



**Education  
Partnerships  
Coalition**  
*Minnesota*

# 2021 REPORT

**Austin Aspires - Austin**

**Cradle 2 Career - Rochester**

**Every Hand Joined - Red Wing**

**Generation Next - Twin Cities**

**Northfield Promise - Northfield**

**Northside Achievement Zone - Minneapolis**

**Park Partnership for Success - Saint Louis Park**

**Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood - Saint Paul**

**United Way of Central Minnesota- Saint Cloud Area**



# About The Education Partnerships Coalition

*The Education Partnerships Coalition (EPC) engages more than 120,000 youth and their families across Minnesota.*

Coalition members take a birth-to-career approach to eliminating Minnesota's worst-in-the-nation opportunity gaps. All Coalition members are locally-controlled, data-driven public-private partnerships. This collective impact focus brings communities together to enact solutions that improve outcomes for children and families. Additionally, all EPC members are affiliated with either the Promise Neighborhood Institute or StriveTogether, the leading national collective impact networks.

## Vision Statement

Our children succeed in school and in life.  
Our communities thrive.  
Our state is equitable and prosperous for ALL.

## Mission Statement

The Education Partnerships Coalition is uniting Minnesota cradle-to-career community initiatives to ensure all children and youth succeed.

## Education Partnerships Fund | Aligning Efforts. Multiplying Impact.

Establishing a statewide network of comprehensive educational partnerships that emphasize local solutions and results-based accountability to close the opportunity gap



# Serving Families During Unprecedented Hardships

In previous annual reports, we have shared data on how we are closing Minnesota's worst-in-the-nation opportunity gaps. We have provided information on how we are enabling two generations of Minnesotans to thrive by providing wraparound support services.

Like last year, this report looks different. We have continued to focus on meeting the immediate needs of our communities in the midst of a myriad of crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and racial injustice. The challenges of the last few years have only exacerbated Minnesota's educational inequities and highlighted the State's vast racial disparities. We have continued to step up in new ways to help our families through these difficult times.

In addition to meeting the urgent needs of our families, we have continued to partner with each other and share best practices on how collective impact organizations across the state can effectively serve their communities. Moreover, we have deepened our commitment to supporting parents and core caregivers in building their advocacy skills. In 2021, the Coalition launched the "No Data About Us Without Us" Fellowship. EPC members selected 26 parents and core caregivers who have demonstrated leadership in advocacy to participate in this intensive skill-building exercise. This fellowship is made possible by funding from the McKnight Foundation and StriveTogether.

As our families continue to struggle, we seek to expand our partnerships with government, businesses, and nonprofits to continue helping impacted children and parents.

**We invite you to join us in the critically important work of eliminating Minnesota's opportunity gaps and ensuring all families have the ability to succeed.**

*To discuss how we can collaborate, please contact:  
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THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

StriveTogether



## About Austin Aspires

Austin Aspires is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that launched in 2014 to improve educational outcomes for all students in Austin, Minnesota. Austin Aspires is directed by a board of community volunteers. The organization is funded by Hormel Foods Corporation, the Hormel Foundation, and Mayo Clinic Health System - Albert Lea Austin, as well as a direct legislative appropriation. The Austin Public Schools, Pacelli Catholic Schools, and Riverland Community College are all educational partners of Austin Aspires.

Austin Aspires' approach aligns existing resources to increase impact by using data to determine what works best for children. Austin Aspires brought the community together to develop shared outcomes and indicators of success to use across programs and systems. These shared outcomes identify promising practices and allow for meaningful dialogue on local disparities and solutions to close opportunity gaps.

## Academic Support

During 2021, Austin Aspires utilized grant dollars from ConnectedMN and the State of Minnesota to implement the ACES Tutoring program. With the support of community partners Austin YMCA and United Congregational Church, 47 students participated in **nearly 900 hours of free tutoring** in early 2021. Transportation was provided for those who needed it. Without this support, more students would have become "invisible" in a school system in which staff were struggling to implement required changes.

ACES provided a space for students to connect, be heard, feel seen, and receive needed academic support. Students shared: "It was a quiet place for me to get my work done," and "I found out that tutoring helps us get caught up with missing assignments. I like the support the tutors provide."

