



Wilder
Research

The state of NAZ partnerships at the starting point

*Results from two baseline surveys of
Northside Achievement Zone partner
organizations*

DECEMBER 2010

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Summary

Background

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) began in 2008 as a collaboration of community organizations. Its mission is to build a culture of achievement in a geographic Zone in North Minneapolis to assure all youth graduate from high school college-ready. In 2009, NAZ contracted with Wilder Research to independently evaluate its work. This report summarizes findings from two surveys that document starting points for the functioning of the overall collaboration, its action teams, and the organizations in the NAZ Connect pilot.

Collaboration Progress Check-in Survey

This survey was completed in January 2010 by members of the NAZ Steering Committee and three Coordination Teams. It addresses the health of the collaboration that coordinates the overall structure and service networks of NAZ, and what factors assist and challenge its effectiveness. At the time of the survey, NAZ was in an intense period of growth and change. The findings reflect conditions at that single point in time, and should not be interpreted as characteristic of NAZ's entire history.

Functioning of NAZ as a whole

On each of the seven NAZ guiding principles, at least two-thirds of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that NAZ's operations are consistent with its principles. The main reasons given for organizations to participate in NAZ included improving services and outcomes for clients, and building better partnerships with other organizations. A few also hoped that funding available through NAZ would help them strengthen or expand their programs.

Functioning of working groups

On all items, the majority of respondents reported that individual working groups were also operating in accordance with NAZ guiding principles.

Factors that affect implementation

Common challenges to the implementation of working group ideas included the time commitment needed to participate, and a shortage of funding to support programs. Some also cited factors relating to the complexity of the collaboration itself. The factors most cited as helping to implement work group ideas were communication, collaboration, and

information sharing within the collaborative. A variety of other factors were mentioned, but none by a significant number of respondents.

When asked what they felt was going well within the working group, respondents most often mentioned good communication and respect for others and for differing opinions. Other common themes included workgroup members' commitment to and support for the project, and the perception that the initiative and/or workgroup was making progress.

Collaboration Experience Questionnaire

Part of the survey included items that have been shown to be related to effective collaboration. These are grouped in six domains. The strongest rating was for an *important and realistic purpose*, followed closely by *effective communications*. The lowest ratings were in the domain of *resources*, where human resources were rated highly, but few felt that their workgroup was adequately funded to accomplish its objectives.

Opportunity Network Survey

This survey assessed characteristics of organizations participating in the NAZ Connect pilot, their connections with children and families in the Zone, their alignment with NAZ goals and with each other for delivering effective services, and what strengths or capacities might need to be built or supported. A representative from every agency enrolled in NAZ Connect was asked to complete the survey. It was completed in February and March of 2010.

Organization characteristics, staff, and budget

The pilot organizations answering the survey varied in size, type, clientele, and the extent to which their services focus on the geographic area of the Zone. Annual budgets range from less than \$1,000 to more than \$15 million per year. For most, at baseline, NAZ was a small part of their overall operations.

Alignment of pilot organizations with NAZ purposes

Eighty-eight percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their services help youth in the Zone become college ready. Sixty-six percent agreed or strongly agreed that NAZ provides support and infrastructure to help their organization build new relationships with other organizations. In this baseline measure, only 37 percent believed that organizations in the Zone were currently working well together to serve children and families.

Network Analysis

Network analysis of survey results shows that groups of similar organizations appeared to be working well together to meet NAZ goals, although there were few links between groupings. Few organization representatives stated that they were pursuing joint funding for NAZ activities. Early childhood related organizations and a grouping of out of school time programs appeared to coordinate efforts to combine resources and knowledge.

Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, participants both in the working groups and in NAZ Connect expressed confidence in NAZ and its potential to create positive changes for their clients and the community at large. Survey results show the following opportunities to strengthen the work of NAZ as it moves forward:

Support two-way communication. Help representatives in working groups identify ways to gather input from multiple levels of their home organizations to feed input into the planning process.

Help working groups use research in planning. Support working groups' knowledge and use of relevant research for planning.

Facilitate team-building to promote open communication, trust, and clarity about roles. Some aspects of team-building take time to develop, and others were low due to the intense growth and change in NAZ at the time of the baseline surveys. Support for team-building and for work group leadership may be helpful.

Address the scarcity of resources. The main concern of working group members was a scarcity of time and funding to do their work. NAZ should seek further information about these concerns and work with committee members to ensure they have the necessary resources .

Address service fragmentation. This is one of the major challenges NAZ has pledged to address, and it is clearly visible in the responses to the baseline surveys. As NAZ moves forward in implementation, it will be important to monitor results of follow-up surveys to measure progress.

Encourage joint needs assessment. Most NAZ pilot organizations did not work with each other to assess the needs of community residents. This is one important step in the improved coordination of services. NAZ leadership should ensure that working groups help to promote this activity as the pilot develops.

Seek ways to strengthen connections among organizations within clusters. Some clusters show strong networks among organizations, while in others some organizations report no links to their peers. NAZ should help build relationships where they are weak.

Promote connections among clusters to strengthen the pipeline. Some clusters prepare children for later success (for instance, early childhood organizations prepare children for success in K-12 education). At baseline, early childhood organizations had few connections with other clusters, including K-12. As the NAZ pipeline is built, its success will depend on developing strong connections through which organizations earlier in the chain can receive feedback about the success of their students in the next links along.

Next steps

In planning for the 2011 follow-up surveys, it will be important to address both confidentiality and timing. Baseline surveys were confidential, which helped to ensure participation and frank feedback. However, it also prevents targeting assistance to specific points where it may do the most to help. The timing of follow-up surveys need not match the months in which they were given in 2010, but should be determined based on when the results will be most representative and when the findings are most needed to help shape ongoing planning.

Introduction

Background

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) was formed in 2008 as a collaboration of community organizations. Its mission, inspired by the promise of the Harlem Children's Zone, is ***to build a culture of achievement in a geographic Zone in North Minneapolis to assure all youth graduate from high school college-ready***. Its work is grounded in a shared sense of urgency to address serious gaps of opportunity and achievement in North Minneapolis.

In 2009 NAZ contracted with Wilder Research to conduct an independent, external evaluation of its work. The initial work included baseline measures of both the wellbeing of the community and the functioning of the collaboration itself. This report describes findings about the baseline measure of the collaboration. The purpose of this study was to identify a starting level of performance against which future levels of collaboration can be compared, and also to identify opportunities for current action to strengthen the partnership.

Two different sets of partnerships are of importance to the success of NAZ. These were assessed using different survey instruments, as described below. In general, even though many organizations are represented in both sets of partnerships, different people represent their organization in the two different venues.

The first set of partnerships includes organizations involved in the strategic management of the initiative. This includes the Steering Committee that provides overall vision, governance, and accountability. It also includes the Action Teams that work within the overall governance structure to set the vision and coordinate the action for groups of similar organizations, including early childhood, mentoring, and out-of-school time. This collaboration was assessed using the Collaboration Progress Check-in survey (described below).

The second set of partnerships includes those involved in the Opportunity Network. This group of 50 service providers works cooperatively to strengthen support to children and families, and connects families to resources via a web-based tool called NAZ Connect. Using the tool, families can identify goals and access resources to help them meet their goals. It is hoped that this tool will help improve access to services, and enhance the effectiveness of those services. The characteristics and needs of this partnership were assessed using the Opportunity Network Survey (also described below).

It should be noted that the Collaboration Progress Check-in surveys of groups involved in NAZ's strategic management were conducted during a time of intense growth and change. At that time, the overall structure of governance was being revised, and the number, nature, and roles of key committees were in transition. Under such conditions, it would be expected that responses on topics such as group membership, cohesion, and understanding of roles would be relatively weak compared to levels that would be found during a period of stable organization.

About the surveys

Wilder Research staff designed the surveys jointly with NAZ research staff and colleagues at the University of Minnesota with specialized backgrounds in network analysis. Each of the surveys is described below. This report includes findings from both. It is possible that the same person may have been called upon to answer both surveys, but this is likely to have occurred in only a few cases.

Collaboration Progress Check-In

The Collaboration Progress Check-in survey was designed to answer the following research questions:

- What are the characteristics of the organizations that help to coordinate the overall structure and service networks of NAZ?
- How healthy is the collaboration of those organizations? More particularly, how does the collaboration promote a common vision and purpose? How does it promote effective collaborative work?
- What factors (including resources or lack of resources) assist and challenge the effectiveness of the collaboration?

This survey (see Appendix for a copy of the instrument) is a confidential, paper-and-pencil survey completed by members of the NAZ Steering Committee and three of its Coordination Teams that were active in January 2010. It contains questions relating to participants' experiences with NAZ overall, experiences with their workgroups, challenges and barriers to implementing NAZ ideas, and what their home organizations hope to gain by being involved in NAZ and their workgroup. The survey also contains 22 questions adapted from Wilder's "Collaboration Experience Questionnaire." These questions were identified by Wilder in previous research as being related to successful collaborations. This module of the survey contains questions relating to the political and social environment of the collaborative effort, group membership characteristics, process and structure of the workgroups, communication, a common purpose among group members, resources and

leadership, and outcomes. The survey also includes questions developed by Dr. Doug Wholey of the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health that relate to other important aspects of collaborations: conflict, and constructive controversy. Open-ended questions are statements to which participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement, from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. All percentages reported are the valid percentages, meaning they include all people who answered the survey question.

Members of four different NAZ committees and teams were asked to complete the Collaboration Progress Check-In survey during their regular meeting time during the month of January, 2010. Forty out of around 50 members completed the surveys, for an overall response rate of about 80 percent (because of the organizational flux at the time, the potential total group size is not approximate). The four NAZ working groups active during this time were the Steering Committee, the Out of School Time Coordination Team, the Pre-K/Early Childhood Education Coordination Team, and the Mentoring Coordination Team. Thirty-five percent of the survey participants were from the Steering Committee, 35 percent represented the Out of School Time Team, 20 percent represented the Pre-K/Early Childhood Education Team, and 10 percent represented the Mentoring Team. Respondents were also asked to indicate any other NAZ committees or teams in which they had participated. Throughout this report, the terms "working group," "workgroup," "committee" and "team" are used interchangeably.

NAZ Opportunity Network Survey

The NAZ Opportunity Network survey was designed to answer the following research questions:

- What are organizations' connections with the children and families in the Zone?
- Are organizations well aligned with NAZ goals and each other in order to deliver effective services?
- What organizational strengths or capacities need to be built or supported?

This survey (see Appendix for a copy of the instrument) is a confidential, web-based survey containing questions that measure the development and progress of the NAZ Connect network. NAZ asked that a representative from every agency enrolled in NAZ Connect complete the survey. These questions are related to organizational characteristics and capacity, and the proportion of the organization's clients who live in the Northside Achievement Zone. A set of questions also asked respondents' opinions of NAZ's support and infrastructure. The survey was administered between the last week of February and the last week of March 2011. Representatives of 41 organizations, out of 47

eligible organizations participating in the pilot at the time, completed the Opportunity Network Survey. This represents a response rate of 87 percent.

A set of questions in the Opportunity Network Survey was also used by Sarah Henderson (a graduate student enrolled at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health) to conduct the network analysis. The network analysis was used to get a better understanding of the relationships between organizations, including whether programs worked together to coordinate services, pursue joint funding, and refer NAZ clients to each other. A full network analysis has been reported separately. This report incorporates its findings.

Results

This section includes findings from the Collaboration Progress Check-In survey, Opportunity Network Survey, and the network analysis. Results are separated initially by survey type, then by question. The Collaboration Progress Check-In survey assesses how respondents feel about NAZ as a whole, the current functioning of their committees or teams, challenges or barriers to implementing NAZ ideas, and how workgroup members feel NAZ will contribute to their home organizations. The Opportunity Network Survey asks representatives from agencies enrolling in NAZ Connect to describe their organizations and how NAZ supports their organization and its participation in NAZ Connect. The network analysis, based on responses from the Opportunity Network Survey, measures the development and progress of the NAZ Connect network.

Collaboration Progress Check-In survey

Current functioning of NAZ as a whole based on guiding principles

Based on their experience with the initiative so far, respondents were asked to rate NAZ as a whole in terms of NAZ guiding principles. They were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed that outcomes for children take priority over agency needs, if NAZ representatives can explain how NAZ has met community and partner expectations, if NAZ representatives are open and honest about their work, and if NAZ has what it takes to stick around for the long haul. Responses were based on a five point scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Percentages shown are based on valid responses, numbering from 38 to 40 for individual questions.

Respondents were generally positive regarding the overall work of NAZ and its long-term potential for beneficial impact. The vast majority (97%) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that NAZ was strongest when it came to drawing on connections and other resources from inside and outside the zone. Eighty-seven percent of those surveyed agree or strongly agree that the outcomes for children of NAZ's work are more important than those of the programs and organizations. Eighty-four percent of those interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that NAZ has what it takes to stick with the work for the long haul. Eighty-two percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that NAZ representatives were open and honest, and 68 percent felt that NAZ representatives could explain how they met community and partner expectations (a measure of accountability). (See Figure 1.) (Rows are in decreasing order by the percent who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.)

1. The performance of NAZ as a whole in fulfilling its guiding principles

	SD	D	N	A	SA	A or SA
Group draws on connections and other resources from both inside and outside the Zone	-	-	3%	47%	50%	97%
Group uses research and evaluation to plan and measure progress	-	3%	8%	47%	42%	89%
Outcomes for children are clearly more important than outcomes for programs and organizations	-	-	13%	32%	55%	97%
Group has what it takes to stick with the work for the long haul	-	-	16%	34%	50%	84%
Group is open and honest with participants and other stakeholders about how it does its work	-	5%	13%	40%	42%	82%
Group distributes resources based on the needs of children and families, not the needs of organizations or programs	-	-	27%	38%	35%	73%
Group members can explain how they have met community and partner expectations [accountable]	-	8%	24%	52%	16%	68%

Expected outcomes of NAZ for home organizations

Participants were asked what they believed their home organizations hoped to gain from participating in NAZ and their individual working group. Insight into these hopes can help gauge the organization's likelihood of remaining a part of NAZ for the long term. They also provide some insight into the ease with which organizations are likely to be able to work together, based on the extent to which these hopes are consistent with each other and the overall purposes of NAZ. Common response themes include:

Improved services and outcomes for clients

Twenty-four survey participants indicated that their involvement in NAZ and the workgroups could ultimately produce positive outcomes for children and their families in the Northside. Examples of responses are as follows:

- To impact the success of family and student.
- Ultimately see children increase in educational and community outcomes for future success.
- To see students achieving at a higher level and having a greater opportunity to succeed.

Deepen our impact, connect our work, increase resources, and visibility, elevate the importance of OST [Out of School Time] and youth development.

Build better partnerships with other organizations

Fourteen survey respondents also stated that their involvement with NAZ would increase collaboration among organizations and service providers, which would ultimately provide better services for children and their families.

Increase the success of families and children on the Northside through increased collaboration. Share in process of meeting children's needs.

Increased connections with other organizations and knowledge of other services for families we serve so they ultimately receive comprehensive services.

Develop relationships that effectively link our work to other work in the community.

Greater connection to NAZ community members and organizations working together to support children and families.

More funding to build capacity

Four respondents also mentioned that funding provided through NAZ could build stronger programs, which would impact success overall.

Potentially larger funding stream access to make us all better.

The capacity to fully serve kids in the zone – needs are money to build capacity.

Respondents also hoped to build a stronger community, provide mentors for children, increase their ability to serve more clients, and eliminate the achievement gap.

