting all the needs of the students – actually figuring those things out, and then tracking the minority graduation rates to see what’s happening for them. Generally colleges check on freshman year to sophomore year but then after that we’re not checking retention rates any more, or even grad rates.* – Postsecondary representative

**NAZ could do:**

- Stay in touch with the college about the student

*So what relationship should NAZ have with the college these kids are going to? Constant contact or communication with the college about the student – check in on whether they are financially stable? Have pathways to tutoring? Eating? What kind of routine they have? Registering on time for their classes? Mentally too challenged with one of the classes? Have an advisor?*

*I agree. ... No matter how large or small the college, there’s a crack. The college may have resources, there are a lot of them, but students don’t always use them. That’s where we have the gap – they need specialized advisors, not only on the NAZ side, but also in college offices there to help (for students of color, low income, first generation, whatever that is).* – Postsecondary representatives
Thoughts about quantitative data to collect for next year’s report

- What activities are youth engaged in outside of the school day?
- ACT scores and Explore and Plan data (sliced by high school)
- Where do graduates go to school and what kinds of outcomes they have there (matriculation and completion rates)?
  - Especially, what postsecondary schools do black and brown boys attend where they are successful? What do those schools do that could be replicated here?*
  - Also, where are middle-class and affluent Northside students going, and how successful are they?
- First-person information from students themselves:
  - What do they say they want to do after high school, and how does that align with what they actually do?
  - For those who attend college and succeed, what helped?

* Time did not allow us to determine if others in the group were interested in the same kinds of data mentioned by each speaker; the exception was the starred item (what are schools doing that are helping black and brown boys succeed), where several others volunteered their agreement during the conversation.

Participants’ top priorities for change

Participants were asked for the one thing they would change, if they could, to improve college readiness among NAZ scholars.

- Three participants stressed the need to address the belief gap
- Three participants stressed the need to help align all partners and bridge gaps between programs and education levels
- One participant emphasized the importance of strengthening academic skills
- One participant’s top priority for change was to find a way through bureaucratic obstacles to offering college credit during high school

For more information

For more information about this report, contact Ellen Shelton at Wilder Research, 651-280-2689.

Author: Ellen Shelton

February 2019
Information from Scholar Coaches
The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) developed its High School into College success strategy with the aim of creating a population of scholars who graduate from high school ready to enter and successfully complete college and/or a career. The implementation of this plan has begun with pilot efforts at the high school level. Key team members are NAZ Family Achievement Coaches, who work with scholars in a variety of settings. In AY2018, one coach was embedded with the high school out-of-school-time (OST) partner Cookie Cart, and one was embedded at Henry High School. During AY2019, the planning and implementation will expand to include college-level partners.

Overall, NAZ Family Achievement Coaches support families to instill the belief throughout the life course that college is possible for the scholars. Providing academic and social support are two important aspects of this role. In addition, they work to set specific goals for families, called achievement plans, and identify specific academic goals for scholars. This summary presents key findings from an interview conducted with the two Coaches who worked with high school scholars in AY2018. In this role, Coaches primarily work one-on-one with scholars, and may engage scholars’ parents and siblings.

**Main takeaways**

- Poverty, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and associated trauma affect scholars’ academic readiness and success in many ways. Financial and social emotional needs often underlie scholars’ academic needs. Though challenging to resolve, addressing them can greatly help to improve school success and college readiness.

- Establishing rapport and building trust with scholars was the key to all other coaching work. Many scholars have experienced disappointment and broken trust with adults in their lives, presenting an opportunity for Coaches to provide consistency. If there is staff turnover, relationships and trust are not easily transferred.
■ Coaches emphasized the need to draw flexibly from a wide range of skills and strategies. Important skills included familiarity with youth work (including knowing the resources available to youth in the community) and family dynamics, and the need to provide support in a variety of locations, both one-on-one and in groups.

■ Because of the wide range of scholars’ family situations, NAZ’s two-generation approach to coaching services presents challenges and advantages. Some scholars are threatened by having their Coach share information with their parent, while others may benefit from coordination between the Coach and parents. Making the same Coach work with parents to support scholars and think of family dynamics leads to thinking of many more people than the scholar. As a result, even without providing individual support to other family members Coaches felt as if they had rosters that were much larger, even if additional members were not officially a part of their roster. This can lead to substantially divergent goals and opinions about strategies for achieving them.

■ Cultural specificity in coaching builds trust that both makes the coaching effective, and offers scholars a breadth of education and experience they don’t receive in schools.

■ Though only one Coach was from an OST setting, both mentioned the importance of vocational training for the high school into college strategy. They mentioned that the soft skills learned in OST programs can help scholars get college- or career-ready, but also commented on the limited number of job opportunities for Northside teens.

■ To help build the pathway to college, Coaches recommended more support in selecting where to go, planning for and securing financing to pay for tuition and other costs, and support for scholars and parents during the transition into college and through their time there.

Recommendations

■ Continue to develop the Scholar Coach role, with an emphasis on primary support for the scholar. Explore ways to maintain the coaching relationship throughout the four years of high school as well as into and through college, if possible.

■ Continue to support coaching that combines one-on-one and group configurations; offer Youth Foundations during after-school hours.

■ Work with partners to develop more year-round youth employment opportunities, and to provide access to laptops or tablets and the skills to use them.

■ Consider ways to include more support for college planning (including selection of colleges and financial planning) and support for parents in maintaining connections with youth living far from home.
Basic and social-emotional needs underlie many other challenges

Financial stability in homes takes precedence

Both Coaches agreed that social-emotional needs are the primary needs among scholars and show up in multifaceted ways. One Coach mentioned that academic focus or skills are usually not a challenge, but rather scholars’ social-emotional needs, generated by life circumstances, challenge their academic progress. Both discussed how this shows up in the concrete material needs of scholars who live in poverty. When parents’ income can only provide shelter and food, scholars may lack the clothing and other material items that are important in the high school social context. This creates stigma and shame for some scholars. In addition, both Coaches discussed the importance—and common occurrence—of hunger and housing instability in scholars’ academic performance. Both Coaches highlighted that the complexity of scholars’ lives outside of academics makes preparing for college challenging.