At the request of the parents, the ACES Tutoring program was re-established in the fall of 2021 to continue support as the students returned to the classroom.

## Parent Engagement

The extremely important role of parent/caregiver continued to be even more important during 2021. Austin Aspires and our community partners worked to ensure that wraparound support was provided to the parents, allowing them to be better equipped to engage with and advocate on behalf of their children. From January through October of 2021, Austin Aspires' staff worked closely with **over 900 families** to provide access to food support, legal support, transportation services, childcare, medical services, and more.

As one parent wrote about an Aspires staff member: *“MaKayla was right there from the beginning. Since getting my referral, she has been there every day for myself and my children. She is very resourceful and knowledgeable in knowing what is available to me and my family to help us. She is very understanding not only of my needs but of my children’s needs and does it without judgment and treats us as family and is always there to help or find a way to get myself or my children help.”*

### **Mental Health & Social-Emotional Support**

According to the organization Mental Health America, “Good mental health allows children to think clearly, develop socially and learn new skills. Additionally, good friends and encouraging words from adults are all important for helping children develop self-confidence, high self-esteem, and a healthy emotional outlook on life.”

For that reason, the community of Austin has made a commitment to educating parents, caregivers, educators and providers in Dr. Becky Bailey’s Conscious Discipline. Throughout 2021, **nearly 70 licensed home daycare providers, preschool, transportation and school staff have received infant/early childhood mental health training from Austin Aspires and/or partner organization staff.**





### About Cradle 2 Career

Cradle 2 Career is a community-wide initiative working to eliminate education disparities and racial inequities in Rochester, Minnesota. COVID-19 continues to negatively affect children and young adults in and out of school. It is right now that our community must respond to the increasing disparities that threaten to increase the ~30% academic gap that persists for Black and Latinx students.

### Academic Support

Kindergarten Readiness has two big projects that came from their work in 2020-2021. They have successfully created their local data set, which means they can make decisions with real-time data on the students they are serving now, and they can measure the collective results of their strategies at the end of each school year. They have prioritized indicators across five domains of learning (cognitive, numeracy, literacy, physical, and social-emotional) that help individualize interventions instead of taking a general approach. In addition, they held focus groups with parents and caregivers to validate the need for kindergarten readiness activities, tools, and supports for parents, especially those new to the United States school systems. Parents indicated they do need supports, so the Kindergarten Readiness Network created “Kindergarten Ready!” cards.

These cards align with the five domains of learning and have simple activities parents can do with their children. The cards are in English and are also translated into Somali and Spanish. They will be available on our website with audio directions for our parents/caregivers who may not read well in the provided languages.

### Parent Engagement

Cradle 2 Career established its Parent Council in fall of 2021. Parent representatives from communities across Rochester come together to set the agenda for the year, partner with the networks to co-design strategies, and advise the organization about the barriers they and their children are facing that interrupt or disrupt the academic pursuits of their children.

In addition, the Parent Council identified a need for better relationships with the police department. We were able to convene members of the Ethiopian community and police officers to eat dinner together and establish deeper relationships.





## Mental Health and Social-Emotional Support

The toll that COVID-19 has had on the mental health and well-being of our community has been substantial and continues to persist. The High School Graduation Network conducted student focus groups across 16 partner organizations. They found that students need adults who see them for who they are and care for them, no matter what kind of day they are having. According to the fall 2020 Panorama survey conducted by Rochester Public Schools, **a mere 43% of students in grades 6-12 report a sense of belonging in their school setting.**


Recognizing that mental health and well-being are connected to a sense of belonging, the High School Graduation Network is training adults to be more culturally responsive to the needs of the youth in their programs. The goal is to have culturally responsive adults across all organizations in which youth find themselves, including workplaces and retail spaces.



WAAN BASAASAYAA 

 Wuxuu adeegsadaa luqad.

La ciyaarida canugaaga waxyabo mala awaal ah oo ku saabsan waxaha maalinaha ah waxay ka caawin doontaa canugaaga inuu horumariyo xirfadaha dhagaysiga iyo hadalka.

