

# NAZ Parent Engagement and Parent Education: Overall Summary

*Findings from 2017-18*



The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)'s ***Parent Engagement and Parent Education*** Results Plan details strategies for engaging families through the Family Achievement Coach role and the Family Academy parent education program. The aim of the Parent Engagement and Parent Education strategy is to help parents increase their belief, intention, skills and commitment to support their children's academic development and successful path to college. The key strategy areas include:

- Support and embed “neighbor-leader” parent coach role in school settings and at-large
- Coach implements Achievement Goal Plan with NAZ parents to support skills and belief in raising college-ready scholars
- Utilize team approach to support family success
- Host evidence-based parent education classes to infuse knowledge

For this report, we gathered data from: NAZ's case management database, NAZ Connect; NAZ Anchor School Principals (via a paper and pencil survey; n=4); and conducted focus groups with NAZ Family Achievement Coaches (one group with co-located coaches, n=14; one group with at-large coaches not in a school setting, n=5) as well as one with a NAZ parent and her support team about parent leadership. (More detailed information about the results of the focus groups are published separately). An assessment of parent achievement, as it relates to supporting and promoting scholars' academic success, is currently in development and will provide more information in the future about the impact of NAZ on parents and parent engagement.

This report summarizes key strategies and metrics from the previous year.

# Key findings

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)'s *Parent Engagement and Parent Education* Results Plan outlines metrics and guidelines for recruiting and engaging with families through the Family Achievement Coach (also shortened to “Coach”) role and Family Academy parent education program. Key outputs related to this strategy are shown in Figure 1.

- In FY2018, 780 families participated in the engagement strategy, nearly 100 more than just two years prior.
- About 8 in 10 of these families completed an Achievement Plan goal, also up from the previous year.
- About 3 in 10 families (228 families in total) graduated from Family Academy or another evidence-based curriculum in FY2018.

## 1. Key outputs

	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
Families in engagement strategy	694 families	718 families	780 families
Families with Achievement Plans and Goals completed	60% 417 families	63% 455 families	81% 599 families
Families participating in conferences	N/A	N/A	32% 247 families
Families graduating from Family Academy or other evidence-based curriculum	25% 171 families	29% 210 families	29% 228 families
Families with parent leaders	N/A	3% 22 families	3% 25 families

Source. NAZ Connect data downloaded May 2018 (FY2018), June 2017 (FY2017), and July 2016 (FY2016), respectively.

## Engagement strategy

- Of the 780 families participating in the engagement strategy, about two out of every five families (38%) were relatively new to NAZ, having been enrolled for one year or less.
- Three out of every five families (62%) had been working with a Coach for more than one year, reflecting long-standing connections between families and Coaches.
- Among these families, nearly two-thirds communicated with their Coach at least once per quarter, including one-third who connected at least twice per quarter.

Focus groups conducted with both co-located and at-large coaches reveal that Coaches use multiple strategies to effectively engage parents in NAZ, including taking the time to build relationships and trust with parents and scholars, collaborating with teachers, developing and aligning parent and scholar goals, observing scholars in the classroom, leveraging NAZ partnerships, and offering scholarships and incentives. Despite these efforts, Coaches do experience some challenges engaging parents: some parents are not responsive to Coaches' outreach attempts; goals are somewhat limited and can feel redundant and not personalized; and parents do not always feel welcomed by schools.

Coaches offered several ideas for increasing parent engagement, which include building on existing efforts by Coaches and NAZ (e.g., leveraging NAZ partnerships, partnering with principals to ensure schools are perceived as a welcoming place), as well as some new potential opportunities (e.g., allowing parents to set personalized goals, providing Coaches with additional training around achievement planning, and bringing back events like Family Night). See the separate summary, "NAZ Parent Engagement and Parent Education: Coach Focus Group Summary" for more information.

## Achievement Planning

Achievement Planning is the process of goal setting with families to foster academic achievement in the family's home. Four out of five families (81%) completed at least one goal during the past year (Figure 2).

Coaches may use various Goal Plans as a guide to set goals with families. This report examines progress on three different goal plans: the Family Achievement Plan, the Scholar Achievement Plan, and the Family Supports Plan.

- The ***Family Achievement Plan*** is a set of goals that helps parents help their scholars succeed academically; 77 percent of NAZ families who set a goal in that area completed a goal.
- In addition to working with parents, Coaches have recently begun working directly with scholars on the ***Scholar Achievement Plan***, which supports scholars in their academic achievement. Of the 470 families who had set a goal on the Scholar Achievement Plan, 64 percent had completed a goal.
- Some families also select goals from the ***Family Support Plan***, which includes goals related to career, finance, and housing. Although NAZ Family Support Specialists often guide work on the Family Support Plan, Coaches are instrumental in helping families achieve these goals. Of the 295 families with active goals in that area, 69 percent had completed a goal.

## 2. Goals completed

Goal area	Total number of families with an active goal	Families who completed 1 or more goals	
		N	%
Any goal across all strategy areas	780	599	81%
Family Achievement Plan goals	647	496	77%
Scholar Achievement Plan goals	470	300	64%
Family Support Plan goals	295	203	69%

Source: NAZ Connect, data downloaded May 2018.

Note: The denominator for the percent of families completing any goal is the total number of families enrolled; the denominator for the other areas is the number of families who had an active goal in that area during FY2018. Goal completion reflects both goals and goal steps.