Doing what's right and important for building a stronger community.

To help as many families as we can and to match as many children in the zone with an adult mentor.

Improve service to youth and families on the Northside.

Our primary reason for being involved in NAZ is to support efforts that help us address and eliminate the achievement gap and to ensure that our students and families have access to the resources they need to succeed academically and in life.

Working group and home organization

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of questions about their working group and its relationship to their home organization. Respondents were asked if the group’s activities were useful, if their workgroup was willing to change its ideas or activities based on feedback from participating organizations, if they receive input from their home organization on difficulties the working group could address, and if people in their home organization regularly let them know if they have trouble implementing the workgroup’s ideas or recommendations. Responses were based on a 5 point scale, from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

Almost all (96%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that NAZ’s activities were useful, and that NAZ listened to their feedback to inform changes. Most participants (89%) also agreed or strongly agreed that their home organization is receptive to NAZ ideas.

Participants were generally less positive about whether they received input from their home organizations about working groups. Half of all respondents indicated they received input from members of their home organizations about difficulties their NAZ working group could address. Only 42 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their home organization would inform them if they had trouble implementing NAZ committee ideas or recommendations. (See Figure 2.)

2. Linkages between NAZ and home organizations

	SD	D	N	A	SA	A or SA
Workgroup activities are useful	3%		3%	53%	43%	96%
Workgroup is willing to change its ideas or activities based on feedback from participating organizations	3%	-	5%	53%	40%	93%
Respondent’s home organization is receptive to ideas that come from group	3%	-	8%	56%	33%	89%
In its discussions and recommendations, workgroup considers what activities mean for participating organizations to implement them	3%	3%	8%	55%	33%	88%
Respondent regularly receives input from people in home organization about service or coordination difficulties that the workgroup could address	3%	16%	31%	26%	24%	50%
People in home organization regularly let respondent know if they have trouble implementing the group’s ideas or recommendations	-	16%	42%	34%	8%	42%

Note: Percentages may not total exactly 100 due to rounding.

Results show that the flow of information is quite strong from the work group out to participating organizations, but less strong in the opposite direction. It will be important for NAZ to seek regular methods to help ensure that representatives on working groups are not only sharing NAZ information back to their home organizations, but also seeking input from multiple levels of their organizations to help inform and shape NAZ strategies.

Barriers to implementing NAZ coordination team ideas

Respondents were asked to name the one or two most important challenges or barriers they and other members of their home organization have faced in implementing Coordination Team ideas. Common response themes include:

Time commitment needed to participate

Having enough time to dedicate to NAZ activities was one of the most commonly cited challenges in implementing NAZ coordination team ideas. These eight respondents also mentioned that sufficient time is needed to bring together representatives of various organizations in order to address any concerns.

Time commitment to attend meetings – coordinate, quarterly.

Having the staff time for meeting/working through the issues.

It has taken some time to get the right membership of the team and work towards a comprehensive plan that all the organizations can contribute to. The members of this group have limited time.

Lack of funding

A shortage of funding was also seen by five survey participants as an obstacle to employing the Coordination Team's ideas. This is not surprising, given the other funding challenges cited.

Lack of funding to support initiatives/limited resources.

Finances – as a mentoring organization like others in this field, there are costs involved (over \$2K) in matching and supporting each child. Most of us have full waiting lists already. To take an additional caseload in the zone is a great financial challenge.

Funding and recruitment – ongoing challenges for mentoring organizations.

Respondents also mentioned barriers such as structural or organizational challenges to implementing Coordination Team ideas (including organizational capacity, resources,

and case load), too many levels of authority, or too many people involved in the decision making process. Five respondents stated that their home organization had not yet reached the implementation stage.

Decisions take longer to be made due to the collaborative process itself – getting the views – the disparate views of members when making one decision.

It's been difficult managing an ever-growing network of contributors, coming from varying levels of active participation and levels of authority/responsibility.

Concerns about time are a nearly universal theme in evaluations of collaborative. It is a promising finding that, despite these concerns, ratings of the collaborative's process and progress are otherwise quite high.

Factors that facilitate the implementation of Coordination Team ideas

Despite these challenges, home organizations mentioned a number of factors that helped them to implement NAZ Coordination Team ideas. Common themes include:

Communication, collaboration, and information sharing

Fifteen respondents indicated that communication and collaboration among NAZ participants made it easier to employ Coordination Team ideas.

Ease of communication – being able to share written, concrete, summarized information or NAZ recommendations with my supervisor.

NAZ and this committee communicate well electronically and personally.

To get clear and open communication and updates.

Clarity of mission and objectives

Three respondents also noted that NAZ's clear mission and goals helped them and other members of their organization implement ideas.

Impressive communication/initiative around mission/purpose/passion and promise. Dire need for this initiative.

Coordinates and collective agreement over shared goal and activities.

Other factors supporting the implementation of project plans include buy-in by members, commitment to the work and to serving clients, good leadership, and resource development.

Our commitment to coordinated work to better serve Northside kids.

We're committed to the work – together.

Good leadership with transparent communication.

Resource development conversations.

Organized, thought out. Connection to NAZ – well known, respected initiative.

Current functioning of working groups

Using the same questions as for NAZ as a whole, survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their individual working group operated consistently with NAZ guiding principles.

Almost all (96%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their working groups put outcomes for children above that of programs and organizations. Most (90%) of respondents believed the group was open and honest with stakeholders regarding their work, and 88 percent felt that their group could stick to the work for the long haul. Eighty-three percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their group uses research and evaluation to plan and measure progress. The majority (61%) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that resources were distributed based on the needs of children and families. Fifty-nine percent also felt they could explain how their working group met community and partner expectations. (See Figure 3.)

3. Current functioning of working groups

	SD	D	N	A	SA	A or SA
Group draws on connections and other resources from both inside and outside the Zone	-	-	3%	56%	41%	97%
Outcomes for children are clearly more important than outcomes for programs and organizations	-	-	5%	38%	58%	96%
Group is open and honest with participants and other stakeholders about how it does its work	-	3%	8%	45%	45%	90%
Group has what it takes to stick with the work for the long haul	-	-	13%	48%	40%	88%
Group uses research and evaluation to plan and measure progress	-	3%	15%	55%	28%	83%
Group distributes resources based on the needs of children and families, not the needs of organizations or programs	-	-	39%	32%	29%	61%
Group members can explain how they have met community and partner expectations [accountable]	-	8%	33%	51%	8%	59%

Note: Percentages may not total exactly 100 due to rounding.

The separate working groups are rated slightly higher than “NAZ as a whole” on their priority for children’s outcomes and transparency of their work. The overall collaborative is rated slightly higher for the use of research and evaluation, use of connections inside and outside of the Zone, and distribution of resources based on the needs of children and families. For the most part, these are natural differences given the variation in the level of responsibility across groups. However, NAZ leaders may wish to find ways to support working groups’ knowledge and use of relevant research, and explore the extent to which they might benefit from help in maintaining connections and obtaining additional resources.

Positive results from working groups

When asked what they felt was going well within each working group, the following response themes were most common:

Good communication, respect for others and for differing opinions

Ten respondents indicated members communicated well with their fellow workgroup members, and that respect for each other’s input was apparent.

People listen to each other. Great effort to include partners who need to be at the table.

Open to learning about each other/other’s work.

The opportunity for everyone’s ideas to be brought to the table.

Leadership is fantastic. Respect for all voices is evident at every meeting.

Commitment to and support for the project

Eight respondents indicated that workgroup members are dedicated to their team, which can ultimately build connections around a common cause.

Passion and commitment and patience with the process.

Clear commitment to positive youth development.

People are committed to doing some real work, not just talking.

Clear movement and evolution of the project

Seven survey participants stated that NAZ-related work was consistently being done within their team, and that their work was progressing accordingly.

We've made some key decisions that have been effective and meaningful in terms of moving NAZ forward.

There is a clear evolution of the collaborative.

Openness to change and flexibility with the continual process of reshaping.

Other positive results from the working groups include great leadership, diversity of programs and people, flexibility and openness to change, and effective decision making.

Leadership, shared passion and vision. Provides opportunity to come together to heal Northside community.

Facilitation of meetings is very good.

Excellent mix of organizations and the right personalities are at the table.

There is a general sense/support for the overall mission and need in calling to achieve that mission.

What needs improvement?

Conversely, respondents were asked to describe their biggest areas of concern for the working groups. The following are the most common response themes:

Resources, staffing, and time

The need for more resources, staff, and time was expressed by six survey participants. With time, in particular, respondents indicated they hoped for more preparation and meeting time.

Could use dedicated staff support.

Make sure all documents are simple and clear.

More time and funding to do work of committee. Directed activities.

More prep time. We need more timely receipt of new documents.

More meeting time to get further, faster, or more work outside meeting times.

More purpose and structure for the group

Four survey participants expressed the need for clearer goals for the group, as well as better structure for the workgroups themselves. As mentioned in the introduction, this

was expected, considering the reorganization that was under way at the time of the survey.

A clear sense as to how we will actualize the goals of this group.

Clear purpose and structure that is coherent and that reflects logic model, I know that this is coming.

Staying with an organizational structure that is comprehensive for all who participate in the Steering Committee.

Communication among workgroups

Four respondents indicated that communication was an area of concern, particularly relating to communication between as well as within groups. Survey participants also expressed the need for greater transparency.

Communication between the NAZ steering committee and OST [Out of School Time]. I feel we get a lot of redirection from NAZ that doesn't always fit with where we are as a group which makes us stop and go in a different direction or we need to redo things we have done before.

Transparency in communication. Respect for varying work styles to thinking styles. Flexibility.

For leadership to make sure we are running information by members before the meetings. Ongoing communication and sharing of written documentation according to our process work.

Clarity of roles within the project

Three respondents mentioned they would like more clarity as to their role within the workgroup, and how to incorporate other stakeholders in the process.

Clarity of roles in respect to other parts of NAZ.

Clarity on how we can engage youth voice.

Clarity on how to engage clients and dealing with dominant personalities was a concern for one of the working group participants as well. One client felt a need for more respect for the expertise of the members of the education group (which was being reorganized at the time). Another respondent hoped to see greater diversity of the group, particularly the Steering Committee. Others felt it was too early to say what aspects of the working groups would need improvement.

Working group responses to the “Collaboration Experience Questionnaire”

Survey participants were asked their level of agreement with questions relating to the quality of the collaboration within the working group. These questions relate to the work environment, membership characteristics, process and structure of the workgroups, communication, a common purpose among group members, resources including leadership, and outcomes. These factors have been shown, in other research, to be related to the effectiveness of collaborative enterprises. This section also includes questions shown from Group Theory research to be related to group functioning more broadly. These questions deal with conflict, constructive controversy, and risk tolerance. Response options ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), with a neutral option (3). It should be noted that the number of responses in some of the committees or teams is small, and that no individual group was rated by more than fourteen individuals. Mentoring Group responses are not reported separately because of the small number in this group.

The scores below represent the average responses for each of the categories mentioned above. Lower scores indicate that respondents generally disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements in that section. Higher scores indicate a greater degree of agreement. For example, the Political and Social Environment section consists of two statements: “Agencies in our community have a history of working together” and “The political and social climate seems to be ‘right’ for a collaborative like this one.” Scores for this section range from 3 to 4, indicating that on average, respondents remained neutral (3) or agreed (4) with the statements. Individual questions can be found in the Collaboration Progress Check-In questionnaire in the Appendix. (See Figure 4.)

4. Collaboration scores overall and by workgroup

Domain	Number of items (questions) in domain	Mean score, by domain and group			
		Total N=40	Steering Committee N=14	Pre-K N=8	Out of School Time N=14
Political/social Environment	2	3.75	3.53	4.25	3.67
Membership	3	3.82	3.85	4.42***	3.43***
Process and Structure	8	3.86	3.90	4.10	3.77
Communication	2	4.04	4.07	4.19	4.00
Purpose	4	4.14	4.43*	4.28	3.82***
Resources incl. Leadership	3	3.54	3.62	3.58	3.55
Overall CEQ	22	3.86	3.94	4.10*	3.68**
Conflict	2	2.26	2.57	1.81	2.11
Constructive Controversy	2	4.05	4.11	4.25	3.93
Risk	1	4.08	4.14	4.29	3.93

Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

(" $p < .05$ " means that there is at most a 5% chance that the difference in ratings between this group and the others could have occurred as a result of some random variation in responses. " $p < .001$ " means there is only 1 chance in 1000 that the difference is due to random variation. Ratings not noted with any asterisks are not considered statistically significant, meaning we cannot rule out the possibility that the difference between them and the others might be due to chance.)

In the summary of scores above, averages are shown because they are the best way to compare responses across groups or between different times. However, mean scores also leave out information that can be important. For example, an average of 3 could mean, at one extreme, that all respondents were neutral on the question, or, at the other extreme, that half strongly agreed and half strongly disagreed. Therefore, in the discussion of responses below, we provide the more detailed information on levels of agreement.

Key findings of the Collaboration Progress Check-in survey

This section describes results for each individual item in the Collaboration Experience Questionnaire, and for the three additional group functioning factors included in the survey. It is important to remember that the survey was administered to collect baseline data at an early stage of building the collaborative, so it is to be expected that many scores will have room for improvement over time. Results can be used to identify particular areas of focus. It should also be recognized that the overall NAZ collaborative and its Steering Committee were undergoing some structural reconfigurations at the time the survey was administered.

Environment

Respondents were split as to whether agencies in their community have a history of working together (44% of all survey participants agreed or strongly agreed and 43% disagreed or strongly disagreed; mean score 3.03). Almost all (97%) of the workgroup participants agreed or strongly agreed that the political and social climate is “right” for a project like NAZ (mean 4.48). The average rating on this item was slightly lower for the Out-of-School Time group compared to the others ($p < .05$).

Membership characteristics

Almost all respondents believed their organization will benefit from being involved in the working group, with 95 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement (mean 4.41). Sixty percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the organizations involved in the group were the “right” ones to do the work (mean 3.65).

Trust between working group members showed some of the most significant variations in response. Fifty-two percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “people involved in this working group always trust one another,” 30 percent were neutral, and 18 percent disagreed (mean score 3.43). Eighty-eight percent of the Pre-K workgroup, however, agreed or strongly agreed that their working group trusted one another (mean 4.13), which was the highest percentage of all groups ($p < .01$).

Trust is a factor that requires time to develop, so it is naturally one that would be expected to receive lower ratings on a baseline measure. However, NAZ leadership may wish to consider ways to intentionally help working groups build trust.

Overall, the members of the Pre-K group rated their group significantly higher on these membership characteristics compared to other groups ($p < .001$), and the Out-of-School Time group rated their group lower ($P < .001$). In particular, the Out-of-School Time group was less likely to agree that their organization would benefit from being involved.

Process and Structure

All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that everyone who is a part of the working groups wants NAZ to succeed (mean score 4.65). Almost all respondents (93%) stated members of the workgroup are willing to consider different ways of working (mean 4.23). Eighty percent of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that their group makes timely decisions so the project can keep moving forward (mean 3.93). Sixty-three percent of those surveyed indicated they had enough time to take information back to their organizations and confer with colleagues (3.55).