 Waxyaabaha ku wareegsan qolka

ألعاب اللوحة 

التعرف على الأرقام 

الخبرات اليدوية تدعم ادراك الأطفال للمواضيع 

ورق ، قلم تاشير (ماركر) ، قلم تلوين ، أو قلم رصاص ، عجينة تشكيل (طين اصطناعي) أو خيط 

## About Every Hand Joined

Every Hand Joined (EHJ) is a cradle-to-career, collective impact model that engages youth-serving and government partners in Red Wing, Minnesota (population 16,338). Formed in 2012, the partnership aims to bring the community together around improving youth outcomes and building a support system so organizations can collaborate more closely.

In 2021, EHJ moved under the umbrella of Red Wing Youth Outreach (RWYO). For nearly 30 years, RWYO has made lasting change in the lives of Red Wing's youth through mentoring, independent living skills, and crisis intervention programs. Investment in programs that get results has been a hallmark of its operating philosophy. The change leverages the combined strengths of RWYO and EHJ: youth enrichment programs, parent engagement strategies, data sharing and measurement, and collaboration and coordination among youth-serving organizations.

## Social Skills, Emotional Management Skills, and Independent Living Skills

Partnership efforts included a community-wide mentoring program aimed at helping students develop social skills and emotional management skills, and a partnership between the schools and youth-serving nonprofits to offer independent living skills classes. The partnership paired 184 students with mentors. Students reported the following about their involvement in the program. Below are student survey responses.

- 80% of respondents are more comfortable with basic money management skills such as budgeting as well as understanding credit, loans and interest rates
- 80% of respondents understand the concept of rent, the pros and cons of having a roommate, and can identify housing options within a budget
- 80% understand the public transportation schedule
- 90% have either completed their driver's education class or know what is required to get their driver's license
- 75% feel more comfortable advocating for themselves with their teachers and understand the costs of higher education
- 90% of participants are more comfortable filling out job applications and preparing for and participating in job interviews
- 90% of respondents are more comfortable asking for help on the job, and appropriately communicating with supervisors, colleagues, and customers





## Academic Support Student Services

- Six agencies in the Partnership created a Community Distance Education Assistance Program (CDEAP)
- 57 youth attended in-person while schools were in distance learning
- 84% of students enrolled increased their daily school attendance from the 2020 Spring Semester (when schools shut down/distance learning implemented)
- 96% of students enrolled reported feeling more community support as part of participating in CDEAP
- 100% of students had fewer education-related technology barriers due to CDEAP participation
- **238 students received Targeted Services for academic support from six different programs (three in-school and three community-based)**
- Assisted Red Wing Public Schools in developing an improved data policy and procedures to better meet student academic needs

## Parent Engagement

Every Hand Joined hosted a “Parents Have the Power” series of workshops. In these workshops, 33 parents and core caregivers expressed interest in continuing their advocacy leadership journey. Additionally, Every Hand Joined staff have been meeting directly with parents and core caregivers to provide individualized support for caregivers in their advocacy journeys. Every Hand Joined’s online resource for parent advocacy has been accessed close to 1,000 times. Parents and core caregivers of Hispanic youth created a Parent Council. Every Hand Joined parents and core caregivers led 30 community conversations.



## About Generation Next

Generation Next impacts over 75,000 students through the direct engagement with both superintendents from Minneapolis Public Schools and Saint Paul Public Schools. The only cradle-to-career backbone organization addressing systemic disparities in the Twin Cities, Generation Next convenes a coalition of local cross-sector partners to create collective impact that aims to close the opportunity and achievement gaps facing students of color and lower-income students.

