

## Mission

NAZA is a nationally-recognized system of free, high-quality afterschool programs that provide academic support and new creative outlets for Metro Nashville Public Schools' middle school students (grades five to eight) at safe and convenient locations, both at school and in the community. NAZA reaches middle school students who cannot access other afterschool programs due to cost or transportation issues. The system is organized around five geographic zones that encompass Davidson County.

Through NAZA's system of coordinated providers, students are given structure in an open and safe environment that provides encouragement, a sense of accomplishment, and access to new and exciting opportunities.

## A Systems Approach

NAZA acts as an expanded learning system. Afterschool providers have moved from running ad hoc programs of varying quality to building a lasting community-wide effort to help students succeed in school—and be ready for college and career. NAZA unites providers and other stakeholders around shared principles. It coordinates and maximizes resources, and drives improvement throughout the community. Its charge is to:

- Increase access by targeting resources to where they are most needed.
- Drive improved student outcomes by coordinating expanded learning with in-school learning and provide training and professional development. Our **data partnership** with MNPS allows us to tailor instruction to meet individual student needs.
- Improve efficiencies through coordinated scheduling, marketing, transportation, and resource-sharing that eliminate duplication so dollars stretch further and more students can participate.
- Promote continuous improvement by collecting data about program effectiveness and holding programs accountable for quality and results.

NAZA is funded largely by Metro Government, with support from local and national private entities, such as The Wallace Foundation. Both Metro Schools and the afterschool providers contribute substantial resources in-kind. Through this systems approach, \$1,300 can engage a young person in high-quality and appealing afterschool programs for the school year.

## History

Mayor Karl Dean launched NAZA in 2010 to provide an *afterschool system* for middle school youth as part of a strategy to increase the high school graduation rate. After extensive benchmarking with national organizations and other cities, the NAZA Leadership Council adopted a **charter, framework and structure**.

This came in response to a key recommendation of the *Project for Student Success* the previous year. Its findings in part: “The city is sorely lacking in programs and opportunities for middle and high school students in particular. Existing programs may not match the needs of youth in high-risk neighborhoods for accessible locations, targeted social and educational interventions, and hours of operation.”

The need for NAZA is evident when measured against the following statistics:

- Risk of youth crime and child victimization increases between 3 and 7 p.m.
- Only about 10 percent of 20,000 MNPS middle school students participate in structured afterschool programming, and most of that is fee-based (15,000 of those students live in low-income households).
- The school day accounts for only about 20 percent of children's waking hours

- Research shows that students who participate in quality afterschool programs are more likely to graduate.
- Students who drop out are eight times more likely to go to prison, are not eligible for 90 percent of new jobs and earn less than half as much as college grads.
- Students can't participate in afterschool sports teams until sixth grade. The “early warning indicators” of high school drop-out (school attendance, school behavior and course completion ) fall steadily during the middle school years in Metro.

NAZA has expanded by an additional afterzone every year since 2010, until its fifth Zone made the network virtually county-wide in 2014 . In 2011 the [Wallace Foundation](#) selected NAZA for its Next Generation Afterschool Systems Building Initiative. In 2012 NAZA was invited to join the national collaborative [Every Hour Counts](#).

Although incubated in the Mayor's Office, NAZA transitioned to a permanent home within Community Engagement at Nashville Public Library in mid-2014. The story of this transition was summarized in a case study, [This is NAZA](#), with support from The Wallace Foundation.

## OUR TEAM

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