Responses varied widely regarding whether people in the working groups have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities, where 40 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed, 48 percent were neutral, and 12 percent disagreed (mean score 3.33). Responses also differed regarding whether there are clear processes for making decisions among the partners in the group, where 49 percent agreed or strongly agreed, 41 percent were neutral, and 10 percent disagreed (mean 3.46). This rating is likely affected by the reorganization under way in NAZ leadership at the time. Leadership now may wish to assess current roles and responsibilities and the clarity with which they are communicated.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the group was able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to the working group (mean 3.61). Responses were split regarding their workgroup's ability to adapt to changing conditions, with 50 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing and 47 percent remaining neutral (mean 3.61).

There were few statistically significant differences between groups on their ratings in the process and structure domain. Reflecting the significant reorganization that was occurring in January, the Steering Committee respondents gave slightly lower ratings on "clear process for making decisions" ($p < .05$).

Communication

Eighty-five percent of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that they are informed about what goes on in the working group (mean 4.05). Eighty-three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that communication among working group members occurs in both formal and informal ways (4.03). There were no statistically significant differences among groups on the ratings in this domain.

Purpose

All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the people in their working group are dedicated to the idea that they can make NAZ work (mean 4.58). Ninety percent of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that their ideas about what they hoped to accomplish within the work group are similar to that of others (mean 4.03). Eighty-five percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their working group has established reasonable goals (mean 3.90). Seventy percent of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that no other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what NAZ is attempting (4.08).

Some statistically significant group differences were found in this domain, with the Steering Committee scoring somewhat higher than other groups ($p < .01$), and the Out-of-School Time team scoring somewhat lower ($p < .001$). In particular, Steering Committee

respondents rated higher than other groups on reasonable goals ($p < .05$), members' commitment to making the project work ($p < .05$), and uniqueness of purpose ($p < .001$). The Out-of-School Time group was less likely to agree that all members were committed to making the project work ($p < .05$), and less likely to agree that there is no other organization trying to do the same thing ($p < .001$).

Resources

Almost all (95%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the people in leadership positions within the working groups have good skills for working with other people and organizations (mean 4.28). Sixty percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their working group has adequate "people power" to do what it wants to accomplish (mean 3.73). Only 11 percent of respondents agreed that their workgroup was adequately funded to do what they want to accomplish. Forty-six percent of respondents disagreed, and 43 percent felt neutral about the amount of funding (mean 2.65).

Conflict

Eighty-three percent of survey participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that personality clashes are evident in their working group (mean 2.05). Sixty-three percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea that conflicts regarding ideas frequently arise in the working group (mean 2.48).

Only one statistically significant difference was observed among the groups: the Pre-K team was somewhat less likely to report frequent conflicts regarding ideas ($p < .05$).

Constructive Controversy

Almost all (95%) agreed or strongly agreed that even when members of the working group disagree, they communicate with respect for each other (mean 4.28). Seventy-seven percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their working group used opposing views to understand problems (mean 3.82). There were no statistically significant differences among groups in this domain.

Risk

Ninety percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel it is safe to take a risk and try new things in their working group (mean 4.08). There were no statistically significant differences among groups on this item.

Overall, results of these collaboration and group dynamics items show a healthy level of group functioning, especially for a baseline survey. It is possible that measures may be

slightly lower in the next time period, because groups may then be in the midst of challenges of implementation. These are likely to be more stressful than the challenges occurring during the planning stage the groups were dealing with in January 2010. In addition, once past the earliest stages of groups, participants are often more comfortable revealing more challenging issues with each other. As a result, tensions that may have been kept beneath the surface during the initial phases often begin to be more evident in intermediate stages.

NAZ Opportunity Network Survey

This section describes the organizations participating in the NAZ Connect pilot to make coordinated services available to families and children in the Zone. Many, but not all, of these organizations also participate in one or more of the working groups that help to plan NAZ services and activities through the working groups described in the previous section of this report. Organizations in the NAZ Connect service delivery pilot vary greatly in size, in the kinds of individuals or groups to whom their services are targeted, in the kinds of services they offer, and in the extent to which their services and programs are concentrated in the geographic area of the Zone.

Organization characteristics

Representatives of 41 organizations participating in the NAZ Connect pilot completed the Opportunity Network Survey. Thirty-three of the organizations had been in operation for nine years or more, and eight had operated for less than nine years. They were of vastly different sizes, with some annual budgets less than \$1,000, while over half had annual budgets of \$1,000,000 or more (see Figure 5).

5. Organization's total annual budget (estimated)

Annual budget (range)	Number of organizations
Less than \$1,000	4
\$1,000 - \$299,999	0
\$300,000 - \$499,999	3
\$500,000 - \$999,999	5
Don't know (but less than \$1 million)	3
\$1,000,000 - \$1,999,999	7
\$2,000,000 - \$10,000,000	8
More than \$15 million	2
Don't know (but more than \$1 million)	9

Respondents were asked to identify the type of organization they represented, and allowed to answer yes to more than one label. The majority (28 of 41) identified as community-based organizations. One identified as an emerging service organization, not fully formed. Eight consider themselves faith-based organizations, and six identified as private, for-profit organizations. Seven were governmental organizations, one was a university or college, and four identified as a school.

Thirty-four of the organizations have written by-laws, 33 have articles of incorporation, and 33 had 501(c) (3) status. Almost all (39 of 41) of the organizations said they have written goals that are part of a strategic plan. Forty of the organizations have a functioning board of directors or a governing body, and 33 have a fundraising plan. All of the respondents that answered “no” to any of these questions indicated that either their organization was interested in developing or obtaining these in the next year, or that they were not applicable to the organization.

Twenty-six of the organizations had filed an IRS 990 form in the past year (required of non-profits with more than \$25,000 in annual revenues), and 25 of the organizations had been audited in the past three years.

Staff

The number of paid, full-time staff working for the pilot organizations ranged from zero to 1,400. Paid, part-time staff ranged from zero to 155. The number of volunteers at each of the organizations was significantly larger, with organizations mentioning a range of zero to 20,000. (See Figure 6.)

6. Number of staff working for participating organizations

	Organizations with this many paid, full-time staff	Organizations with this many paid, part-time staff	Organizations with this many volunteers
0 – 25	26	30	16
26 – 100	9	6	8
101 – 1,000	2	1	7
More than 1,000	1	-	5

Most (35 of 41) of the organizations said they do not have any paid staff for whom 50 percent or more of their time is devoted to NAZ. Two of the organizations said they have four paid staff with 50 percent or more of their time dedicated to the project. Four organizations were unable to estimate the proportion.

The number of paid staff with less than 50 percent of their time devoted to NAZ varied between organizations, with responses ranging from zero to seven staff members. The most common response was one, with 11 organizations saying they had a single staff member dedicated to NAZ for less than 50 percent of their time. The number of volunteers working on NAZ for any part of their time also varied, with responses ranging from zero to 30. Most (27 of 41) of the organizations did not have any volunteers working on the project.

Services

Organizations were asked the proportion of their services that are dedicated to individuals, families, and children and youth of various ages. Responses are shown in Figure 7 below. The numbers in each space show the number of organizations reporting each of the categories. For example, in the first row, 5 respondents reported that less than 10 percent of their organization’s services or activities target individuals, 9 respondents reported that between 10 and 50 percent (some, but fewer than half) of the organization’s services and activities target individuals, 11 respondents report that 51 to 90 percent (or more than half) target individuals, and 10 report that 91 to 100 percent (or almost all) of the organization’s services and activities target individuals. This question was answered by a total of 35 respondents; the others did not have this information available.

7. Proportion of services and activities targeting various groups

What proportion of services or activities target.....? ¹	Number of organizations, by percent of all services or activities that are targeted to each group shown at left				Total (number of organizations reporting for this category)
	<10% of services/activities	10%-50% of services/activities	51%-90% of services/activities	91%-100% of services/activities	
Individuals?	5	9	11	10	35
Groups of individuals (not families)?	13	9	7	6	35
Whole families?	18	7	5	6	36
Children ages 0-5?	24	6	6	1	37
Elementary school-age children?	15	14	4	3	36
Middle school-age youth?	16	13	2	3	34
High school-age youth?	14	14	4	4	36
Adults or whole families?	11	14	7	9	41

¹ Responses shown are number of organizations responding.

Sources of organizations' income

The main sources of income for most organizations were private foundations, individual contributions, and corporations or corporate foundations. Most also had at least some revenue from state, local, and federal grants or contracts, and most had at least some funding from other non-profit organizations. Other sources of income (not listed separately below) include earned income, fundraising, program service fees, membership dues, and in-kind donations. (See Figure 8.)

8. Proportion of organization's annual budget from various sources

What proportion of your organization's total annual budget comes from.....?	Number of organizations, by proportion of budget from each of the sources shown at left			Total (number of organizations reporting for this category)
	None	1%-20%	More than 20%	
Private foundations?	3	16	15	34
Individual contributions?	4	19	11	34
Corporate funding or foundations?	4	20	10	34
State grants/funding?	12	14	8	34
Local government?	10	18	7	35
Federal grants/funding?	14	14	6	34
Non-profit organizations?	10	20	3	33
Other?	8	14	9	31

For most organizations, only a small part of their overall budget goes toward activities connected with NAZ. Thirty-one of the 41 organizations surveyed stated that less than 20 percent of their total annual budget is used for NAZ related activities. However, one organization said that more than 80 percent of its total annual budget was used for NAZ activities.

Clients

The proportion of clients served by these organizations who live in the Northside Achievement Zone area varies considerably. Most respondents indicated that some, but fewer than half (10 to 50%) of their organizations' clients lived in the Zone. Three were unable to estimate the proportion. The responses shown (Figure 9) indicate the number of organizations responding within each range.

9. Proportion of clients located in Northside Achievement Zone

	Number of organizations, by proportion of clients located in the Zone				
	<10%	10%-25%	26%-50%	51%-75%	76% or more
What proportion of all the clients your organization serves are located in the NAZ area?	9	12	11	2	4

Alignment of pilot organizations with NAZ purposes

Survey respondents were asked to think about the part of their organization that works directly with NAZ and to identify their level of agreement with various statements about that component of the organization and its services. Responses were based on a 4 point scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Respondents were also allowed to indicate “not applicable” or “don’t know.” For this reason, percentages shown may not equal exactly one hundred percent.

Eighty-eight percent of the organizational representatives surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their services help youth in the Zone become college ready. Eighty-eight percent of participants also agreed or strongly agreed that NAZ values feedback and suggestions from their organization. Eighty-three percent of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that NAZ supports their organization in their participation in NAZ Connect. Sixty-six percent also agreed or strongly agreed that NAZ takes into account their organization’s needs in their plans.

Sixty-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that NAZ provides support and infrastructure to help their organization build new relationships with other organizations. Only 37 percent of the organizations, however, believed that organizations in the Zone are currently working well together to serve children and families. When asked whether NAZ provides support and infrastructure for their organization to develop and build capacity, responses varied. Twenty-seven percent agreed or strongly agreed, and 27 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. (See Figure 10.)

10. Views of the working relationship between NAZ and pilot organizations

	SA	A	D	SD
<i>“Thinking about the <u>part of your organization that works with NAZ</u>, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”</i>				
The services that my organization provides help youth in the Zone become college ready	49%	39%	2%	2%
At this time, organizations in the Zone are working well together to serve children and families	10%	27%	19%	5%
<i>“Thinking about the <u>part of your organization that works with NAZ</u>, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about <u>NAZ as a whole?</u>”</i>				
NAZ values input from my organization	42%	46%	-	2%
NAZ takes into account my organization's needs in their plans	20%	46%	7%	2%
NAZ provides support and infrastructure to help my organization develop and build capacity	7%	20%	22%	5%
NAZ provides support and infrastructure to help my organization build new relationships with other organizations	12%	54%	10%	2%
NAZ supports my organization in our participation in NAZ Connect	27%	56%	2%	2%

Separately, respondents were asked how well they believed NAZ is meeting the needs of youth in the Northside Achievement Zone. Sixty-one percent indicated it was too soon to rate, 14 percent indicated “excellent” or “good,” and 10 percent indicated “fair.”

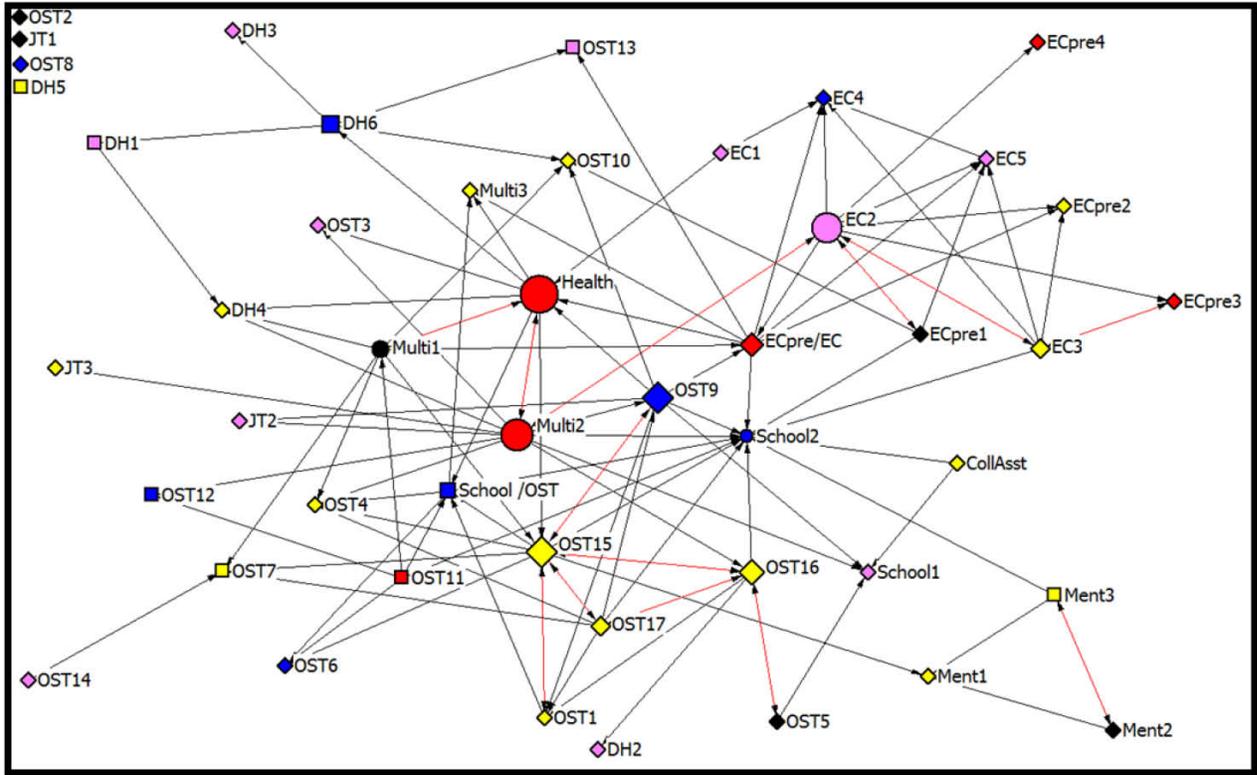
Network analysis

It is a premise of NAZ that services for families and children should be coordinated in order to be as effective as possible. This coordination of service will depend on good working relationships among the organizations providing them. To assess the functioning of relationships among the NAZ Connect pilot organizations, a network analysis was conducted by a different external evaluator (Henderson, 2010; report attached in Appendix). The analysis examined the relationships among organizations in general, as well as clusters of similar organizations working together, links between clusters, and which organizations are considered central and peripheral within the network. Five types of relationships among organizations were measured: participation in joint efforts to assess needs, coordination of programs, joint program development, joint funding, and client referrals to each other. The analysis also assessed whether a pair of organizations has more than one type of relationship, and whether relationships are reciprocated or reported by only one of the organizations.