## Place-Based Data Convenings

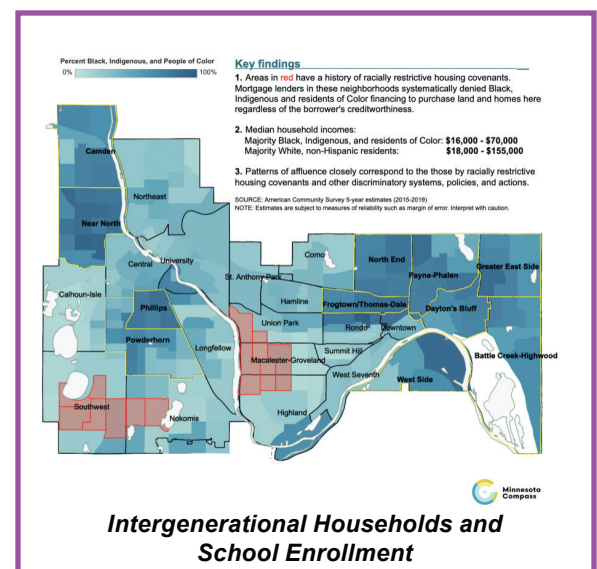
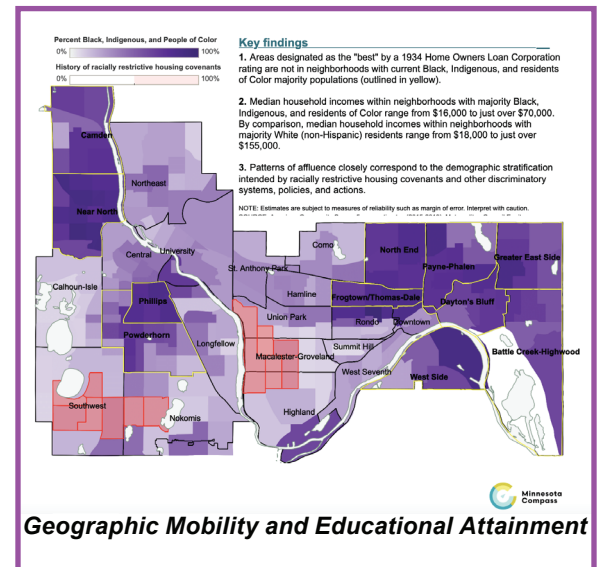
In 2021, Generation Next partnered with Wilder Research's Minnesota Compass team to identify and explore a series of neighborhood-based indicators that educational and community stakeholders can use together to inform action.

Generation Next and Minnesota Compass shared insights from the initial research across three virtual convenings. The first two sessions focused on specific angles through which to view communities. The final convening served as a capstone for integrating community perspectives in developing a clear through-line for effectively connecting individual, neighborhood, and systems data.

This is a multi-phase effort, informed by results from our first round of community interviews and analysis.

We are currently working together to co-design, with community-based and place-based leaders, a regional data hub that will link neighborhood-level data across systems to inform community progress on creating the social, emotional, and learning environments that can lead to successful, equitable outcomes later in life.

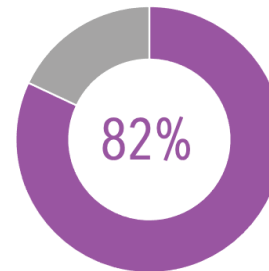
*To read more about our previous work on place-based data with Minnesota Compass, visit [www.gennextmsp.org/placebaseddata/](http://www.gennextmsp.org/placebaseddata/)*



## Equitable Learning Recovery

Together with Ignite Afterschool and Greater Twin Cities United Way, Generation Next launched the Equitable Learning Recovery project to learn how COVID relief funding was used to provide summer learning programming to students across the state.

We asked providers, school district leaders, and community partners across the state to share their perspectives. The initial survey had 136 respondents: 53% were community partners and 46% were employed at a district or formal education setting.



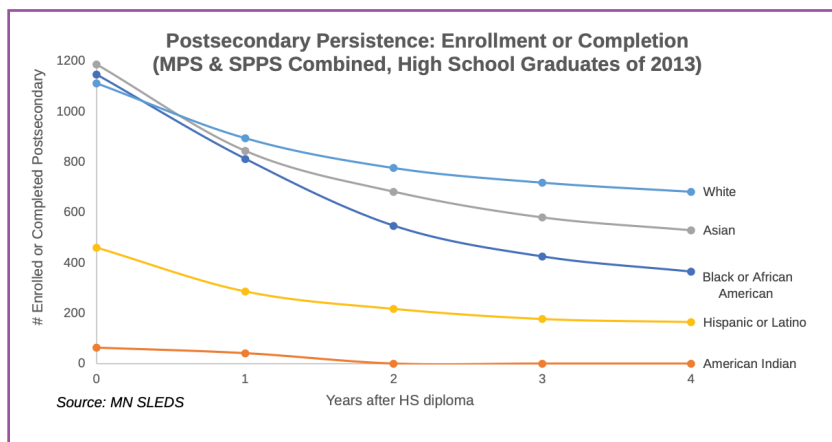
agreed that **new** opportunities and strategies tried in response to the pandemic in summer 2021 should continue in the future

We have begun to share these initial results with community-based leaders. The next phase is to work closely with eight communities across the state (with Generation Next as the lead partner in Minneapolis and Saint Paul) to understand the accomplishments, challenges and new learnings, with an eye toward long-term impact.