High school lives are so much more complex than just academics. We wish it were just the academics that was the barriers but it’s the complexity of their lives. With just academics, we could solve it. We could connect them to all those things, but not enough for the other things that prevent them from showing up and being their best selves. — Family Achievement Coach

Adverse childhood experiences impact learning

Both Coaches highlighted the importance and salience of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in the learning and lives of scholars. Many scholars have experienced ACEs and other forms of trauma and, still being minors and in childhood, are still in the throes of this experience. This experience manifests itself in multiple ways in the classroom; students may be a “class clown” or act out, which may resolve challenging situations by getting themselves removed from them. Coaches observed that the impacts of ACEs and of living in poverty were closely interrelated. The results of struggling financially, and having to provide for their families, and the results of having stigma and shame associated with a variety of ACEs, cause stress in their experiences in schools. Additionally, it is a challenge for scholars to trust adults and be transparent about their experiences, and for this reason, some scholars have trouble accessing support.
Supports from parents may be strained or lacking

Because families often lack the income to cover the material needs of scholars beyond housing and food (and sometimes struggle to cover both of those), scholars are often expected to contribute to family financial sustainability. This places a tremendous amount of responsibility on scholars, which the Coaches report prevents many of them from being able to experience their full childhood. In addition, parental support for scholars may be reduced due to extended work hours, fatigue, or focusing nurturance on younger children while assuming older children are better able to take care of themselves. The relationship strain may be severe enough to cause the scholar to lose trust in the parent. One Coach articulated that for many scholars, the family supports that many might consider normative are not present for some NAZ scholars.

If they are lacking trusted adults, who can they reach out to? Where’s the village? Where’s an aunt or uncle? Even her big brother? She’s the youngest scholar in the family. How can you trust others when you have learned you can’t trust those in your own family? — Family Achievement Coach

Youth Foundations can help scholars’ social-emotional development

The Coach based at Henry High School described a strong positive response to the Youth Foundations course, piloted during AY2018. It was truncated after a few weeks because it generated conversations among scholars that were so engaging that they continued into and interfered with regular class work. The value was clearly established during the pilot, however, and the Coach hopes the course can be offered again in AY2019 but during after-school hours. The Coach also suggested that NAZ explore the possibility of getting Minneapolis Public Schools’ approval to offer it for credit recovery.

Successful coaching requires a variety of skills and approaches

Successful coaching requires flexibility

Building the initial relationship and establishing rapport. Coaches mentioned multiple ways they come to understand the experiences of scholars, such as around ACEs and trauma. One Coach mentioned that their personal experience of adversity allows them to “put themselves in their shoes” and understand the challenges scholars face. For example, because many of the scholars need to take public transit to school (as opposed to school buses), it can be hard just to get to school. It is also important for the Coach to be open about their own experiences, as a way to establish rapport and so that the scholar can feel safe in communicating their needs. As described in more detail in
the section on cultural specificity, the scholars don’t relate to all of their teachers culturally, making the Coaches’ and scholars’ shared cultural background a valuable way of building trust as well as enriching the support they can provide.

**Varied roles and skills.** Both Coaches mentioned the amount of flexibility in roles and skills needed to successfully provide support for the scholars they work with. One Coach mentioned the need to educate themselves to become a youth worker, with their “own tool kit” of all the youth-specific skills and knowledge of resources. One offered the example of thinking through the types of supports that a scholar would not ordinarily get from the school and brought each scholar on their roster printed copies of missing assignments, reminded them of deadlines, and checked in with them weekly about their academic progress. One Coach identified motivational interviewing as one of the professional skills that has allowed them to understand scholars’ needs and communicate in a way that gives the scholar the ability to choose whether they are ready for the interaction.

**Mix of settings and meeting formats.** Both Coaches mentioned that successful coaching required flexibility in the **settings** and **formats** of their work with scholars. One Coach walks with scholars to allow for privacy not possible in their shared school office space. The Coach working in an OST program, finding that the scholars there did not know about NAZ and the Coach’s relationship to NAZ, began meeting with the scholars in a variety of locations to help the scholars broaden their perspective beyond just the OST program and to provide support where it would work best for the scholar. Moreover, as this Coach transitioned into a new role, they made it clear to their scholars that their support would not end with the job transition. In addition to being flexible in the setting, both Coaches mentioned that they are flexible to scholars needing or wanting to work one-on-one and/or in groups. Coaches cited both of these kinds of interactions as being important to help scholars build skills and readiness for their futures. It is also essential to identify whether and when to bring a scholar’s parent into the coaching process.

**Cultural specificity in family achievement coaching**

When asked about cultural specificity in family achievement coaching, both Coaches shared a number of stories illustrating its importance and its implementation. They both see value in their ability to relate to NAZ scholars from their personal experience, and emphasized its importance in building credibility with scholars. Their background helps them build trust with scholars, and one Coach mentioned that scholars are able to tell whether a Coach is speaking from a genuine place of personal experience. One Coach emphasized that they are asking scholars to open up about painful and sometimes traumatic experiences, so they viewed their own openness as necessary; in fact, scholars will ask about what Coaches have personally been through.
Some of the ways that Coaches draw on cultural specificity are in talking to scholars about the current political climate, educating them about history, and discussing the life situations that scholars encounter. They also discuss popular culture with scholars; one Coach mentioned that in a group, they discussed the symbolism and context of a popular music video with a group of scholars. The other Coach shared a story of bringing a group of scholars to a community event in which they were almost the only people of color in the room, and how the coaching they provided helped prepare scholars with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in a community dialogue. The life situations discussed were wide ranging, including parenting, relationships, and navigating situations with the police and gang activity.