The section below summarizes key findings and recommendations from the network analysis. In interpreting these findings, it is important to remember that only one informant completed the survey on behalf of each organization. This respondent may not always have known of all the relationships that different parts of their organization had with other organizations. Therefore, linkages among organizations may be somewhat under-reported.

The diagram below depicts all relationships among NAZ organizations. Each pair of organizations that has a relationship is connected by a line. The arrow at the end of the line indicates the direction of the relationship. If the relationship is only in one direction, the line is black. If the relationship is reciprocated, meaning there is an arrow going in both directions, the line is red. Organizations with similar relationships are grouped close to one another, in order to make the relationships between them more apparent. This diagram shows several clusters of similar organizations, which is a strength in the network. There are also a few peripheral organizations (such as ECpre4, an early childhood education program, shown in the upper right corner) that would benefit from additional connections to peer organizations and schools. The diagram also shows a small number of central organizations, notably those labeled Health, EC2 (an early childhood program), and Multi2 (a multi-purpose organization) that are key to the network, with relationships to a large number of other organizations.

11. Relationships among all NAZ organizations



<u>Organization Type shown by Shape</u>	<u>Number of Programs within Organization shown by Color</u>	<u>Organization Labels</u>
 Government Funded	Black 1-2	School: <i>School</i>
 Faith-Based	Purple 3-5	Early Childhood Education: <i>ECpre</i>
 Non-Profit / For-Profit	Blue 5-9	Early Childhood Program: <i>EC</i>
	Red 10+	Multi-Program Organization: <i>Multi</i>
	Yellow Unknown	Out of School Time: <i>OST</i>
		Job Training: <i>JT</i>
		Mentoring: <i>MENT</i>
		Development & Housing: <i>DH</i>

Source: Henderson, S. (2010, May). *Cradle-to-College: Organizing Networks to Promote Educational Achievement for Children in Poverty*. [See full report in Appendix]

Needs assessment

The Opportunity Network Survey asked participants which NAZ Connect organizations their organization had worked with to conduct a needs assessment for the NAZ clients they serve. Overall in the needs assessment network, there were very few reciprocal relationships, where both organizations agreed there was a relationship between them and their work. The strongest relationships were between an early childhood program and early childhood school, and between two mentoring programs. There were few clusters where similar types of organizations indicated they had worked together on a needs assessment. It would be important for the NAZ Connect organizations to know whether other organizations are working on similar issues. It would also benefit NAZ to know if organizations have worked together to better understand the needs of the community and identify potential solutions.

Coordination of programs

The survey also assessed whether programs coordinated efforts to combine resources and knowledge. Several clusters were found, including a grouping of early childhood related organizations and a grouping of out of school time programs. These results are similar to those found in the Collaboration Experience Questionnaire, where the Pre-K/Early Childhood Education workgroup consistently had the highest mean scores. This indicates respondents' consistent agreement with each of the statements about working relationships within the service planning group.

The early childhood service delivery cluster had one organization that appeared central to the others. Although this organization may be very influential within the cluster, it may also be overburdened. The early childhood cluster had few connections to other groupings in the network, which would be an area to improve upon in order to understand how to best prepare children for further education.

The out of school time programs appeared to be working closely with one another overall. A few out of school time programs and schools did not appear to be a part of this grouping, an issue that could be addressed in the future. Coordinating programs of similar interest will likely help NAZ meet its goals.

Program development

The survey asked participants whether they have worked with other organizations to develop NAZ-related programs and services. This question ultimately assessed how members of NAZ Connect were working with each other to meet NAZ goals. Overall, within clusters, similar organizations were working well together overall, although there were few links between groupings. Mentoring programs also appear relatively far-

removed from other clusters. Despite the need for efforts to connect groups, the connections within clusters are promising.

Joint funding

Survey participants were asked if their organization had worked with other NAZ Connect organizations to pursue joint funding for NAZ related activities and programs. Ideally, all would be in agreement as to which organizations they are co-funded with, although it is likely that many of the organizational representatives who completed the surveys did not have full knowledge of agency funding. Overall, very few of the organization representatives stated they are pursuing joint funding for NAZ activities. Some clusters, such as out of school time programs and mentoring programs, are not connected with others in the network. The unreciprocated ties may also be of interest, as one would expect organizations to agree that they are sharing funds. It is possible that shared funding may increase competition between groups, which could limit the number of joint activities organizations are willing to be a part of.

Client referrals

Participants were also asked which other NAZ Connect organizations their organization had referred NAZ clients to in the past. In this case, reciprocated relationships were not a critical concern. For example, schools may refer a student to a mentoring program, but it is not necessary for the mentoring program to refer the child back to the school. Four organizations were central in the network: a health organization, two out of school time organizations, and an organization with programs of multiple types. All of these central organizations were consistently referred to by other organizations, and sent referrals to other NAZ organizations for further assistance. These four organizations may prove essential to include in NAZ management activities.

Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, participants gave favorable feedback about their participation in NAZ and about the operations of the NAZ initiative overall, and believe it has potential to create positive changes in outcomes for their clients. Respondents and their home organizations have high hopes for the project, and anticipate improvements in services for clients, better partnerships with other organizations, and, in the long run, a stronger community. This report concludes with observations and suggestions for ways to use the findings from the two partnership surveys to continue to strengthen NAZ's operations.

Applications of findings mentioned earlier

This section recapitulates in one place suggestions made throughout the report about ways in which findings might be applied to strengthen the work of NAZ as it moves forward.

Potential applications of findings from Collaboration Progress Check-In survey (organizations involved in planning and coordination)

Communication. Survey results show that the flow of information is quite strong from the work groups out to participating organizations, but less strong in the opposite direction. It will be important for NAZ to seek regular methods to help ensure that representatives on working groups are not only sharing NAZ information back to their home organizations, but also seeking input their organizations to help inform and shape NAZ strategies. It is important that this input come from multiple levels of the home organization, including both front-line staff (on practical issues of service delivery), top-line executives (on strategic partnerships and investments of resources) and as many levels in between as the organization has (for tactical decisions about how to plan the work that is decided on).

Use of research in planning. Working groups report less use of research for planning compared to the Steering Committee. To ensure that best practices are being considered and applied, NAZ leaders may wish to find ways to support working groups' knowledge and use of relevant research.

Trust. Trust is a factor that requires time to develop, so it is naturally one that would be expected to receive lower ratings on a baseline measure. If the ratings on this scale are not higher in the 2011 follow-up survey, NAZ leadership may wish to consider ways to intentionally help working groups build trust.

Clear roles and responsibilities. The relatively lower rating on this item was likely affected by the fact that the 2010 survey was completed during a time of reorganization

in the structure of NAZ leadership. It will be important to compare the 2010 rating with the 2011 follow-up results to see whether it has increased since that time.

Address the scarcity of resources. The main concern of working group members was a scarcity of time and funding to do their work. NAZ should seek further information about these concerns and work with committee members to ensure they have the resources necessary to complete their work.

Address service fragmentation. Less than half (37%) of the organizations participating in NAZ working groups believed that organizations in the Zone were working well together to serve children and families. This reflects the fragmented state of services in the Northside when NAZ was at the starting line, and it is one of the major community challenges that the NAZ collaboration has pledged to address. Results of the Network Analysis can help NAZ identify points to focus its efforts, including support for organizations that are central to the network, and those that have already begun to coordinate programs. As NAZ moves forward in implementation, it will be important to monitor results of follow-up surveys to measure progress.

Summary of Collaboration Progress Check-In findings. Overall, results of these collaboration and group dynamics items show a healthy level of group functioning, especially for a baseline survey. Other than specific improvements noted above, it is possible that overall measures may be slightly lower in the next time period, because groups may then be in the midst of challenges of implementation. These are likely to be more stressful than the challenges occurring during the planning stage that the groups were dealing with in January 2010. In addition, once past the earliest stages of groups, participants are often more comfortable revealing challenging issues with each other. As a result, tensions that may have been kept beneath the surface during the initial phases often begin to be more evident in intermediate stages. Specific problem areas, if there are any, can be identified in the 2011 survey and used as the basis for planning the kinds of support that will help the effectiveness of the working groups.

Potential applications of findings from Opportunity Network survey (organizations involved in direct service through NAZ Connect)

Results of the Opportunity Network survey should be interpreted with the recognition that the pilot was at the earliest stage of development and had not yet “gone live” for family use when the surveys were completed. The survey is a true baseline measure, identifying the extent to which joint work existed before the pilot was introduced to bring greater coordination to service delivery in the Northside. Low levels of coordination are to be expected, and can help identify opportunities for NAZ to make a difference. Areas of greater coordination likely reflect more of a history of organizations working together,

either through NAZ action teams or for other purposes, and can help identify opportunities for others clusters to learn what works.

Joint needs assessment. There were few clusters where similar types of organizations indicated they had worked together on a needs assessment. As the pilot develops, it will be important for the pilot organizations to learn which of their peer organizations are working on similar issues and connect more with them. It will also benefit NAZ leadership to find opportunities to learn from clusters of organizations that have worked together, to benefit from what they have learned about the needs of the community and potential solutions.

Connections within clusters. The out of school time programs appeared to be working closely with one another overall. A few out of school time programs and schools did not appear to be a part of this grouping, an issue that could be addressed in the future. Coordinating programs of similar interest will likely help NAZ meet its goals.

Attention to capacity of central organizations. The early childhood service delivery cluster had one organization that appeared central to the others. Although this organization may be very influential within the cluster, it may also be overburdened. NAZ and/or action group leaders may wish to identify whether other organizations in this cluster might be able to share some of the role of tending to important connections.

Connections between different clusters in the pipeline. The early childhood cluster had few connections to other groupings in the network. This would be an area to improve upon in order to understand how to best prepare children for further education. Early childhood programs need connections with K-12 schools to monitor how well prepared their students are for the next level of their education, and the specifics about what kinds of preparation (if any) might be strengthened.

Overall observations and recommendations

The concerns most apparent in the Collaboration Progress Check-In survey were resource concerns and structural concerns (such as the need for clearer goals for the workgroups). The Opportunity Network survey shows significant opportunities for developing and strengthening relationships among service delivery organizations, as well as many promising relationships already in place. Opportunities to strengthen planning and operations by facilitating connections between organizations within NAZ were also mentioned in the Collaboration Progress Check-In survey.

The following summarize recommendations to NAZ for actions that may assist in meeting both process and outcome goals of the initiative:

- Ensure that roles, responsibilities, and processes for decision-making have become more clear within individual working groups and NAZ as a whole
- Facilitate connections between pilot organizations within service clusters, and among related clusters
- Facilitate team-building to ensure trust and open communication among working group members
- Understand funding concerns among working group members, and work with committee members to ensure they have the resources necessary to complete their work
- Encourage working group participants to engage a variety of members of their home organizations, and encourage them to express suggestions and concerns about NAZ activities

Next steps

Plans call for both of the partnership surveys to be administered annually to monitor the development of vital collaborations. As planning begins for the 2011 surveys, both confidentiality and timing should be discussed.

For the baseline surveys, respondents were guaranteed that their personal identification and organizational affiliation would not be disclosed in any reporting. While this was important to encourage survey participation and frank feedback, it also limits the use of findings because we cannot identify specific collaborative partners who might benefit most from further support. In planning for the follow-up surveys, we recommend discussing the relative value of confidentiality versus the potential to more specifically identify relative weaknesses that can be remediated when the source of distress is clear.

We also recommend discussions about the best timing for follow-up surveys. Is January the best time of year for the Collaboration Progress Check-In survey, or is there a different time of year when the information might be more representative? Is there a best time of year for the Opportunity Network survey? Is it important to administer and report both surveys at the same time? Is there a time of year when the results are most needed to help shape ongoing planning? These questions should be addressed as part of the planning process.

Appendix

Collaboration Progress Check-In Survey

NAZ Opportunity Network Survey

Network Analysis report

Collaboration Progress Check-In Survey

NAZ Collaboration Progress Check-In

Today's date: _____

 Month Day Year

The purpose of this questionnaire is to describe the experience of persons involved in the NAZ collaborative initiative. There are no right or wrong answers. The items are based on a review of research about what makes collaboration successful. The results will be used to identify progress of the overall initiative and its main working groups, and to identify potential weaknesses so they can be addressed. **Your answers are confidential** and will be grouped with the answers of others.

1. In column 1 below, please mark **only one box** to indicate which NAZ committee or team you are meeting with today. In the survey below, when a question refers to "your working group," please answer about the group you check here.



	1. This meeting is of: (check one)	2. I <u>also</u> belong to: (check all that apply)
a. Management Team	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
b. Steering Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
c. Neighbors & Parents Coordination Team	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
d. K-12 Education Coordination Team	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
e. Pre-K Education Coordination Team	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
f. Mentoring Coordination Team	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
g. Out of School Time Coordination Team	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
h. Housing Stability Coordination Team	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
i. Resource Development Subcommittee		<input type="checkbox"/> ²
j. Governance & Structure Subcommittee		<input type="checkbox"/> ²
k. Standards & Accountability Subcommittee		<input type="checkbox"/> ²
l. Communications & Outreach Subcommittee		<input type="checkbox"/> ²
m. Other 1 (Specify: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
n. Other 2 (Specify: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²



2. In column 2 above, please indicate **all** the NAZ committees or teams you are currently part of.
3. What community organization do you represent in your work with NAZ? (In the survey below, when a question refers to "your home organization," please answer about the organization you named here.)

In the questions below about "this working group," please answer based on your current experience with the group you checked in Column 1 above (the group you are meeting with today).

4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about this working group and its relationship to your home organization. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. This group's activities are useful.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
b. In its discussions and recommendations, this group considers what it means for participating organizations to implement them.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
c. This group is willing to change its ideas or activities based on feedback from participating organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
d. My home organization is receptive to ideas that come from this group.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
e. I regularly receive input from people in my home organization about service or coordination difficulties that this working group could address.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
f. People in my home organization regularly let me know if they have trouble implementing this group's ideas or recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵

5. What are the one or two most important challenges or barriers you and other members of your home organization have faced in implementing Coordination Team ideas?

6. What are the one or two most important factors that help you and other members of your home organization implement ideas from this working group?