## Postsecondary Preparation & Persistence

In 2021, to support Minnesota’s goal of reaching 70 percent postsecondary attainment, Generation Next began an agreement with the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), to analyze individual-level SLEDS data. Through SLEDS data, we are working with partners to identify barriers and gaps that are limiting opportunities for students of color in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, as they transition from high school to postsecondary.

Initial analysis has focused on dual credit participation and racial disparities in postsecondary. We will continue looking at institutional patterns and delve into developmental education and employment patterns. We expect to have findings this year that will inform our work with local institutions, which includes our PK-12 (MPS & SPPS) and MinnState partners, who are members of our Leadership Council.



Combined results for Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) and Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) show similar numbers of high school graduates (approximately 1,200) in each of the Black, Asian and White student groups.

Four years after graduation, the number of Black graduates who completed or persisted in postsecondary was half that of White graduates.



Northfield

## About Northfield Promise

Formed in 2012, Northfield Promise is a collective impact initiative designed to achieve community-level change for children and youth. Northfield Promise seeks to build a culture of collaboration and shared accountability among community partners to ensure ALL children achieve their full potential. As a data-driven initiative, Northfield Promise is not about just creating new programs, but instead about aligning partners and resources to expand efforts that are seeing results. Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) provides the backbone support for Northfield Promise, recruiting and convening the partners and helping ensure the implementation of the action steps.

## Key Activities & Accomplishments of 2021

### Academic Support

- **76% of Northfield's incoming kindergartners were ready for K in reading** – up from 56% in 2018. **For children receiving free/reduced lunch, the rate jumped from 38% to 60% in that time!** Northfield saw similar growth in kindergarten readiness in math!
- **Provided 6,124 academic advising sessions** to 368 TORCH students in grades 6-12. TORCH offers academic guidance, social-emotional support, tutoring, and postsecondary access to youth who are students of color, from low-income homes, and/or potential first-generation college attendees. **91% of TORCH's senior cohort graduated on time** despite the pandemic.
- **Distributed 10,289 free books** to local children through the Northfield Promise BookBike (which visits local apartment complexes, mobile home parks, and community events) and 24 free little libraries.
- **Provided internet access to 242 children** from low-income homes throughout the 2020-21 school year – helping to make distance learning possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Launched a concurrent enrollment program, **allowing 108 Northfield High School students** to simultaneously earn high school and postsecondary credit for select classes taken at school.
- Supported the continued growth of the Northfield Community College Collaborative, **servicing 73 students in 249 classes**. Students are able to earn an associate degree without leaving Northfield through a combination of in-person and supported online courses.
  - **98% of students are first-generation college attendees and 80% are students of color.**



## Parent Engagement

- Supported **47 Latinx parents** in a four-month training series on how to engage in the education system and strategies to advocate for their children.
- Launched the use of TalkingPoints in the Northfield Public Schools, providing technology that allows for teachers and parents to text back and forth in their preferred language and have it translated into the recipient's preferred language. **More than 50,000 texts have been exchanged in the first four months.**
- Coordinated a six-month training series in Spanish for **13 Latina mothers** interested in starting childcare businesses. Working with the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation and Three Rivers Community Action to launch a childcare incubator site in Northfield's local community center.

## Mental Health and Social-Emotional Support

- Recognizing the disruptions caused by the pandemic, connected with **278 Class of 2020 graduates** monthly for 6 months to provide additional support in their post-high school transitions.
- **Supported 93 high school students** to serve as voting members on 31 different city, school district, and nonprofit boards and commissions through the Youth on Boards initiative.