Our kids find themselves in a lot of challenges and I try to mentor them with what’s going on. For example, if they get in a car with their cousin and find out there’s a gun, how do you handle it? Are you riding dirty? Do you tell on your cousin if the police pull you over? One kid might say I won’t tell because I’ll be called a snitch. Another might say I have a future, I would tell. A lot of them aren’t even aware of what choices they have.

— Family Achievement Coach

Successful coaching requires understanding family dynamics

Unlike in most other NAZ settings, Coaches who work at the high school level first begin working with the scholars, and only secondarily bring in other members of the family. Both Coaches mentioned that understanding the family dynamic is essential to successful coaching, as every situation is unique. Thus, they must be flexible to determine whether and when to bring parents in. For some scholars, having parents involved can help strengthen the connection, while for others it may feel like a betrayal of trust. One Coach gave the example of how they and a parent were able to work together to help a scholar improve their grades and find a job. However, the Coaches mentioned situations where the scholar may have already mentally or emotionally “checked out” from the household, presenting challenges to focusing on the scholar’s goals in the context of the full family. If the scholar is not sharing important information with their parent, a Coach’s direct communication with the parent about their scholar may result in the youth’s loss of confidence in the coach, requiring the relationship to be re-built from scratch. Even under less challenging family situations, if the Coach works with both the scholar and the parent, there may be concerns about confidentiality or the scholar not feeling confident that the Coach is there primarily for the scholar.

Another consideration is that not all family members may be equally ready to address some of their personal issues. For example, one Coach was able to help a scholar exit a crisis situation while the others in the family remained in crisis. While this was helpful for the scholar’s personal and academic progress, it also introduced a new form of distress and guilt for the scholar due to the feeling of having left the others behind.
Coaching with the two-generation approach

The two-generation approach has pros and cons for high school scholar coaching

Both Coaches support the two-generation approach, but as the discussion of family dynamics illustrates, the conversation surfaced a number of tensions that make this approach challenging for Coaches who work with high school scholars. The challenges apply in both the OST and school settings. In addition to trying to work with both generations when they are not in harmony with each other, other challenges include large workloads and sustaining the coaching relationship for the long-term.

Workload. The needs of high school scholars include addressing social-emotional and academic challenges and planning proactively for college and/or career. Coaches feel these needs are challenging to handle with a roster of 30 scholars. Adding other family members can easily increase this workload to over 100 individuals. When family dynamics are rocky, it may not be possible for the same coach to provide sufficient attention to every family member. While there is no expectation for Coaches to work with other siblings or entirely with the family as part of their job duties, Coaches observe a need for additional support within the family that is beyond the capacity of their role.

Relationship sustainability. Turnover of Coaches (including progression to related positions) can jeopardize the consistency of the coach-scholar relationship on which trust, and hence the success of the coaching, depends. A smaller roster size, and vesting the primary coaching for parents in a separate layer of support, would be helpful in addressing both of these challenges. This would allow the scholar to have the consistent support of one person throughout the four years of high school to help with preparing for and successfully entering college.

Work experience and training also helps scholars prepare for college

When asked about the value of vocational training for academic success, Coaches identified several ways in which it is helpful, and identified areas where it could be improved.

Work experience teaches soft skills

Coaches identified a number of ways that work experience is helpful for scholars, including three specific ways in which it directly helps scholars prepare for college. First, employment teaches **self-regulation**, which is important on the job and allows scholars to learn tools to help cope with the stressors and demands of college life. In addition, scholars **learn a number of soft skills** through work experience. These soft skills include resume writing, customer service, and interviewing. Last,
one of the OST programs provides **networking** opportunities for scholars to find employment at other companies. The training provided in this OST program gives scholars’ perspective about how to be more competitive in the job market and make a good impression. Through mentoring, Coaches helped scholars learn soft skills, such as how to dress for interviews and how to communicate with others in the workplace as compared to communicating with friends (i.e., code switching).

**Vocational training has room for improvement**

Both Coaches mentioned that vocational training has value for scholars and highlighted that the mission of NAZ focuses on getting scholars to be “college or career ready” by the end of high school. Although vocational education is not part of high school curricula, the OST Coach mentioned that not every scholar is ready to go to college right after high school. One reason is the cost of tuition. If scholars learned a trade, they would earn income allowing them to work to pay for college later if needed. Although there is stigma around learning a trade instead of going to college, the Coach pointed out that the trades are currently lacking a new generation to learn them, creating an opportunity for access to vocational services through a high school vocational education pipeline.

**Technology and job opportunities are limited**

In addition to the lack of vocational education in schools, coaches identified two other areas where vocational preparation is lacking: technology and job opportunities. One Coach pointed out that Northside scholars have less access to technology than students in other areas. Students in other districts receive more technology resources and have the opportunity to learn basic tech skills. NAZ scholars who do not receive these same resources often arrive at the workplace and in college at a disadvantage, sometimes not even knowing how to email their professors and colleagues. The Coaches noted that there is a large number of Northside nonprofits and suggested they might be able to help supply the needed tablets or laptops for students to help fill this gap. Another major gap is the severe shortage of job opportunities for teens in the Northside. Other than a couple of large summer-only programs and the OST programs that partner with NAZ, scholars have little access to employment.
Other areas for potential support

In addition to the themes discussed above, Coaches raised a number of topics that were not discussed in sufficient detail to merit their own sections in this report. The following are additional areas where Coaches thought NAZ could provide additional support to help high school scholars be better prepared to attend college.

Identifying the pathway to college

Both Coaches noted that most scholars need more support in navigating the pathway into college. Some specific areas included identifying potential colleges to attend and getting through the transition from high school into college, particularly after matriculation. Paying for college is a challenge and Coaches mentioned that more support would be helpful in helping scholars to formulate a plan specific to them and their goals. In addition, navigating college life can be a challenge, including the adjustment to living away from family. Because not every family is able to provide material supports for scholars planning to attend college, offering some of those supports would be helpful. For example, one Coach made sure a scholar had a MacBook and a fan to take to college.