7. For each of the NAZ guiding principles shown below, please rate the **current** functioning of your working group.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. This group does its work such that outcomes for children are clearly more important than outcomes for programs and organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
b. Group members can explain how we have met community and partner expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
c. This group uses research and evaluation to plan and measure progress.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
d. This group is open and honest with participants and other stakeholders regarding how we do our work.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
e. This group has what it takes to stick with the work for the long haul.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
f. This group draws on connections and other resources from both inside and outside the Zone.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
g. This group distributes resources based on the needs of children and families, not the needs of organizations or programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵

8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about this working group. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Agencies in our community have a history of working together.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
b. Others (in this community) who are not part of this working group would generally agree that the organizations involved in the group are the "right" organizations to undertake this work.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
c. The political and social climate seems to be "right" for a collaborative project like this one.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
d. People involved in this working group always trust one another.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
e. My organization will benefit from being involved in this working group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
f. Everyone who is a member of this working group wants this project to succeed.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
g. When this working group makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
h. People in this working group are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
i. People in this working group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
j. There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this working group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
k. This working group is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
l. We are currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this working group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
m. This group makes timely decisions so the project can keep moving forward.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
n. I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in this working group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
o. Communication among the people in this working group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
p. People in this working group have established reasonable goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
q. The people in this working group are dedicated to the idea that we can make this project work.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
r. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this working group seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
s. No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to do.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
t. This working group has adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
u. This working group has adequate "people power" to do what it wants to accomplish.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
v. The people in leadership positions for this working group have good skills for working with other people and organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
w. Conflicts regarding ideas frequently arise in this working group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
x. In this working group, we use our opposing views to understand problems.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
y. I feel that it is safe to take a risk to try new things in this working group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
z. Personality clashes are evident in this working group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
aa. Even when we disagree on this working group, we communicate with respect for each other.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

9. What is working well in this group? (optional)

10. What needs improvement in this working group? (optional)

11. What percent of the members of this group do you feel you work closely with to accomplish the group's tasks?

- 1 0 to 19% 2 20 to 39% 3 40 to 59% 4 60 to 79% 5 80 to 100%

12. For the last questions on this page, please think of the workings of NAZ overall, including all the partners, working groups, steering committee, and managing partners. Based on your experience with the overall initiative at this point, please rate **NAZ as a whole** in terms of each of the following NAZ guiding principles.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. NAZ does its work such that outcomes for children are clearly more important than outcomes for programs and organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
b. NAZ representatives can explain how NAZ has met community and partner expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
c. NAZ uses research and evaluation to plan and measure progress.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
d. NAZ representatives are open and honest with participants and other stakeholders regarding how NAZ does its work.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
e. NAZ has what it takes to stick with the work for the long haul.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
f. NAZ draws on connections and other resources from both inside and outside the Zone.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
g. This group distributes resources based on the needs of children and families, not the needs of organizations or programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

13. What does your home organization hope to gain by being involved in NAZ and this working group?

14. If you have any further comments to add about **NAZ as a whole**, please write them below. (optional)

Those are all our questions. Thank you for your time.

NAZ Opportunity Network Survey

NAZ Opportunity Network Survey

You are invited to participate in a research project that evaluates the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ). This survey takes about 15 minutes to complete. If you do not know the answers to any questions, please consult with the appropriate staff at your organization to answer the questions. If needed, you can exit this survey at any point and return to it later without losing any information you have already entered.

This research will be used to track NAZ's progress and help it become more effective by identifying improvement opportunities. You are invited to participate because you work in an organization that participates in NAZ Connect. Your choice to participate is voluntary and will not affect your relationship with NAZ. There are no risks for participating in this study and there are no direct benefits to participation. Your participation will help NAZ become more effective.

Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential. To analyze the data, we need to know which organization you are affiliated with. However, once you return the survey, a code is assigned to the survey and information that identifies you as an individual is removed, thereby protecting your confidentiality. In any report we publish, we will not include information that will make it possible to identify you or your organization.

The research is a collaborative project between the University of Minnesota and Wilder Research with support from Dr. Lauren Martin, NAZ accountability and evaluation lead. Wilder Research serves as the evaluator for NAZ and will be collecting, analyzing, and reporting the findings in cooperation with researchers from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. If you have any questions about the study please contact Katie Broton, Wilder Research, at 651-280-2678 or kmb3@wilder.org. If you have technical problems with the web survey please contact Dan Swanson at 651-280-2712 or dds@wilder.org.

1. Do you consent to participate in this survey about the NAZ Opportunity Network?

Yes - Continue to survey No - Exit survey

2. Name of organization (please write in the name of the legal or free-standing entity; e.g., Amherst H. Wilder Foundation):

***Please refer to this organization when asked about “your organization”**

3. What is your organization’s mission statement? _____

- Don’t Know The organization does not have a written mission statement

4. Name of the department(s) or part(s) of your organization working with NAZ (e.g., Children & Family Services Division): _____

[If the entire organization is working with NAZ, please write in the name of your entire organization again]

***Please refer to this part when asked about “the part of your organization that works with NAZ”**

5. How many years has your organization been in operation?

- Less than 1 year
 1 to 3 years
 4 to 6 years
 7 to 9 years
 More than 9 years
 Don't know

6. Is your organization... (Indicate Yes or No for each)

Yes No Don't know

- a. An emerging service organization, not fully formed
- b. A community-based organization?
- c. A faith-based organization?
- d. A private, for-profit organization?
- e. A government organization (city, county, state, etc.)?
- f. A university or college?
- g. A school (public, private, charter, alternative, etc.)?

7. Does your organization have...(Indicate Yes or No for each)

Yes No Don't know

- a. Written by-laws?
- b. Articles of incorporation?
- c. 501(c)(3) status?
- d. A fiscal agent?
- e. Written goals that are part of a strategic plan?
- f. A functioning board of directors or a governing body?
- g. A fundraising plan?

IF NO to a-g:
Do you think your organization would be interested in developing or obtaining this in the next year or two?
Yes, No, DK, NA

8. Has your organization...

Yes No Don't know

- a. Filed an IRS 990 form in the past year?
- b. Been audited in the past three years?

9. Approximately, how many staff and volunteers work for or with your organization?

_____ # Don't know

- a. Paid, full time staff
- b. Paid, part time staff
- c. Volunteers
- d. Paid staff with 50% or more of their time devoted to NAZ
- e. Paid staff with less than 50% of their time devoted to NAZ
- f. Volunteers working on NAZ (any part of their time)

10. In your organization, what proportion of your services or activities target...

<10% 10%-25% 26%-50% 51%-75% 76%-90% 91%-100% DK

- a. Individuals
- b. Groups of individuals (such as student groups, not families)
- c. Whole families

11. In your organization, what proportion of your services or activities target...

<10% 10%-25% 26%-50% 51%-75% 76%-90% 91%-100% DK

- a. Children ages 0 to 5
- b. Elementary school-age children
- c. Middle school-age youth
- d. High school-age youth
- e. Adults or Whole Families

12. Organizational characteristics:

(please indicate the following for your organization as a whole)

a. Primary types of service(s) provided [Drop down list of 6 NAZ Service Categories – choose up to 3]

b. Other types of services provided [Drop down list of 6 NAZ Service Categories – choose up to 5]

Please do not click on your primary type of service(s) again

c. Geographic area served _____

e. Approximate number of people served last year (unduplicated) _____ # DK

e. Comments (optional): _____

6 NAZ Service Categories:

- Education
- Social/Emotional
- Health
- Legal/Advocacy
- Housing
- Employment/Finance

13. What is your organization's approximate total annual budget?

(can be rounded to nearest thousand) _____ DK

14. What proportion of your organization's total annual budget comes from the following sources?

Less than 20% 21% to 40% 41% to 60% 61% to 80% 81% or more DK

- a. Federal grants/funding
- b. State grants/funding
- c. Local government (e.g., city, county, school district)
- d. Private foundations (e.g., McKnight, Bush)
- e. Corporate funding or corporate foundations (e.g., General Mills)
- f. Non-profit organizations (e.g., United Way)
- g. Other _____

15. What proportion of your organization's total annual budget is used for NAZ related activities?

- Less than 20%
- 21% to 40%
- 41% to 60%
- 61% to 80%
- 81% or more
- Don't know

16. Approximately what proportion of all of the clients your organization serves are located in the Northside Achievement Zone area? We would appreciate your best estimation (see map of the Northside Achievement Zone area).

- Less than 10%
- 10% to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% or more
- Don't know

17. Approximately how many distinct programs or projects does your organization operate? _____# Don't Know

18. Please list all of your organization's programs or projects that are working with NAZ.

a.
b.
c.
d.
e.
f.
g.
h.
i.
j.

19. Below is a list of the organizations in the NAZ Connect Pilot. Please identify *all* of the ones that your organization works with in NAZ in any way (e.g., joint assessments, planning, funding, coordinating services, or referring clients to each other).

[Programming note: The organizations indicated by R in this Q will be the response options in Q20-24]

20. In the *past month*, which NAZ Connect organizations has your organization worked with to conduct needs assessment for the NAZ clients you serve?

(Choose up to 10; If more than 10, choose the most frequent).

None Don't Know

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Double-click drop down of only the organizations R selected above; Select up to 10

21. In the *past month*, which NAZ Connect organizations has your organization worked with to coordinate NAZ related programs and services?

(Choose up to 10; If more than 10, choose the most frequent).

None Don't Know

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Double-click drop down of only the organizations R selected above; Select up to 10

22. In the *past month*, which NAZ Connect organizations has your organization worked with to develop NAZ related programs and services?

(Choose up to 10; If more than 10, choose the most frequent).

None Don't Know

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Double-click drop down of only the organizations R selected above; Select up to 10

23. In the *past month*, which NAZ Connect organizations has your organization worked with to pursue joint funding for NAZ related activities and programs? (Choose up to 10; If more than 10, choose the most frequent).

None Don't Know

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Double-click drop down of only the organizations R selected above; Select up to 10

24. In the *past month*, which NAZ Connect organizations has your organization referred NAZ clients to for programs and services? (Choose up to 10; If more than 10, choose the most frequent).

None Don't Know

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Double-click drop down of only the organizations R selected above; Select up to 10

25. Does the part of your organization that *works with NAZ* provide early childhood education or K-12 education services?

Yes No  Go to Question 29



26. In the *past year*, which NAZ Connect organizations have your NAZ clients typically worked with to receive education-related services before they received services from your organization?

(e.g., if your organization provides elementary age services, which organization(s) would they have gone to for pre-elementary services)

(Choose up to 10; If more than 10, choose the most frequent).

- Other organizations that are not part of NAZ Connect provide prior education-related services for our NAZ clients
- No organizations provide prior education-related services for our NAZ clients
- Don't Know

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Double-click drop down including only the organizations that provide education-related services

27. In the *past year*, which NAZ Connect organizations have your NAZ clients typically worked with to receive education-related services after they received services from your organization?

(e.g., if your organization provides pre-kindergarten services, which organization(s) do they go to when they move into kindergarten)

(Choose up to 10; If more than 10, choose the most frequent).

- Other organizations that are not part of NAZ Connect provide subsequent education-related services for our NAZ clients
- No organizations provide subsequent education-related services for our NAZ clients
- Don't Know

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Double-click drop down including only the organizations that provide education-related services

28. For what proportion of all NAZ youth (0-18 years old) you serve do you...

<10% 10%-25% 26%-50% 51%-75% 76%-90% 91%-100% DK NA

a. Measure the readiness of incoming youth for your services?

b. Provide feedback about youths' readiness to the organization(s) where they were previously served?

c. Receive feedback about youths' readiness from the organization(s) they go to after yours?

29. How frequently does the part of your organization that works with NAZ...

Every month or more / More than once per year / Once per year / Less than once per year / Never / DK / NA

a. Collect feedback about your services from clients/participants?

b. Collect or receive feedback about your services from other organizations?

c. Provide other organizations with feedback about their services?

d. Review journals or other written materials for improving your services?

e. Observe services in other NAZ Connect organizations?

f. Implement changes planned to improve services in your organization?

g. Evaluate changes planned to improve services in your organization?

h. Work with other NAZ Connect organizations to select changes to improve the NAZ Opportunity Network?

i. Work with other NAZ Connect organizations to implement a planned NAZ Opportunity Network improvement?

j. Work with other NAZ Connect organizations to evaluate a change to improve the NAZ Opportunity Network?

30. Thinking about the part of your organization that works with NAZ, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about NAZ as a whole?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree DK NA

a. NAZ values input from my organization

b. NAZ takes into account my organization's needs in their plans.

c. NAZ provides support and infrastructure to help my organization develop and build capacity.

d. NAZ provides support and infrastructure to help my organization build new relationships with other organizations.

e. NAZ supports my organization in our participation in NAZ Connect

31. Overall, how well do you think NAZ is meeting the needs of youth in the Northside Achievement Zone?

Excellent Good Fair Poor Don't know Too soon to rate

32. Thank you for participating in this survey. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about NAZ?

Network Analysis report

Cradle-to-College: Organizing Networks to Promote Educational Achievement
for Children in Poverty

A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF HEALTH POLICY &
MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA BY

Sarah Henderson

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Douglas R. Wholey, PhD

May 2010

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Abstract

The purpose of this Master's thesis project is to assist the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ), a collaborative of organizations that support children in North Minneapolis, in identifying effective collaborations among the participating organizations. This was achieved by conducting a social network analysis study which is described in this paper.

The goal of this analysis is to assist NAZ in meeting their goal of preparing children for college and life success by helping NAZ management to understand how NAZ organizations coordinate their efforts and relate to the NAZ management structure. A social network analysis provides NAZ management information on areas of strong working relationships between organizations and information on areas for improvement in the overall functioning of the collaboration. The sample consisted of all NAZ organizations enrolled in NAZ Connect, a software program which connects families to resources. NAZ organizations include schools, mental health organizations, faith-based organizations, and after school programs. A representative from each organization was asked to list other organizations in NAZ they worked with in various areas, such as who they refer clients to and who they worked with to conduct needs assessments. The response rate was 86% with 41 of the 47 member agencies of NAZ connect responding to the survey. The principal findings show greater collaboration among schools than among service providers. Service providers may benefit from an intervention to encourage increased collaboration. Another finding is a lack of reciprocated relationships between organizations. When two organizations agree they are both working together, that relationship is reciprocated, and is considered a strong relationship. This network has many unreciprocated weak relationships. Further investigation as to why this is the case may be important for NAZ management. Finally, organizations with five or more programs are most central in NAZ because they have the most relationships with other organizations in NAZ. Therefore, the NAZ coordination team may benefit from working closely with these central organizations in order to stay current on what is happening in the network and to improve the network.

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Introduction

Service delivery organizations within a community often rely upon one another to coordinate services, make referrals, and share information to meet the needs of clients.⁵ The connections among these organizations can have an impact on the effectiveness of the system as a whole.⁵

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ), a community partnership located in Minneapolis, Minnesota focused on improving the lives of children, is an example of where the connections and collaborations between organizations are likely to be instrumental to the success of the partnership. The mission of NAZ is to improve educational outcomes for children in north Minneapolis. This project examines the nature of collaborations among the partnering organizations of NAZ in order to identify opportunities for improvement that may help NAZ achieve its mission.

Mission of NAZ

NAZ is a collaborative, community-based, north Minneapolis partnership of approximately 70 schools and local organizations which seeks to promote educational achievement and life success for all children up to the age of 18. North Minneapolis is a region where crime and violence are prevalent and many children live in poverty. A child growing up in the area has a disproportionately lower opportunity for success than a child living in a more affluent community. The outcome for many children in North Minneapolis is lower academic achievement, limited employment opportunities, and often involvement in criminal activities.¹ The mission of NAZ is to improve the overall physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of children.¹ This mission is directly related to the World Health Organization's definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."² the primary mechanism used by NAZ to reach these goals is aligning community resources to expand opportunities for children. NAZ seeks to move children seamlessly through the system so that by the age of 18 they are prepared for college, instead of following a path to prison.

There are two parts to the NAZ structure; the opportunity network and NAZ management. The opportunity network consists of 47 member organizations involved in NAZ Connect, an online tool which connects families to local resources. Member organizations of NAZ Connect have voluntarily provided information about their organization to meet the needs of families. The opportunity network provides the actual services and programs to children. NAZ management, including a coordinating committee and action teams, provides support and oversight to the member organizations. This research focuses primarily on how the opportunity network coordinates activities to meet the needs of children in order to provide the NAZ management with information on collaboration strengths and opportunities for improvement. The results of the research will allow NAZ management to address issues surrounding NAZ programs and initiatives. Creating and maintaining effective, targeted partnerships and collaborations will enhance the likelihood of NAZ to produce the environments and interventions that improve the lives and health of children in north Minneapolis.