## About Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)

The Northside Achievement Zone's (NAZ) mission is to end multi-generational poverty in North Minneapolis by building a culture of achievement where all low-income children of color graduate high school college- and career-ready.

NAZ works as the backbone of 25+ collaborating schools and nonprofits (Anchor Partners) to provide a continuum of support for up to 1,000 families and 2,000 children each year. Our goal is to serve the community as an engine of hope, opportunity, and change in the toughest of neighborhoods — working intentionally to move Minnesota from worst to first in eradicating opportunity gaps. Our cradle-to-career programming works to improve the achievement mindset of both parents and their children and includes: early childhood education; K-12 scholar academic supports; family housing, finance, and career assistance; NAZ Family Academy parenting and empowerment classes; and mental health wellness-oriented trainings to address racialized trauma for community partners and educational professionals.

**In FY21, NAZ served 1,903 scholars from 963 families for a total of 2,824 people.**

This includes:

- **499 families engaged** with coaches in achievement planning
- **494 scholars enrolled** in out-of-school time or other academic interventions
- **209 early childhood learning scholars** enrolled in a quality learning center; 100 of these received a NAZ scholarship to attend at little to no cost
- **194 families engaged** in housing stability improvement planning, with 131 families meeting goals to improve stability
- **67 families supported** through our career and finance strategy, 26 parents through the MFIP/FAST program
- **102 graduates from NAZ Family Academy** parenting and empowerment courses and **61 parents identified as NAZ parent leaders** in the community





## How NAZ Showed Up for the Northside

The full impact of the pandemic and extreme community violence on Northside families and scholars is yet to be fully understood. However, research shows and NAZ knows that scholars have been challenged with educational attainment and mental health declines due to these traumas and interruptions, while families continue to struggle financially.

**To help mitigate these detrimental impacts, NAZ raised over \$3.7M in emergency funds and distributed these resources across North Minneapolis over the past 18 months:**

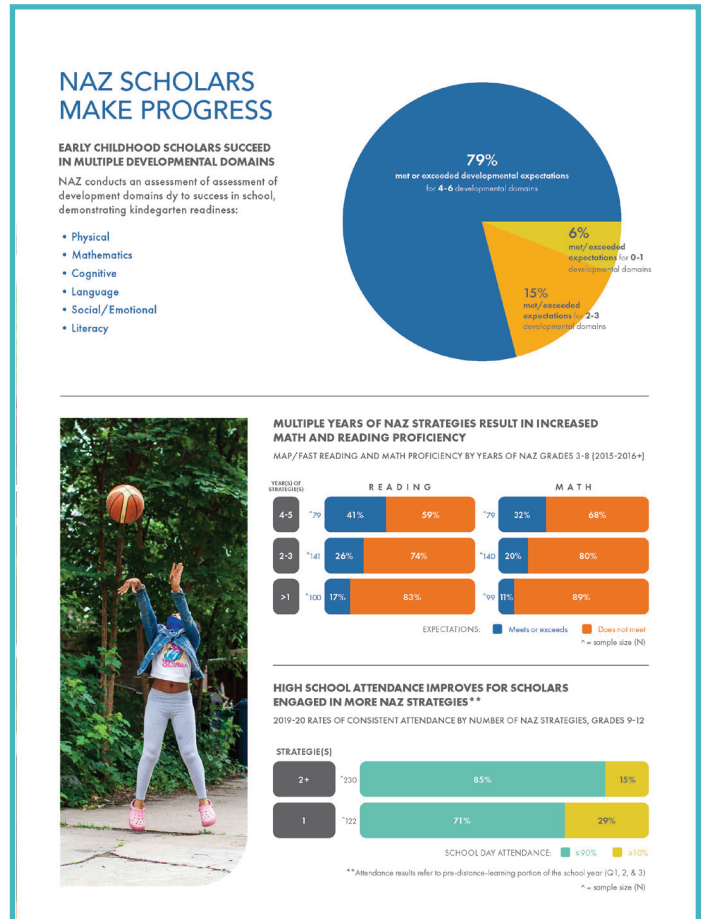
- \$440,000 in direct cash relief to 450 families and \$325,000 in rent relief to 87 families
- 140,000 reusable and disposable face masks and a focused COVID-19 awareness campaign
- 1,259 laptops, 1,629 noise-canceling headphones and 274 household subscriptions to high-speed internet service
- 70 K-5 scholars engaged in 1:1 virtual literacy tutoring from Reading Partners and MN Reading Corps
- More than 150 parents graduated from virtual NAZ Family Academy classes
- Hundreds of mental health referrals to NAZ partner Washburn Center for Children
- Weekly home food deliveries to 150 families