One coach mentioned helping parents manage their scholar’s transition to college. Citing the approach of the Harlem Children’s Zone, the Coach supported the idea of having navigators help parents stay connected to scholars regardless of where they live, and help families navigate the cost of college.

Navigating the financial aspects of college

Related to financial costs, Coaches mentioned that scholars need direct financial help. In particular, finding ways to help students pay for the cost of college is an important part of their coaching support, such as helping them apply for a scholarship. As mentioned earlier, employment or even entry into the trades is another possible way to help scholars pay for college. The challenge of affording college is also an extension of the earlier theme about economic disadvantage: similar to how scholars may experience stigma in high school by not being able to afford certain clothes, Coaches identified that helping scholars fund their college experience could help them avoid this experience in college.

Related topics Coaches find it important to cover in their work with scholars include coaching and education about budgeting, helping them find and/or succeed in a job, and helping scholars feel like they belong in college, all without taking on more debt than they can handle.
Relieving financial burdens during high school

Many of the themes focus on specific ways to prepare for college, but some of these may also allow scholars to enhance their high school experience. While employability is helpful for funding college, one Coach pointed out that it is important for scholars to be able to have their own money. Lack of spending money and the associated stigma may contribute to some delinquent activity; having positive options available for earning spending money would make it easier for Coaches to steer scholars into choosing constructive activities. For scholars who are employed, some find that their income is needed to help support their families. One Coach said that they wished NAZ scholars could have money to spend on themselves. Similarly, this Coach described how scholars often do not get to be children when they are children, which has impacts on future generations.

*I would like our youth to be allowed to be youth. . . I would like them to be able to maintain their innocence as long as possible, just focus on school, or a job for spending money. I need for the adults to rear them, to play the adult role and not expect kids to assume that role before it’s their time. Our youth don’t get the opportunity to be innocent, to just think about prom. They are already carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders, so by the time they are 30 they are burnt out. And that translates into another generation.* — Family Achievement Coach

What NAZ and NAZ partners can do

The conversation with the Coaches included many reflections on what is working with scholar coaching to date, and learnings about what did not work as well. Suggestions for NAZ and NAZ partners include:

Suggestions for NAZ

- Offer the Youth Foundations class for high school students after school; if possible, have it approved for credit recovery.
- Reduce the Coach roster size, either by reducing the number of scholars (and families) assigned to each Coach, or by adding Coaches who specifically work with family members.
- Include Family Achievement Coach support for parents to maintain connections with scholars while they are away at college.
- Offer funds to help scholars with the costs associated with going to college, such as room furnishings or a laptop.
Suggestions for partners

Minneapolis Public Schools

- Approve Youth Foundations for recovery credit, and employ more staff whose cultural background matches that of students.

Partners in general

- Offer (or link to) more opportunities for year-round youth employment. Other than Cookie Cart, almost no programs offer teen jobs except in the summer. In addition, having a positive way to spend their time outside of school out-of-school hours more generally might lessen their involvement in unhealthy or unsafe activities.

- While it is beyond the scope of NAZ to change the number of employers available in the Northside, building partnerships with employers may be one strategy that can help.

Provide laptops or tablets to Northside scholars to support their academic and career development.
Information from High School Scholars
Scholar Coaching for high school scholars is a relatively new strategy for NAZ. During the 2017-18 academic year it was offered with two Coaches, one co-located with Patrick Henry High School, and one co-located with Cookie Cart. In October 2018, Wilder Research conducted a focus group with six high school scholars who had worked with NAZ Scholar Coaches. The scholars were asked about what led them to sign up for coaching, what has been helpful and what could be more helpful about the experience, the role of employment in their preparation for college, how their work with the Coach affects their sense of cultural identity, and what difference their experiences with coaching has made in their life.

The following summary highlights the key themes that emerged from the focus group. These should be interpreted narrowly, due to the small size of the group and the fact that most participants said they had expected to be coming to a group reunion rather than a focus group. One had just started with NAZ and had little to say. For these reasons, the results may not be fully representational of all scholars who have been involved in Scholar Coaching.

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Main takeaways

- Five of the six focus group participants described very positive experiences in coaching (the sixth had just started), emphasizing the personal encouragement and support they received.
- Both individual and group coaching were valuable to these scholars.
- Impacts they cited were mainly personal and interpersonal but for some also included increased work and college readiness.
- The cultural specificity of the coaching experience was a welcome contrast and supplement to their experiences at school.
What worked about Scholar Coaching

Scholars had varying reasons for enrolling in coaching

Most of the scholars in the focus group heard about the coaching opportunity through their work at Cookie Cart, where the Coach introduced herself and NAZ and what they could offer through one-on-one interviews. Three were interested in the homework help, while one mentioned help with other parts of life outside of work, and one was primarily attracted by the opportunity to be part of what she called a “bonding group” and the group’s discussions and activities on behalf of the Northside. When asked about friends who might benefit from coaching but who had not asked for one, most felt it was because they were not aware of NAZ.

The most helpful part of coaching was the personal support

- Scholars’ comments indicate that while the homework and other kinds of help were attractive in deciding to enroll, the most important factor in their continued participation was their personal relationship with the Coach, and, for some, with each other.

  *I was thinking that I was good [didn’t need to sign up], school was fine with me. Then she explained that it was more than that; to speak our opinions, it’s a bonding group, way more than just school.*

- Several mentioned the way the Coach was “there for me,” could be counted on to “open up time,” and helped them to de-stress when things got to be too much for them.

  *I know I have someone to call … knowing she can help me with advice. I know she will meet me … [if] something else doesn’t go right, I have back-up for her to help me with the resources. You don’t feel alone or on your own in this world.*

- Two scholars mentioned the Coach’s help getting them access to resources they needed.