The organizations involved in the NAZ opportunity network fall into two main categories: schools and services providers. The schools include public, private, and charter educational institutions. The service providers include organizations which offer services for children outside of school, such as health services, mentoring programs, and early childhood programs.¹ All members of NAZ are committed to work together to achieve the mission and focus their work to improve outcomes for children.

NAZ organizations are also distinguished as faith-based, government funded, and non-profit/for-profit organizations. Each of these types of organizations has a distinct role in the community. Another important aspect of organizations is the number of programs they provide. An organization which only provides job training to students is more specialized than a multi-program organization. A specialized organization may provide services only to a small group within this community where the multi-program organization may work with a wide range of community members.

A major goal of NAZ is to ensure that children have access to appropriate services and education at each developmental stage. For example, if a child does not receive services at an early developmental stage, he or she may miss an opportunity that may not be possible to obtain at a later developmental stage. Collaboration among organizations with common missions and organizations adjacent to one another on the developmental pipeline for children is key to making sure opportunities are not missed. Inadequate or ineffective collaboration between organizations may increase chances of missed transitions for children. For example, when a child completes an after-school program for their age-group where they were provided with reading and math assistance, but the transition to the next age-group does not occur, the child may fall behind in school if he or she is struggling in one of these subject areas.

The outcome for many at-risk children is to drop out of school because they are not prepared for the academic level of work and experience lower expectations from teachers.¹³ This results in an increased chance they will

become involved in criminal activities, be on public assistance, and have a higher rate of tobacco use.³ While it is clear that targeted collaboration is key to the success of NAZ, it is unknown if this objective has been reached. This research provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how organizations working towards assisting at-risk children can coordinate these efforts successfully.

Successful collaborations between organizations such as schools and other service providers may increase the educational outcomes for children. Education is positively associated with better work and economic conditions, stronger social support systems, healthier lifestyles, and better health outcomes.^{4,5} Effective collaborations will help NAZ impact health disparities, mental health, violence reduction and education through improved opportunities for children. These collaborative efforts will ensure children have access to needed services through improved referrals, while organizations involved in NAZ will be aware of and gain resources through sharing of knowledge.

The success of NAZ is based on collaboration among organizations within the opportunity network yet little is known about how the NAZ opportunity network is organized or how it can be improved. The purpose of this project is to conduct a network analysis to identify and describe the organizational network partnerships and coordination of activities in NAZ. The project will provide a descriptive analysis of the network, including gaps and strengths in the relationships among partner organizations.

Networks and NAZ

NAZ opportunity networks are the organizations and the relationships between them. Organizations involved in NAZ are primarily service providers and schools. How organizations, such as those in the opportunity network, coordinate efforts is likely to affect outcomes of those being provided services, children.⁵ Specific exchanges within the network, such as referrals or sharing of information can be examined to evaluate how effective the organizations in the opportunity network work together to meet the needs of children. This evaluation can help

NAZ management refocus efforts where improvement could benefit the overall effectiveness of the collaboration.⁶

Currently, NAZ management, its coordinating committee, and action teams do not have adequate information about which organizations interact with one another. While NAZ is working to implement various programs to improve the quality of services for children, an overall understanding of how the collaboration functions will assist them in directing efforts to areas identified as needing improvement. A network analysis will be used as a tool to evaluate the functioning of relationships in the NAZ opportunity network so that NAZ management can effectively promote organizational relationships which will lead to improved opportunities and services for children.

The network analysis will examine the structure of the NAZ opportunity network which includes relationships between organization, clusters of similar organizations working together, links between clusters of similar organizations, and central and peripheral organizations. The number of connections between organizations, the type of relationships and the strength of relationships will be assessed. A network analysis will provide a map which measures and illustrates these interactions.⁷

i. Relations between Organizations

organizations are linked through working relationships, referrals, and the flow of information between these organizations. The density of these relationships refers to the number of connections that exist between organizations over the number of possible connections.⁶ A high density of connections means there are many working relationships within the network. A network with many connections, however, is not necessarily ideal. In fact, too many connections within NAZ can result in entities which are overwhelmed by the effort of working with too many groups.¹⁰ Thus, focusing on specific connections among groups with similar functions and missions and specific areas where collaboration is needed for success are the focus for improvement.

The strength of relationships among NAZ organizations is also important. A strong relationship would be one where two organizations have multiple connections, such as similar mission, referral of clients, and collaboration on projects. Relationship strength between organizations in NAZ can also be examined through one-way or reciprocated relationships. A one way relationship is one in which an organization expresses a relationship with another, but the relationship is not reciprocated. In the case of a referral, this may not be an issue. It would make sense for a school to refer a child to family services, but not necessarily for family services to refer a child to a school. If one organization claims to work on projects with another group, but the other group does not claim the same, it indicates there may be a problem. If the relationship is confirmed between the two organizations, it is a reciprocal relationship.

ii. Clusters of Similar Organizations Working Together

In a network the type of relationships among organizations is also important for understanding the functioning of NAZ. The type of relationship can be analyzed in terms of where one would expect to find relationships in the network and where relationships actually exist.⁶ It would be beneficial for groups with similar missions, such as schools, to coordinate efforts because they would be able to share information and coordinate education

plans. This grouping of similar organizations within the network is indicative of how effectively the network is functioning.

A weak network exists when similar organizations do not work closely with one another. There may be a group of family services organizations which have very similar missions, but do not work with one another on projects or refer clients to one another. This weak network relationship could occur for a number of reasons. First, organizations may be so involved in their own goals they are not aware of other groups doing similar work. Second, there may be groups which compete for funding but do not trust one another.

iii. Links Between Clusters of Similar Organizations

The patterns of relationships within a network have an impact the overall outcome of the network.⁹ the manner in which clusters of organizations in NAZ are connected to one another in the opportunity network will impact how information and resources are shared, and will thus impact the productivity of the network as a whole. A strong network is one where groups of similar organizations are clustered together, and are connected to clusters of other types of organizations. For example, a group of early childhood education organizations working closely with one another should be connected through central organizations to a cluster of elementary schools. This ensures that when children move from early childhood to elementary school there is a connection to facilitate this critical transition.

For areas where the transfer of information is crucial there should be more than one connection from the source of information to the rest of the network. Otherwise, information is blocked because of the lack of sufficient connections between groups in the network. For example, a group of mental health organizations should be strongly working together and should be connected to schools so they are able to effectively reach populations of children in need of services. The problem NAZ would face if this connection does not exist is that a school may need to refer a child for mental health services but not have the information to access those services in the

area. Too few connections between schools and mental health services may harm the overall functioning of the network because without it, children would not receive needed services. Once weaknesses within NAZ are identified, strategies can be used to bridge gaps and identify where improved cohesiveness could impact the effectiveness of the network.

iv. Central and Peripheral Organizations

An organization with many strong ties to other organizations is important to the success of the network as a whole. The centrality of the network is examined by identifying organizations which are strongly connected to other organizations and are located in a central position in the network. A library with programs for children may have many relationships with the schools, mental health providers, and family service organizations within NAZ and would therefore be considered essential for the overall functioning of the network. For this scenario, NAZ management may decide that too much dependence has been placed on this one central organization for resources, and thereby work towards creating additional ties between all the organizations. An alternate option would be for NAZ to decide to focus efforts on maintaining the role of the library as the central connector and work closely with the library to promote the NAZ mission.

The position of an organization in a network is important, for example if an organization with significant resources is on the outskirts of the network, with few or no connections, it is peripheral. It may be important to gain an understanding of why this is the case. NAZ might benefit by choosing to focus on bringing that entity into a more central position within the system depending. A faith-based organization may have many resources for children, but may not trust the other organization partners within NAZ which have different belief systems. This is a situation where the faith-based organization could potentially become more involved if they had the opportunity to learn more about the other organizations and how working with other groups could help them to fulfill their mission.

In summary, the analysis will allow NAZ management to understand the relationships between involved organizations in order to identify strengths and weaknesses so efforts can be focused on areas which will assist NAZ in successfully meeting the needs of children.

For this project there are six specific objectives:

1. Describe the organizations in NAZ
2. Examine the density and strength of relationships between organizations in NAZ
3. Identify clusters of organizations working closely with one another.
4. Examine how clusters of organizations are linked together
5. Identify organizations which are weakly linked to the network which may useful to integrate into the network.
6. Identify central organizations that may be useful to partner with to develop NAZ

Methods:

A social network analysis was conducted to assist NAZ in identifying areas of improvement and allow them to understand the working relationships between involved organizations. The network was implemented using a retrospective survey design to identify and examine NAZ networks. The analysis is descriptive and qualitative in nature, primarily using visual inspection of network graphs. The analysis of survey data involves identifying and describing the networks, and evaluating the connections within the opportunity network. Other variables, such as missions and activities of organizations are included in the analysis where relevant.

An online survey was used to study the opportunity network. Wilder Research administered and provided the data from the survey on organizational characteristics and relationships between participating organizations that provide services to children. NAZ also provided assistance in collecting data for this research. The key informants for this network were chosen based on participation in NAZ Connect and includes 47 organizations.

A representative from each organization was asked to answer and submit the survey questions. The response rate was 86% with 41 of the 47 organizations in the opportunity network responding to the survey.

The opportunity network survey includes questions to describe the organizations involved in NAZ such as services offered, funding sources, and mission goals. The majority of the questions focus on collaborations and involvement with NAZ. The expectation is that there will be stronger ties among organizations with similar agency missions, programs and from one developmental level to the next. The reasoning for this is that similar groups, such as mental health organizations would benefit by sharing knowledge and resources.

For the survey, the person responding to the questions was anonymous. The names of the organizations were coded with non-identifiable descriptors to avoid identifying particular organizations.

There are three steps in conducting the network analysis of NAZ. The first step is to determine who is in the network. For NAZ, this is a closed group of organizations which includes 47 NAZ Connect members. The second step is to conduct a survey using questionnaires. The questions in the survey are specific to the relationships being measured in the NAZ network. For example the following question identifies which organizations work with one another: “Which NAZ organizations do you most frequently work with to develop NAZ related programs and services (list up to 10 with the ones you work with most frequently listed first)(see appendix A). At this stage it is useful to determine how the network would be structured for optimal performance which can then be compared to the results of the analysis. Finally, the data is imported into a software program (UCINET 6) to generate a detailed map of the network.⁶

When analyzing the network, specific roles of the organizations are first identified. The role of the organization refers to the type of work performed by that organization. Then, relationships between the organizations are

assessed. Relationships can be classified by type, strength and the direction of the relationship. The type of relationships will mainly involve working relationships between organizations.

Relational strength is measured in three ways. First, there are seven types of relationships measured; program development, coordination of programs, referrals, needs assessment, and joint funding. These types of relationships were chosen because they measure the relational strength between organizations in areas impacting the overall functioning of NAZ.

Second, relational strength is also measured by whether a pair of organizations has more than one kind of relationships, for example an organization which works with another organization only for assessment, would not have as strong a relationship as one where they work with one another for assessment and program coordination.

Finally, relational strength is evaluated in terms of whether relationships are reciprocated. This means that when an organization says it work with another organization, such as conducting assessments, the other organizations says it works with the first organization in the same way.

The opportunity network is compared to what the network was expected to look like by a visual inspection of the diagram that represents the network. This allows for identification of problems as well as affirmation of where the network is working well.⁸ The expectation is that similar organizations will be grouped together within the network and the various groups are connected to one another for optimal performance of the collaboration. The central and peripheral organizations are also examined in order to ensure central organizations are involved in NAZ activities and to determine if it would benefit the network to integrate peripheral organizations to a more central role. This process will allow interventions to be focused on areas most in need of improvement.

Analysis Plan

Once the data was collected for the opportunity network, it was imported into the UCINET 6 computer software program and processed in order to create a visual map of each network. There is one network which represents all the relationships included in the survey, as well as a separate network for each type of relationship. For example, there is a separate network map for referrals, coordination of programs, and needs assessments. An analysis of the relationships in the network maps was conducted visually to assess where there are strong and weak ties among participating organizations.

Results

Figures 1 – 6 show the relations among opportunity network members, such as referrals, and are used to analyze the networks. I will first describe how to interpret and give an overview of key findings from all the connections between the organizations through this network map. This will be followed with the figures with key findings for NAZ.

Each organization is depicted as a shape, which indicates if it is a non-profit or for-profit, faith-based, or government funded. One reason for these categories is to examine if there are groupings based on these functions. A non-profit or a for-profit organization is important to distinguish because these organizations provide services mainly outside of school programs, and tend to offer more specialized services. Faith-based organizations are often a mechanism for referrals into other programs, since families may turn to these organizations for assistance based on trust or familiarity with the organization. Finally, government funded organizations are intended to meet the needs of the community such as libraries and education. These groups would ideally be located in the center of the network since they work with many people in the community and generally offer multiple services to children.

Each organization is connected by a line which indicates a relationship between the two organizations. At the end of the line is an arrow for the direction of the relationship. If the relationship is only in one direction, the

line is black. If the relationship is reciprocated, meaning there is an arrow going in both directions, the line is labeled red. Reciprocated relationships are strong because both organizations agree. In the figures 1 -6 there are less reciprocated relationships than one-way relationships which may be an area for NAZ management to further investigate to understand why.

Each organization in the network is also distinguished by color which represents the number of programs the organization manages. An organization with one or two programs offers more specialized services than an organization which offers many programs. It is important to make a distinction between the number of programs because the organizations offering the most programs, labeled in blue and red, are more centrally located in the network than organizations with five or less programs, labeled in purple and black. Many of the organizations are labeled yellow, which means the number of programs for that organization was not self-reported in the survey. One implication for a very specialized program, such as housing and development, is that there may not be a need for these groups to be connected to many others in order to function optimally. This is most likely the case for the housing and development organizations in the network. As noted in the left portion of figure I, these organizations are connected to one another, as well as to the more central groups. As long as clients are able to access these services through connections in the network, it is not likely that an intervention to bring them into a more central role would improve opportunities for NAZ clients.

Organizations in the network are labeled based on the types of services they provide. This label is located to the right of the shape of the organization it represents with a number to distinguish each as unique. The organization names are not included in order to avoid alienating organizations which may not be located where they would want to be. There were two organizations which self-identified as being in more than one category, and are labeled with both. For example, ECpre/EC offers both early childhood education and early childhood programs and School/OST is a school and also offers out of school time programs. It is not likely that these dual labels will allow for identification of the specific organization. Early childhood education is differentiated

from early childhood programs, and includes organizations such as daycare centers and organizations serving as a school for children during the weekdays. Early childhood programs offer other types of services to children which are not provided on a daily basis.

Organizations in figures 1-6 are formatted so organizations with similar relationships are grouped close to one another. As an example, in figure 1 the mentoring organizations in the bottom right are located close to each other and they are each connected to one another. The size of the shape is larger for organizations which lie between many others and connect groups of organizations and individual organizations.⁶ These central organizations are the key actors in the overall functioning of the network. For example, in figure 1 the organization labeled 'Health' is depicted as a large red circle and has many relationships which connect various groupings within the network. Many of the other organizations in the network work with 'Health' on various levels which means 'Health' is likely an important resource. NAZ management will benefit from identifying these central leaders in order to work closely with them on promoting NAZ initiatives and staying up-to-date on events taking place in network.

All Relations

Figure 1 depicts a network of all the relationships that were measured in the survey. This includes assessment, coordination, program co-development, co-funding, and referrals. Figures 2-6 depict each individual relationship.

