For Immediate Release
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New Data Shows MCA Scores Higher with Length of NAZ Enrollment

*Early results show NAZ-enrolled students “turning the corner” in efforts to close the achievement gap in North Minneapolis*

A report released by Wilder Research today shows early progress of the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) in closing the achievement gap in North Minneapolis. For the first time, data shows Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) scores are improved among students in grades 3-5 with longer enrollment in NAZ.

NAZ President and CEO Sondra Samuels said, “Minnesota has the second worst achievement gap in the country and North Minneapolis is ground zero for this disparity. For the second year in a row, we have early data that shows our radically new approach is creating results. We’re seeing that when low income children of color are surrounded by a team of support, they do better. This is a great step not only for the families of North Minneapolis, but for all of Minnesota because it means we’ve hit on an approach that can support the future progress of the entire state.”

The MCA results released in 2014 by the MN Department of Education highlight the achievement gap that exists between white and minority students in Minnesota. The 2014 MCA results showed only 35 percent of minority students scoring as proficient in math and 33 percent as proficient in reading, compared to their white counterparts, for whom 71 percent were proficient in math and 67 percent were proficient in reading.

However, the Wilder Research report shows early progress in the efforts by the NAZ collaborative to close that gap. One notable finding is that longer enrollment in NAZ is associated with higher academic proficiency on the MCAs for children in grades 3-5 (measured during the for the 2013-2014 school year). A summary of the report is attached. The full 2014 Year End Wilder report is available on the-naz.org/results.

**MCA SCORES IMPROVE WITH LENGTH OF ENROLLMENT**
Reasons NAZ attributes to this change include better coordination among a collaboration of NAZ partner organizations to work with the same NAZ parents and students within a defined geographic area. NAZ has close partnerships with nine area schools, and provides on-site support for parents and students. In addition, NAZ students attend academic after-school and summer programs that lengthen the amount of instruction they receive. NAZ and their collaborative partners track data that measures progress against their long-term goals.

The Wilder report shows strongest improvement among the youngest NAZ-enrolled students, citing that goals for middle school student improvement were not met during 2013-2014. This is a result of more robust programs for younger age groups during the report period. NAZ plans to fully expand middle school solutions in 2015.

About Northside Achievement Zone
The NAZ Promise Neighborhood is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and a collaboration of organizations and schools partnering with families in a geographic “Zone” of North Minneapolis that is dedicated to permanently closing the achievement gap and to preparing children to graduate from high school ready for college. NAZ works to recruit students who are experiencing the lowest academic outcomes.

Visit the-naz.org for more information. 

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