  *Helping to find resources is a big one. Whatever you need, they find a resource for school, life, jobs and other opportunities that help with certain stuff.*

The quality and consistency of the relationship is important

- Scholars’ comments emphasize their relationship with the individual Coach (and, to a lesser extent, other members of their group), and reflect somewhat limited connections to, or familiarity with, NAZ as an organization. At least one had participated in the Walk to College, and at least one or two had been on the bus trip to Washington, D.C. These scholars’
primary affiliation, however, was with the Coach, and this relationship does not appear to be transferable to a new Coach if the position turns over.

[The Coach] left Cookie Cart, so the group stopped. Even if we brought the group back ... I wouldn’t re-join. If I need help, I will go to her.

I feel the same. We are really close to [Coach].

At least two scholars commented on one aspect of their experience that they found not helpful: bringing a succession of outside people for activities. This discussion appears to describe part of a program by Cookie Cart (not NAZ directly) to help its student employees network with a variety of other local employers. Two scholars said they felt no connection with these visitors, and therefore limited comfort or trust. They also felt the group as a whole had no real interest in these activities because the short visit was not enough to make them want to apply to those employers, and there was no follow-up.

It didn’t make sense [to me] when they brought in outside people to do activities with us. They would come and brainstorm some ideas about college, write them down, and we would never see them again.

My biggest thing in consistency. I would rather get to know this person so I can be comfortable. If it is not consistent, then I don’t want it.

... Sometimes the outside people were okay, but there were also some worker and volunteer conflicts. Volunteers would come in and say biased things.

Group coaching (at Cookie Cart) was also valuable to many

At least three of the Cookie Cart scholars favorably mentioned the weekly group coaching sessions. Positive features included creating and strengthening social bonds among the participants, as well as cooperatively accomplishing “productive stuff” to benefit the Northside.

The activities and trips helped promote bonding among scholars, strengthening their capacity for mutual support. In addition, the activities that resulted in tangible accomplishments promoted scholars’ sense of self-efficacy.

We did a lot of productive stuff. One thing I can say about NAZ is we didn’t sit around, and scratch our hair. When we said we were going to do it, we were going to do it. The only way we couldn’t was if something just couldn’t be done.
Some indicated that there was variation in how quickly they were prepared to open up and share, especially in the group setting.

*I was the kind of person who was there and involved, but I wasn’t as social as everyone else. That was like all the boys in NAZ. … The boys would talk, but we wouldn’t really. The girls had the most connections.*

One comment indicated that the group coaching format may be productive for just a particular period of time (while they were employed at Cookie Cart), but might not be readily able to become a long-term cohort without a change of format. They mentioned factors related to their schedules as well as the change in the specific Coach.

*We were starting to show that we could keep this happening.*

*I feel like if we had something like that here, that would be really good. But we are all working a lot more and getting older.*

### What difference coaching has made for scholars

 Asked “what is the most helpful thing your NAZ Coach has done for you,” the first response was “Everything.” This was followed by more specifics. Besides the personal support, advice, motivation, and access to resources that were mentioned as part of the help scholars received on an ongoing basis during coaching, scholars also mentioned the following as ways that they had been affected by the experience:

- A sense of confidence; knowing there is someone there for me; not feeling alone
- Bonding with each other; coming out of one’s own shell and feeling a part of a group
- A sense of accomplishment from doing productive things as part of that group
- Beginning to think that college might be worth it, after starting as a skeptic

The scholar who had just started said their hope was that coaching would help them get another job and go to college. It was clear from the discussion that both the individual and the group coaching has included discussions as well as tangible assistance to build and support scholars’ college aspirations. None of the participants had started college yet, and their answers to the question about impacts primarily dealt with more personal (internal and interpersonal) effects.
Compared to “normal jobs,” jobs with NAZ partners do more to prepare for life and college

A few of the participants compared what they called “normal jobs” to work experiences with a few specific employers who they felt were more understanding, more supportive, and (in some cases) specifically taught them knowledge and skills that were helpful for their further development. Three employers specifically called out as supportive were Cookie Cart, Juxtaposition Arts, and North Market. Most or all of the participants had also worked through Step Up during the summer, but it was not clear whether the jobs through Step Up were considered to be on the supportive side of this comparison or not.

- Helpful jobs included intentional work to develop more kinds of college preparatory skills. These skills were felt to also offer life preparation for those not currently interested in preparing for college. These employers also were more understanding about lapses (like lateness) and provided more support for overcoming them.

> Since I’ve been through Cookie Cart, I feel like I have matured, learned how to lead groups, and help people [customer service]. ... Learning how to talk to people, learning how to solve situations when you’re mad, learning how to cope, how to be in an environment in general, and learning how to communicate with people is big in life.

> They [NAZ and Cookie Cart] give you a lot of leeway that you would not get at a normal job, and teaching us things that we wouldn’t be taught at a normal job. So if I were to start at a different job, I don’t feel like I would be preparing for college. Working here makes me feel ready for college.

> The only thing I can say about another job is time management and that’s it.
Most schools do not provide an environment that supports scholars’ cultural identity

Scholars were asked if their Coach makes a difference in their sense of cultural identity. Only two scholars were still participating in the focus group at this point (plus a third who had just joined and had not had enough coaching experience on which to base an answer). Both of the scholars with experience felt very comfortable with the Coach’s approach to cultural identity.

*Yes, of course. She’s black, I’m black. She understands me. We talk a lot about how we are being treated in north side and the constant brutality. It’s fine, it’s perfect.*

By comparison, all three scholars reported that schools were not safe and supportive in this way. Problems they cited included:

- Overly large, chaotic classes: one mentioned 40 students in one of their classes.
- White teachers who do not understand (or are not in a position to mediate discussions about) cultural identity and social justice.

*As far as teachers go, they’re white. I will respect them but as far as a conversation about social justice, it’s not going too far. I’d rather talk to the janitors or the lunch ladies... The classes we’re supposed to be talking about that in, they get chaotic. ... We need more black teachers in the Minneapolis Public Schools, period.*

[Agreement from the others.]