Table 1 refers to the density of ties for all relations comparing schools to non-schools. These are the two main types of organizations in NAZ, and schools have a lower density of relationships at .165 with other schools than the density of relationships among non-schools which is .322. It is especially important for schools to coordinate with each to ensure children are receiving the education needed at each developmental level. This is an area where NAZ may work towards developing more relationships between schools.

Table 1. Density of Ties between Schools and Non-Schools for All Relations

	Schools	Non-Schools
Schools	.165	.2
Non-Schools	.097	.322

An interesting aspect of figure 1 is how similar types of organizations are clustered together. There is a group of mental health organizations working together in the bottom right of the network and a group of development and housing networks clustered in the upper left. These groupings are beneficial to the functioning of NAZ because these specialized groups will benefit from strong relationships with one another such as planning programs together and referring clients to one another. There is one development and housing organization labeled ‘DH2,’ located on the bottom center of the network, which is not connected to the other development and housing organizations. It may be helpful to this separate development and housing organization to have a connection with one or two of the others with this same specialized service to share information and refer clients. The cluster of development and housing organizations may also benefit from a relationship for the same reason and also because ‘DH2’ has a connection which is far removed from the cluster.

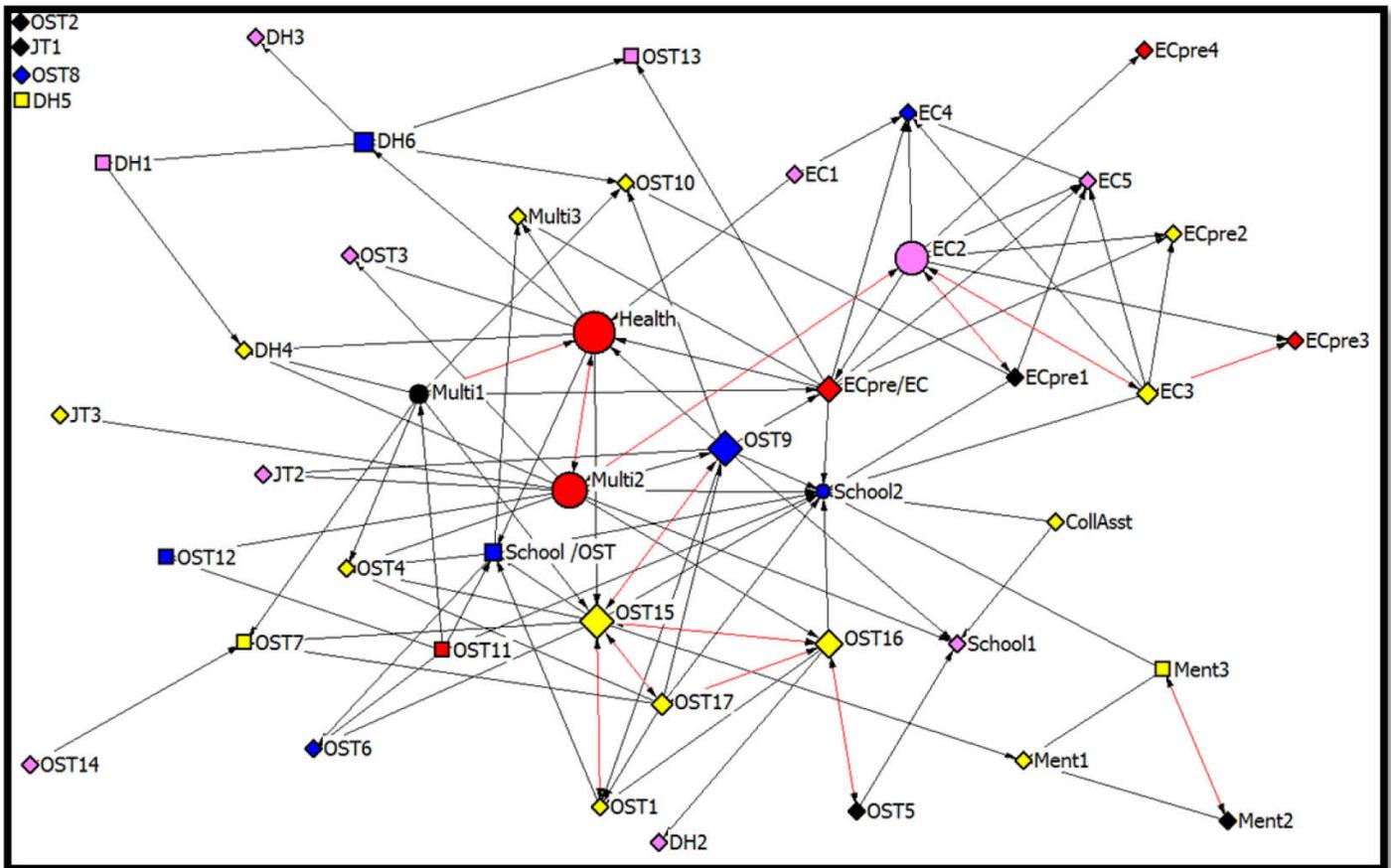
There are two other large clusters of organizations in the network which includes early childhood education and programs, and out of school time programs. The early childhood grouping is located in the upper right corner of the network. There are two organizations which have only one connection to this group; ‘EC1’ and ‘ECpre4.’ This grouping would be stronger if these two organizations developed more ties to the others. A strong group of similar organizations benefits from sharing information and resources with one another since they are all working towards similar goals. One organization to focus on in this grouping is ‘EC2’ which is the most connected in this particular group. NAZ management may benefit from working closely with this organization in areas regarding early childhood issues. Although ‘EC2’ a key player in this group, it has only one connection to another organization outside of the group, which is multi-program organization. It is important for the early childhood groups to work with schools in order to prepare children at an early age for the next level of education. Therefore, an effort to link this organization to one or more schools would promote the

NAZ mission in preparing children for college. Another important organization in this grouping is 'ECpre/EC' because of its many connections within the group as well as several other connections in the network, including a school. While increased relationships for this organization may overburden the already very connected 'ECpre/EC,' NAZ management could learn from this organization how they are able to work with so many others in order to promote similar relationships.

The other large grouping includes out of school time organizations located in the lower portion of the network. A portion of this group is very strongly connected because of the reciprocated relationships that exist there. This grouping is a good example of how the network is working well because all but one organization in this group has at two or more connections with other out of school time programs. There are also many connections between several of organizations in this group and other groups within the network as a whole. The one improvement would be to increase the connections between 'OST14' and the rest of the group. Otherwise, it appears that this grouping would benefit from sharing information and resources which will increase the value of each program. Through the many connections to other kinds of organizations, children are likely to benefit through access to these programs.

Figure 1 depicts many relationships between the organizations overall, indicating a strong network. However, there are less reciprocated relationships than one-way relationships which is an area for improvement. There are several clusters of similar organizations, which is a strength in the network, however, there are areas where targeted connections between groups could benefit the overall functionality. There are a few peripheral organizations, such as ECpre4, which would benefit from additional connections to similar types of organizations. ECpre4 could gain from developing relationships with other early childhood programs and schools. Finally, central organizations such as Health, EC2, and Multi2, are identified as key organizations in the network. NAZ may work to ensure these organizations are involved in promoting NAZ missions.

Figure 1: All Relationships between NAZ Organizations¹²



Organization Type by Shape

- Government Funded
- Faith-Based
- Non-Profit / For-Profit

Number of Programs by Color

- Black** 1-2
- Purple** 3-5
- Blue** 5-9
- Red** 10+
- Yellow** Unknown

Organization Labels

- School: *School*
- Early Childhood Education: *ECpre*
- Early Childhood Program: *EC*
- Multi-Program Organization: *Multi*
- Out of School Time: *OST*
- Job Training: *JT*
- Mentoring: *MENT*
- Development & Housing: *DH*

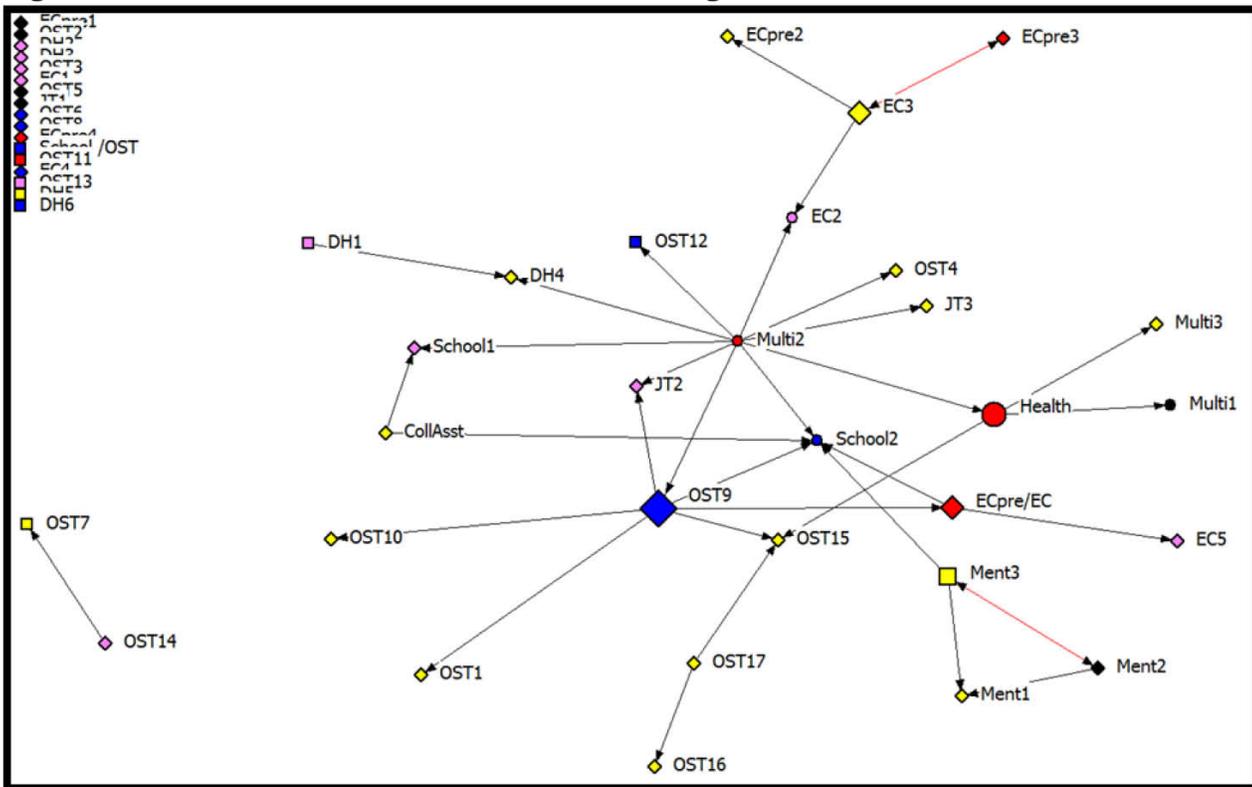
Needs Assessment

Figure 2 depicts the needs assessment coordination. This is an area where agreement of the relationship is especially important. One of the key factors for NAZ to succeed in meeting their goals is ensuring involved organizations are coordinating efforts. In order coordinate efforts, it is important for organizations to have a shared understanding of community needs which need to be met. When organizataions have a shared vision of what they are working towards, they will be more capable of working together to successfully meet shared goals.

There are very few reciprocal relationships in the needs assessment network. The two organizations with reciprocal relationships are an example of where the network is working well. The relationships between ECpre3 and EC3 show there is a strong working relationship between an early childhood program and an early childhood school. This is very positive because the two organizations are able to assess needs for a specific group of children they are focused on (very young children). The organizations Ment2 and Ment3 are both working towards mentoring programs. They will benefit from this strong relationship because of the similarity of activities they conduct. Therefore, the area of needs assessment could be greatly improved by ensuring there are stronger ties between organizations sharing similar activities and goals.

The needs assessment network would benefit from increased relationships, and particularly reciprocated relationships. There are small clusters of two or three similar types of organizations, which is weak in comparison to the strong clustering found in Figure 1. There are also less connections between clusters of similar organizations. There are many peripheral organizations in the network which could benefit from further integration. Finally, the two most central organizations are OST9 and Health.

Figure 2: Needs Assessment Conducted Between Organizations¹²



Organization Type by Shape

- Government Funded
- Faith-Based
- ◆ Non-Profit / For-Profit

Number of Programs by Color

- Black 1-2
- Purple 3-5
- Blue 5-9
- Red 10+
- Yellow Unknown

Organization Labels

- School: *School*
- Early Childhood Education: *ECpre*
- Early Childhood Program: *EC*
- Multi-Program Organization: *Multi*
- Out of School Time: *OST*
- Job Training: *JT*
- Mentoring: *MENT*
- Development & Housing: *DH*

Program Coordination

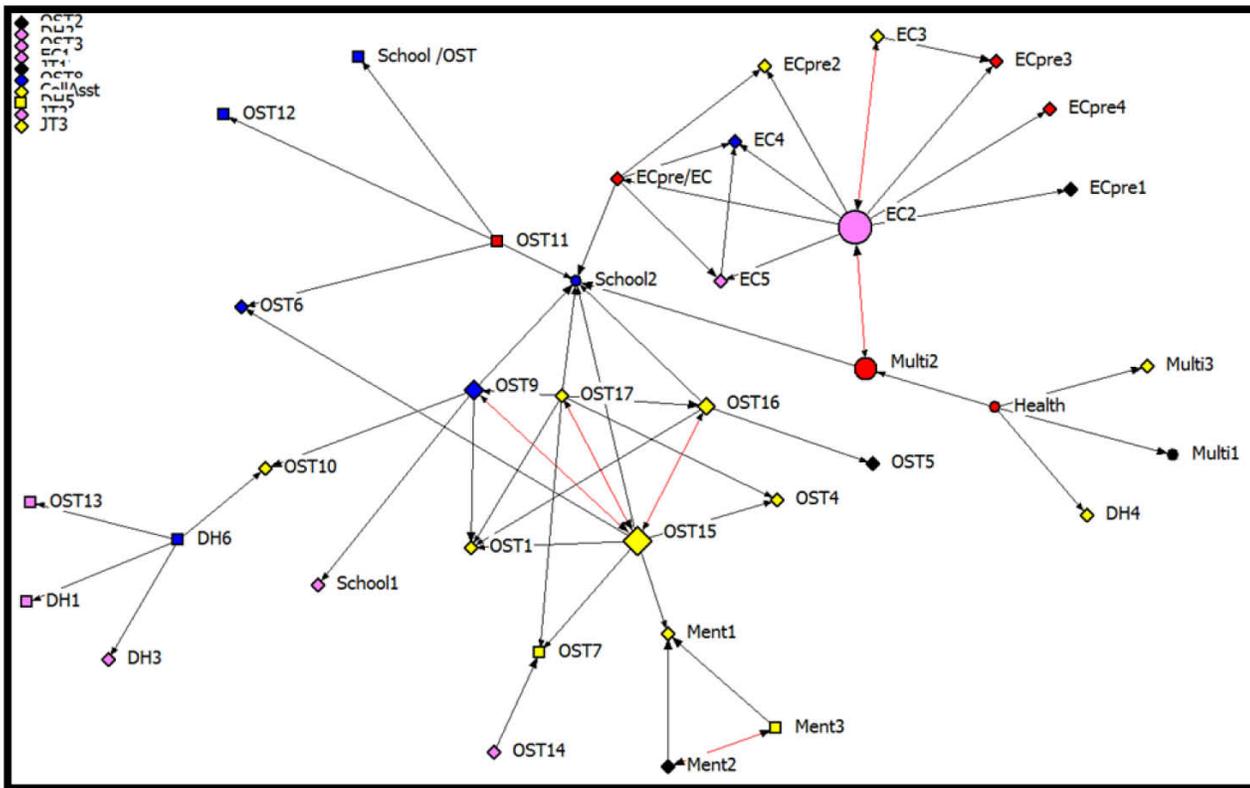
Figure 3 depicts the coordination of programs between organizations. There are several groupings of similar organizations working to coordinate programs. This is a very positive outcome, since organizations with similar goals will be more likely to meet the needs of children if they are combining resources and knowledge. On the upper right of the network, is a grouping of early childhood related organizations. The organization most central to this group, and likely very influential to the success of programs aimed towards helping young children is EC2. It would be useful if some of the early childhood organizations with very few connections developed stronger and more connections between the other early childhood organizations. It may also be useful to have another organization in the center of this group so EC2 does not become overburdened by too many relationships. Finally, there are only two connections from this grouping to other areas of the network. It would be particularly important for there to be connections from the early childhood schools to schools the children will attend when they move into kindergarten. This would allow the early childhood schools to understand how to best prepare children for the next level of education.