In the past year or so, NAZ has worked to enhance the role of Coaches co-located in partner schools by having them work more directly with scholars on achievement planning (as noted above) and by observing scholars in the classroom setting. They have also attempted to clarify the expectations of the Coach role with school staff. According to some partner school principals (n=4), these changes were noticeable:

- Three of the four principals who completed our survey said that expectations for NAZ Coaches were “more clear this year” compared to previous school years.
- All four principals felt that there was an overall improvement in how Coaches were working within their schools.

And as a result of NAZ Coaches working in the classroom:

- 3 out of 3 principals said they “strongly agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that parents of NAZ scholars were more aware of their scholars’ needs.
- 2 of out of 2 principals “strongly agreed” that parents are building relationships with their scholars’ teachers; one principal did not know.
- 3 out of 3 principals “somewhat agreed” that parents are getting more involved/invested in the school overall.

Overall, principals felt Coaches were more “visible” and “hands-on” than in the past. Suggestions for enhancing the way in which Coaches work within the school included: further defining their in-class and out-of-school time roles; getting a job description for coaches for accountability purposes; and having NAZ Coaches meet with teachers to connect on academic support (which, according to most Coaches, is already happening). See the Appendix for more detailed results.

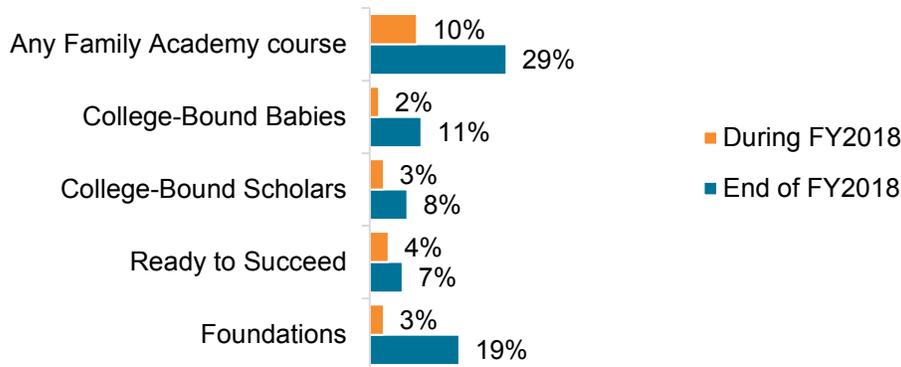
## Families participating in conferences

NAZ Family Achievement Coaches work with families to build the skills and confidence needed to positively engage with the school system. The primary metric is the number of parents attending parent-teacher conferences. During the past year, 247 families – nearly one-third (32%) of all families enrolled – reported participating in parent-teacher conferences at their scholar’s school or early learning center.

## Family Academy and other evidence-based curriculum

Family Academy is the primary evidence-based curriculum utilized by NAZ. The series includes four courses: Foundations, College-Bound Babies, Ready to Succeed, and College-Bound Scholars. The Foundations curriculum focuses on empowerment for all parents, while the other three courses are designed for parents with infant and pre-school age scholars, four- and five-year-old scholars, and elementary-age scholars, respectively. Twenty-nine percent of families in the engagement strategy had completed at least one Family Academy course, most often Foundations (19%) (Figure 3). In the upcoming year, Wilder Research will be working with NAZ to develop an assessment for parents graduating from Family Academy to determine impacts of the program.

### 3. Percent of families completing a Family Academy course (N=780)



Note. Reflects courses completed on or before the data of the data pull, not necessarily during FY2018, by all NAZ-enrolled families. For the counts associated with each percentage, see Figure 6 in the Appendix.

## Parent leadership

Coaches work with parents to identify and pursue various leadership opportunities, as well as build the skills and confidence associated with parents seeing themselves as leaders. Leadership activities include ongoing activities, such as sitting on an advisory council or being hired in a community-facing role, or one-time events, such as representing NAZ in a media event or evaluation activity. During the past year, 25 families (3%) participated in a leadership activity, similar to the 22 families (3%) identified in the 2017 report.

Focus groups with the Coaches revealed that the concept of ‘parent leadership’ is not necessarily strictly or well-defined, but most have a good idea about what it entails based upon their experience with and observation of NAZ parents over the years. To better understand what it means to be a parent leader and the pathway to leadership, a focus group was conducted with one such NAZ parent leader and her support team. What emerged was the profile of a parent leader – someone who was determined, persevered, and took initiative rather than relying on NAZ or others to “do the work” of improving herself and her family; someone who was dedicated to her children and their well-being, and committed to learning and growing as a parent; someone who was open to a different life and to receiving help from others to achieve that life; and someone who inspired others – other parents, NAZ staff, and community members – and wanted to share what she learned and help others on their own journey. The support from NAZ played a critical role in this parent leader’s life – in particular, Family Academy classes, housing and career support, and encouragement from NAZ staff. See the separate summary, “NAZ Parent Engagement and Parent Education: A Profile of Parent Leadership”, for more information.

**Wilder  
Research**  
Information. Insight. Impact.

451 Lexington Parkway North  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-280-2700  
[www.wilderresearch.org](http://www.wilderresearch.org)



AMHERST H  
**WILDER**  
FOUNDATION  
ESTABLISHED 1906

**Here for good.**

### For more information

For more information about this report, contact  
Monica Idzelis Rothe at Wilder Research, 651-280-2657.

Authors: Sarah Gehrig and Monica Idzelis Rothe

July 2018