Scholars also felt their schools were under-resourced, or spent available money on the wrong priorities (some citing iPads or Chromebooks, sports, or building renovations instead of teachers), resulting in overly large class sizes, inadequate teaching resources, and, indirectly, high teacher turnover.
What could be done

Scholars were asked what could be done, or done differently, to make Coaching more helpful. Many of the comments already cited above occurred during the answers to this question. Pulling from the overall discussion, the few other suggestions were:

- A couple of scholars mentioned interest in homework help and/or tutoring.
- Several suggested that if NAZ wants more scholars to be able to benefit from coaching, they need to get the word out more. One recommended the kind of “pop-ups” they have at school to publicize school clubs and after-school activities.
- There was also an interesting interchange between two scholars about what might be considered in recruiting scholars for coaching. One thought NAZ should consider readiness and screen for a scholar’s ability to be mature and commit to following through on commitments, while the other thought that those attributes were exactly what the coaching was helping them to develop, and was open to leaving it more up to the individual scholar to knowingly self-select based on their interest in the activity.

> If they were to start a new group, … pick people who have potential growth. … That specific youth group is not made for everybody. … it took real commitment and some could not live up to that. When [the Coach] would correct you, you had to be mature to get corrected and be able to come back the next week knowing you had messed up…. I know not every kid is going to be that mature right off the bat.

> If wonder if some can grow into that possibly through NAZ. They can learn. I learned a lot in NAZ. I may have been mature, but I feel like I grew more. I thought that was part of the point. Some kids are disrespectful but maybe they can learn how to be respectful. The thing is, NAZ is an option. If you want to do it, you should know how to act. Don’t do something you are not going to participate in and listen for; that doesn’t make sense.
Appendix
NAZ High School into College Success: Appendix

Appendix to the Overall Summary of Findings from 2017-18

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)’s *High School into College Success* Results Plan details strategies for engaging scholars to plan and prepare for high school graduation and productive transitions into college, career, and community participation.

As part of the 2017-18 evaluation, Wilder Research compiled four summary reports:

- NAZ High School into College Success: Summary of Findings from 2017-18
- Information Shared by High School, OST, and Postsecondary Partner Leaders
- What Works in Coaching for High School Scholars (summary of discussion with two Scholar Coaches)
- NAZ High School into College Success: Scholar Focus Group Summary

This Appendix report includes additional context, data points, and instruments used to compile the primary summary document, “Key Findings from 2017-18.” To supplement the existing NAZ Connect data and data suggestions from partners, it also includes a discussion of other current and potential data sources and methods.
NAZ Connect analyses

This report reflects metrics for high school scholars engaged in NAZ activities during one or more of the past three fiscal years (FY2016, FY2017, and FY2018). Each fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. For example, FY2016 runs from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

Data were downloaded from NAZ Connect during April 2018. The report reflects data entered through approximately April 15, 2018, unless otherwise specified. Because the pull occurred during FY2018, FY2018 data may underrepresent the true number of participants. Unless otherwise noted, figures below apply to all three of the fiscal years combined.

Nearly all high school scholars had families working with a Family Achievement Coach (i.e., active in the Family Coaching Strategy). High school scholars were included in this report if they were engaged in the Family Coaching Strategy (93%) or if they participated in a NAZ partner Out-of-School-Time (OST) program (7%) at some point during the three-year timeframe.

Additional NAZ Connect data tables

Demographics

Based on the data available, three-quarters of high school scholars were black or African American (75%) (Figure A1) and roughly equal proportions of scholars were male (47%) and female (45%) (Figure A2).

A1. Race and ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. NAZ Connect, data downloaded April 2018.
A2. Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. NAZ Connect, data downloaded April 2018.

High school scholars attended a wide variety of schools, with the greatest proportions at its anchor schools, North and Henry (Figure A3). During 2017-18, NAZ served about 100 high school scholars at these two schools, and about 240 scholars at other schools. Note that the number of scholars for whom the school is unknown has been decreasing over this period.

A3. School enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Enrollment</th>
<th>2015-16 (N=361)</th>
<th>2016-17 (N=367)</th>
<th>2017-18 (N=347)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North High School/North Academy*</td>
<td>10% 35 scholars</td>
<td>16% 58 scholars</td>
<td>15% 53 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Henry High School*</td>
<td>9% 32 scholars</td>
<td>14% 52 scholars</td>
<td>14% 50 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edison High</td>
<td>5% 18 scholars</td>
<td>6% 23 scholars</td>
<td>8% 27 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Internship Center</td>
<td>2% 6 scholars</td>
<td>2% 9 scholars</td>
<td>5% 17 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbinsdale Area Schools</td>
<td>1% 4 scholars</td>
<td>1% 5 scholars</td>
<td>3% 11 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYC Arts &amp; Technology</td>
<td>1% 3 scholars</td>
<td>2% 6 scholars</td>
<td>3% 10 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest High</td>
<td>2% 7 scholars</td>
<td>2% 6 scholars</td>
<td>3% 10 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Minneapolis Public School</td>
<td>4% 15 scholars</td>
<td>5% 20 scholars</td>
<td>6% 22 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15% 55 scholars</td>
<td>14% 53 scholars</td>
<td>19% 65 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing/unknown</td>
<td>52% 186 scholars</td>
<td>37% 135 scholars</td>
<td>24% 82 scholars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. NAZ Connect, data downloaded April 2018.

Note. Asterisks indicate NAZ anchor schools for the High School into College Strategy.
**NAZ strategy participation**

Figure A4 shows high school scholar participation in each of five key strategies.

**Family Coaching** is NAZ’s key engagement strategy, in which Family Achievement Coaches work with families to connect them to the resources they need.

**Family Achievement Planning** occurs when parents set goals, with the help of Coaches, to improve academic outcomes for their scholars.