In the center of this network are the out of school time programs, which show they are working closely with one another overall. There is one school (School2) which has several relationships with out of school time programs. However, it would be useful if School2 reciprocated these relationships, because all the arrows are pointing to the school and it appears the school does not perceive itself as coordinating programs with any other organizations. There are also a few out of school time programs and schools which are not part of this central grouping. It would be beneficial for these organizations to increase relationships with organizations performing similar functions, particularly schools.

The program coordination network is strong in the area of relationship density, but could still improve from more reciprocated relationships. There is a distinct clustering of similar organizations for early childhood programs and schools, mentoring, and out of school time programs which is a strength of this network.

However, schools are not clustered with one another, and could benefit from coordinating programs together. The out of school time grouping appears to be linked to the most groupings, the early child childhood grouping and mentoring groupings could benefit from additional relationships to other types of organizations. Several organizations are on the periphery, including two schools which should be integrated to a more central location in the network. The two most central organizations in this network are OST15 and EC2.

Figure 3: Coordination of Programs between Organizations¹²



<u>Organization Type by Shape</u>	<u>Number of Programs by Color</u>	<u>Organization Labels</u>
● Government Funded	Black 1-2	School: <i>School</i>
■ Faith-Based	Purple 3-5	Early Childhood Education: <i>ECpre</i>
◆ Non-Profit / For-Profit	Blue 5-9	Early Childhood Program: <i>EC</i>
	Red 10+	Multi-Program Organization: <i>Multi</i>
	Yellow Unknown	Out of School Time: <i>OST</i>
		Job Training: <i>JT</i>
		Mentoring: <i>MENT</i>
		Development & Housing: <i>DH</i>

Program Co-Development

Figure 4 depicts development of NAZ related programs and services between organizations. This is similar to the previous figure focused on coordination of programs. This figure show specific relationships related to NAZ programs. One area of concern is that the group of mentoring programs on the right is not connected to the network. While it is good they are working on NAZ related programs with each other, they could have a stronger impact on children in the community if they work with schools and out of school programs to ensure children who may benefit from a mentoring program are able to access their services.

This network is a good indicator for NAZ management of how involved and committed member organizations are in working together to meet NAZ goals. There are areas where more connections and stronger relationships will be useful, however, it is clear that many organizations in the network are involved in coordinating NAZ related programs, which is very promising to the success of NAZ.

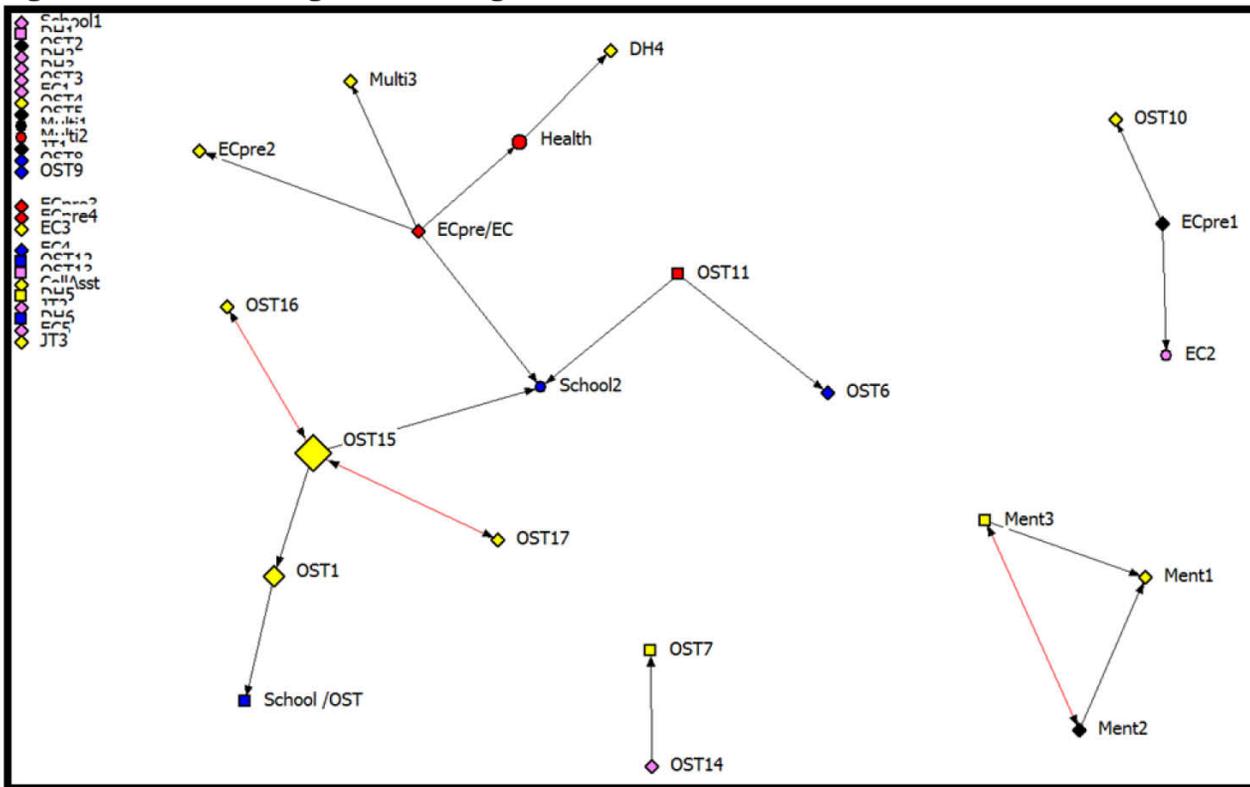
There are many relationships in the program co-development network, but still few reciprocated relationships. Clusters of similar organizations working together are a strength of this network. The links between clusters is a concern, particularly for the mentoring programs which are completely removed from the rest of the network. There are a few peripheral organizations to consider integrating into the network, and the most central organizations are OST9 and Health.

Co-Funding

Figure 5 depicts joint-funding efforts. This is another example of an area where there should be many reciprocated relationships because if there is joint funding, both organizations involved in this joint funding should be in agreement. Any relationship which is only in uni-directional would be an area of concern for NAZ management to further investigate. It would also be up to NAZ management to determine if their mission would benefit from further ties related to joint funding or not. When organizations share a funding source, this could lead to heightened competition between the two organizations, and could limit the amount of coordination they are willing to be involved in.

Overall, joint funding is the weakest network in NAZ. There is a low density of ties overall in the joint funding network, with few reciprocated ties. Another concern is that this network is very fragmented. There are several groupings such as the mentoring programs and out of school time programs which are not connected to any other part of the network. In addition, there are several outliers in this already fragmented network. The most central organizations is OST15, and this may be a key organization for NAZ to work with to further integrate this network.

Figure 5: Joint Funding between Organizations¹²



Organization Type by Shape

- Government Funded
- Faith-Based
- ◆ Non-Profit / For-Profit

Number of Programs by Color

- Black 1-2
- Purple 3-5
- Blue 5-9
- Red 10+
- Yellow Unknown

Organization Labels

- School: *School*
- Early Childhood Education: *ECpre*
- Early Childhood Program: *EC*
- Multi-Program Organization: *Multi*
- Out of School Time: *OST*
- Job Training: *JT*
- Mentoring: *MENT*
- Development & Housing: *DH*

Client Referrals

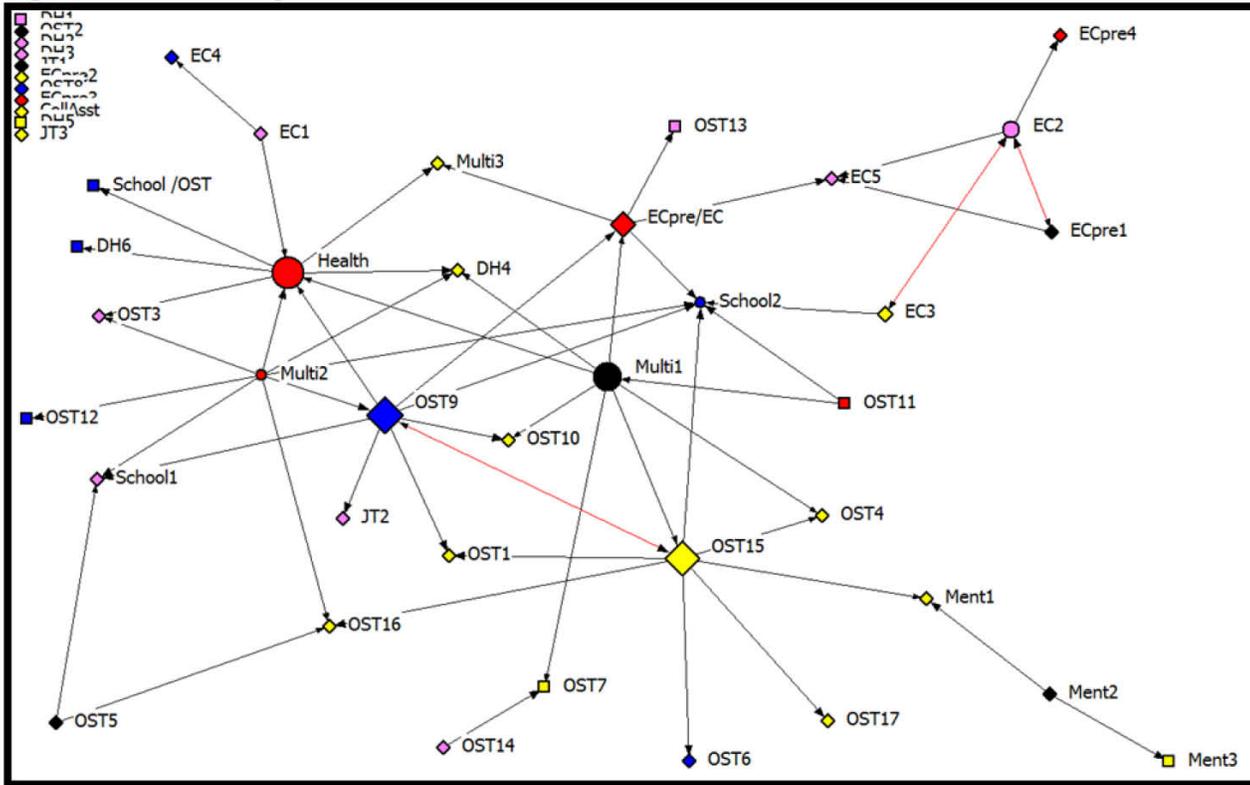
Figure 6 shows where organizations in NAZ refer clients. This is an area where it may not be essential for the relationships to be reciprocated in order for the network to meet the needs of children. For example, if a child is referred from a school to a mentoring program, it is not necessary for the mentoring program to refer the child back to the school where they are already attending. For this network, referrals between organizations with similar missions are important. It is also useful to examine specific kinds of organizations, such as schools. Schools are where children spend most of their time, and people working in schools would be expected to have a very good idea of the needs of attending children. Therefore, they would be expected to make many referrals to children for additional services outside of schools, such as out of school time programs and health services. In this particular network, the amount of referrals given by schools is very limited.

There are four central organizations in this network; Health, OST9, Multi1 and OST15. Health and OST9 have equal amounts of referrals they make and organizations making referrals to them. This indicates that these are the two most actively involved organizations in the area of referrals. They are both actively accepting clients who are referred to them, and referring them on for further services. These are key organizations for NAZ management to work with for coordinating programs and involving these organizations in the NAZ management structure. The other two central organizations; Multi1 and OST15 primarily refer clients to other organizations. This is important to note, because this may be where families go for help when seeking services for their children. NAZ management may also want to include them in management activities.

There is a high density of relationships in the referral network, but few reciprocated relationships which may not be as critical for referrals as other types of relationships. There are groupings of similar types of organizations such as early childhood programs and out of school time organizations, this is a strength in this network. There could be some improvement in connections between groups of organizations, for example,

increasing connections with the mentoring group. There are four central organizations in this network, including Health, which is very positive for ensuring children receive needed health services.

Figure 6: Where Organizations Refer Clients¹²



<u>Organization Type by Shape</u>	<u>Number of Programs by Color</u>	<u>Organization Labels</u>
● Government Funded	Black 1-2	School: <i>School</i>
■ Faith-Based	Purple 3-5	Early Childhood Education: <i>ECpre</i>
◆ Non-Profit / For-Profit	Blue 5-9	Early Childhood Program: <i>EC</i>
	Red 10+	Multi-Program Organization: <i>Multi</i>
	Yellow Unknown	Out of School Time: <i>OST</i>
		Job Training: <i>JT</i>
		Mentoring: <i>MENT</i>
		Development & Housing: <i>DH</i>

Conclusions

The results of this study will be used by NAZ management to focus efforts on maintaining existing relationships, closing gaps, and developing partnerships in order to optimize opportunities for children. While there are several recommendations on where improvements can be made to optimize the effectiveness of the collaboration, NAZ management will need to determine how to go about these efforts, and which areas are most important for them to succeed in meeting their goals.

The most striking component of the analysis was how few relationships between organizations are reciprocated. For most of the types of relationships examined, it is beneficial for there to be agreement on the relationship. When a relationship is confirmed by both parties, it is a strong relationship. Without this agreement, it is questionable if the truth has been told about the relationship or if there is miscommunication between two organizations where there is only a one-direction relationship. NAZ management would benefit from further investigation into the cause of such few reciprocated relationships. Understanding the cause will enable NAZ management to work to improve this aspect of the network.

Organizations coordinating programs with one another should also conduct a needs assessment to ensure they are in agreement on the goals they are working to meet. NAZ management may benefit by working to promote schools to coordinate with out of school services in order to maximize opportunities for children.

A limitation in this study is that while a broad picture of how organizations work together in NAZ will assist the collaboration in making improvements, it does not address the issue of program efficacy at the individual organization level. This is an area which is important for NAZ because examining how each organization contributes to the collaboration and how they assist children in North Minneapolis will impact the success of children in North Minneapolis. This was not addressed because it is beyond the scope of this study.

The results of this study will allow NAZ management to understand how organizations in the opportunity network relate to one another. NAZ can determine where to focus interventions based on recommendations and where they believe the collaboration could benefit the most. An effective network will enable NAZ to reach its goal of improving childrens' lives and increasing opportunities for children.

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Appendix A – Opportunity Network Survey Questions

Appendix B – Coordination Team Network Survey Question