**Scholar Achievement Planning** happens when Family Achievement Coaches work directly with scholars to set goals to improve academics and life skills. For clarity in this report, the Family Achievement Coaches who work directly with scholars are referred to as Scholar Coaches.

**Anchor school enrollment** reflects scholar enrollment in a NAZ anchor school at any point during the three-year period. For the High School into College Strategy, NAZ’s key anchor school partners are North High School/North Academy and Patrick Henry High School.

**OST participation** is out-of-school time program enrollment at one of NAZ’s six high school anchor partners: Cookie Cart, Juxtaposition Arts, AchieveMpls, Project Success, College Possible, and Patrick Henry Beacons. These programs are enriching after school or summer experiences that help scholars develop the skills needed to successfully transition from high school into college.

### A4. Participation in NAZ strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Coaching</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Achievement Planning</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholar Achievement Planning</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchor school enrollment</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OST participation</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. NAZ Connect, data downloaded April 2018.

Note. Scholars could participate in more than one program, so percentages do not add up to 100%.
NAZ partners with six out-of-school (OST) programs (listed above) that serve high school scholars. During the past three years, between 10 and 30 percent of high school scholars have been enrolled in one of these programs during each session (Figures A5 and A6).

A5. Scholar OST participation by session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>% in OST</th>
<th>Number in OST</th>
<th>Number enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Year 2015-16</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2016</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Year 2016-17</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2017</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Year 2017-18</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. NAZ Connect, data downloaded April 2018.

A6. OST program participation by session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>School year 2015-16 (N=44)</th>
<th>Summer 2016 (N=60)</th>
<th>School year 2016-17 (N=109)</th>
<th>Summer 2017 (N=60)</th>
<th>School year 2017-18 (N=34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AchieveMpls</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>98% 59 scholars</td>
<td>67% 73 scholars</td>
<td>98% 59 scholars</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Possible</td>
<td>5% 2 scholars</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6% 6 scholars</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21% 7 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookie Cart</td>
<td>23% 10 scholars</td>
<td>2% 1 scholar</td>
<td>29% 32 scholars</td>
<td>2% 1 scholar</td>
<td>79% 27 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juxtaposition Arts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4% 4 scholars</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Henry High School Beacons</td>
<td>2% 1 scholar</td>
<td>2% 1 scholar</td>
<td>1% 1 scholar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Success</td>
<td>77% 34 scholars</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>67% 73 scholars</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. NAZ Connect, data downloaded April 2018.
Note. Scholars could participate in multiple programs; as such, percentages do not add up to 100%.
Considerations for data development

The Results Plan defines a set of inputs (which measure the fidelity of implementation), outputs (which measure the scope of implementation, including the quantity of solutions utilized), and outcomes (which measure whether and how scholars are better off as a result of NAZ participation). The full list of these metrics is shown at the end of this section.

Partners’ interest in data elements to be collected for the next Results NAZ cycle generally line up with the metrics in the plan. In addition to underscoring the need to describe and track academic success during high school, their suggestions also cluster in the part of the pipeline currently under development, matriculation and success in college, and identifying the kinds of programs or supports that foster success. All of the partners’ data suggestions are listed in the partners’ focus group summary.

Partners also identified a number of qualitative data elements they would like to collect to address questions of context, comparison, and value; an example is: What do scholars say they want to do after high school, and how does that align with what they actually do? Some emphasized the importance of collecting input directly from the scholars themselves.

During the planning and implementation for this Results NAZ report, the research team documented a number of challenges that should be borne in mind during the further development of the Results Plan and the associated plans for developing data processes to support it. These are summarized below, with some thoughts about possible approaches.

**Challenge:** Partners want input directly from scholars, but scholars are hard to recruit to participate in interviews or focus groups.

**Potential approach:** Use Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) to build youth leadership and empowerment while also introducing youth to research methods and benefiting from their superior ability to connect with other youth. One possibility would be to add an optional YPAR module at the end of the Youth Foundations course, to develop a set of scholar leaders who could help develop and implement data collection from other scholars. Eric Moore has informed us that the Minneapolis Public Schools have a YPAR program, called Youth Voice, in every high school. Youthprise also has considerable experience in YPAR. Either of these might be able to help NAZ develop a capacity for YPAR that could in turn help with the collection of data important to the High School into College Success planning.
**Challenge:** Although many metrics have been identified in the Results Plan, some of them cannot be implemented until they are specifically defined. One example is “on-track to graduate.” For example, if this is based on one of the standardized high school tests such as the MCA or ACT, what cut-off score should be used? Alternatively, if this is to be based on the GPA, what average would qualify as on-track? And would this need to be sustained over multiple semesters, or would achieving this GPA in one semester count? The number of credits is also mentioned as a possible basis for this measure. There are commonly accepted numbers to be accrued per semester to qualify as on-track. However, the mention of three different bases for determining on-track requires further discussion and agreement on how to combine them: Would meeting any one of these metrics allow a scholar to be considered on track, or would it be necessary to meet all three?

**Potential approach:** Convene partners to agree on the different kinds of information about a scholar’s progress and college preparation that these three different measures represent; identify what information will be most helpful in identifying scholars’ strengths and challenges; agree on which one or more metrics to base individual and program level decision-making and improvements.

**Challenge:** Collecting consistent data from multiple partners (e.g., GPA, course enrollment). It is likely that different partners collect different information about the students they serve, and it is also likely that the same kind of information is defined or organized differently by different partners (for example, there may be different criteria for what constitutes a college-preparatory level of course).

**Potential approach:** The approach here, as for the definitions of metrics above, depends on convening partners, discussing similarities and differences, and working toward a consensus that will allow collaborative-wide measures.

**Challenge:** Some of the desired metrics would likely require collection of data not available through NAZ’s current data-sharing agreements. This would include data for Northside scholars served by district-wide partners such as AchieveMpls or College Possible, or acquiring data for specific NAZ-enrolled scholars from those partners. Data sharing arrangements might be possible for such data, but some would likely require more explicit language than is currently in the generic NAZ Release of Information (ROI).

**Potential approach:** After prioritizing the most useful new data sources, NAZ would need to determine which ones would require more specific ROIs. It would also be necessary to determine, collaboratively with partners, what process would need to be set up to allow for data to be collected and updated regularly, and what kinds of process support might be needed from NAZ to help this to go smoothly. Additionally, NAZ would need to establish procedures to ensure that ROIs, which must be signed by parents for scholars age 17 and under, begin to be signed by the scholars themselves starting at age 18.
Challenge: On behalf of NAZ, Wilder Research currently has a data sharing agreement with SLEDS (Minnesota’s Statewide Longitudinal Student Education Data System) to receive anonymous, individual data on graduates of NAZ’s anchor high schools. These data include student demographic information, participation in a variety of programs including Advanced Placement and Postsecondary Enrollment Options during high school, and college enrollment, progress, and degrees earned. These data do not address current NAZ needs, but changes to the data sharing agreement might allow us to collect data that would be more useful.

Potential approach: Options include:

- Seek supplementary ROIs for NAZ scholars to allow us to receive data that could be matched with NAZ Connect records. This would allow us to use existing administrative data to track post-secondary enrollment for all NAZ scholars regardless of what high school they attended. (The standard NAZ ROI is not specific enough in its permissions to be acceptable to SLEDS for this use.)

- Adjust our current data sharing agreement to include information about current high school students (not only graduates) and information for all high schools located on the Northside (not only anchor schools). While this would still be anonymous data, without signed ROIs, this would permit us to collect data that would be more closely representative of the overall Northside student population.

- Drop the data sharing agreement, if neither of these approaches appears likely to generate data that will be useful to NAZ, or if it provides data that could be more easily or accurately collected from a different source.

Metrics in the current results plan

Outcomes — Is anybody better off?

- # of scholars on-track to graduate high school as demonstrated by proficiency in MCA, MAP and ACT scores, and GPA
- # of scholars that matriculate and graduate from a post-secondary education program
- # of scholars that are on a career pathway and are civically engaged in community

Outputs — How much did we do?

Programs

- # of scholars enrolled in out-of-school time (OST) programs
- # of scholars on-track to graduation
# of scholars improving their academic outcomes (i.e., GPA, grades, coursework, attitudes about school and community)

**Schools**

- # of scholars enrolled in college-ready course work (i.e., AP, IB, college-level courses)
- # of scholars improving their academic outcomes (i.e., GPA, grades, coursework, attitudes about school and community)

**Inputs — How well did we do it?**

- Offer college-ready and/or career development supports at programs
- Utilization and support for critical pedagogy and culturally relevant practices in schools and programs
- # of college-ready courses and supports offered at schools
- # of counselors per student in schools
- Offering of behavioral health supports in schools that are culturally relevant
- # of teachers and administrators of color in schools
- # and % of master teachers (6+ years of experience) in schools that teach general and special education courses
- # of years school retains the same administrator

**Focus group instruments**

The questions for each of the focus groups are shown below. Each was introduced with a script, not shown here, that included the context for the group, the purpose for which the respondents’ answers would be used, and a request for the participants’ informed consent to take part.

**Questions for partners focus group**

1. Tell us what you know about NAZ. How long has your organization been working with NAZ, and how is it currently involved?

2. What supports are needed and who can provide them to ensure high school Scholars are doing what they need to do to be college-ready and likely to enroll? Specifically, what needs to be done for Scholars who are significantly behind?

3. What supports are needed and who can provide them to ensure NAZ Scholars who enroll in college are successful?
4. What could high school partners do? What could college partners do? What could NAZ do?

5. How can colleges have access to NAZ high school scholars earlier to strengthen the high school into college pipeline?

6. If you had the ability to change one thing to improve college readiness among NAZ scholars, what would it be? Why did you choose that?

7. We are currently building the quantitative arm of this work and exploring data sources to better inform policy and practice. What kinds of information do you think would be most useful to you, if you were to read a report from NAZ a year from now?

Questions for coaches focus group

1. What are the greatest needs that scholars have to increase their academic and personal stability? (“greatest” could include the ones that post the most serious challenges for them, and/or the ones that affect the greatest proportion of scholars – but we would want to know which of those kinds of needs each was)

2. What are their greatest barriers to getting those needs met?

3. What have you found to be most effective to help them get their needs met? (Does it depend? Depends on what? How do you learn that?) Suggestion: Think of a time you felt a Scholar benefitted from your relationship (because they responded positively, took action, or affirmed the support to you). What were the actions you took that lead to this outcome? What ways did you build the relationship?

4. What do you have to say about being culturally specific in NAZ coaching? What is most important about it? How have you seen it make a difference (specific example if possible)? What should any new scholar coach be briefed about culturally specific coaching before they begin?

5. What have you seen among scholars you’ve worked with that has helped with employability? What hasn’t helped with employability? (Why hasn’t that worked?) Does employability also help them be better prepared for college? (How does it help, or when does it not help?)

6. In addition to what the coach can do, what else needs to happen? What does the scholar need from others? (Their family; their high school teacher, counselor, other staff; their peer group; who else?)
Questions for scholars focus group

1. Why did you decide to sign up for a scholar coach?

2. Do you have any friends who might benefit from a NAZ coach? Why do you think they don’t ask for one?

3. What is the most helpful thing your NAZ coach has done for you? How was that helpful?

4. What could have been more helpful (something that wasn’t done, or could have been done differently)?

5. Do you currently work? Has working with a NAZ coach been helpful in that? How does the work affect your readiness for college?

6. When you work with your NAZ coach, how do you feel about your cultural identity? How does this compare to when you are at school? What does your coach do that makes a difference in your sense of cultural identity?

7. What is different for you today because of your work with your coach compared to before?
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451 Lexington Parkway North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-280-2700 | www.wilderresearch.org