## NAZ is Working

Typical K-12 academic progress measures were unavailable last year because of school closures and the inability to administer statewide proficiency tests to all students. Instead, NAZ conducted an academic analysis of scholar proficiency in reading and math using alternative measures (MAP and FAST) with data available before the closing of schools in winter 2020.

Despite the myriad challenges faced by scholars and their families, we found that our results were similar to previous years:

- **Prepared for kindergarten: 79%** of NAZ preschoolers were proficient in 4-6 developmental domains, indicating readiness for kindergarten, as compared to the 25-30% kindergarten readiness that is typical in their community.
- **More NAZ is better:** K-12 scholars with longer participation in NAZ academic strategies have higher rates of proficiency.
- **Improved attendance:** Scholars (and their families) who engaged in two or more strategies attended school more frequently.



## About Park Partnership for Success

If ever there was a break the glass and pull the alarm time for our children and youth, it is now. In response, Children First launched Park Partnership for Success (PPS), a StriveTogether Network cross-sector cradle-to-career effort to close the race, ethnicity and poverty opportunity gaps so all children in St. Louis Park can realize their brilliance. Drawing on its three decades of success in building adults' capacity to champion positive youth development, Children First recognized the unprecedented need to re-imagine how it delivers on its promise of a better future to families and children. EPC membership is key to carrying out the broad scale of change required in this moment.

## Mental Health

Before COVID, our youth struggled with mental health and wellness; of particular concern were statistics showing that our high school girls ideated suicide at a rate 11% higher than their Hennepin County peers participating in the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey. With state and national data showing the negative impact of COVID on children's mental health, PPS initiated three youth-led efforts to improve youth well-being and is a partner in a youth-led effort to transform racially discriminatory discipline practices in a local school system.

PPS also partnered with Park Nicollet/Health Partners to change how the local Mental Health Collaborative moves to action. The group is embarking on its first collective advocacy effort to increase investment in mental health supports.

- **Student Mental Health Video Challenge** – PPS challenged local youth to create an activity that would improve mental health and wellness for their peers. High school students developed a video challenge for young people to share tips and advice for coping and thriving during the first full school year under COVID conditions. The group conducted two virtual learning sessions with groups of youth, curated submissions and presented the final compilation at the PPS launch event.
- **Increasing Access to Care** – 24 local high school students enrolled in the inaugural Certified Nursing Assistant class. These youth conducted a Data Walk with Partnership team members to begin co-creating strategies that improve mental and physical health outcomes by increasing access to health and dental care. 29% of participants requested a continued role in developing strategies and to join the local youth free clinic advisory council.
- **Wellness Activities** – High school interns designed and carried out a free community mental health and wellness activity, decorating face masks at parks adjacent to low-income housing.
- **Disparate Discipline and Restorative Practices** – St. Louis Park Middle and High School interns, working under the direction of Director of Assessment, Research and Evaluation Dr. Silvy Un Lafayette, identified significant differences in school discipline by race and recommended changes in policies and practices. PPS is working to create an aligned response in the surrounding community to support the work happening in the schools.



## Parent Engagement

One key outcome in launching a partnership that meets the rigorous requirements of EPC membership is the creation of an ecosystem to align and amplify existing efforts and fill in gaps. We are developing a new culture that uses a Results-Based Accountability approach, and our community is behaving differently as we move more deeply into strategy development. The parents and students most affected by the change we seek are co-creators of PPS strategies. To that end, PPS initiated the following engagement and power-shifting efforts this year.

- **Key Population Parent Listening Sessions** – Our Early Years Action Group (EYAG) is conducting factor analysis sessions with parents from key populations to better understand challenges and opportunities to their children’s school readiness. The sessions serve as a point of entry for parents to join the EYAG planning team.
- **Increased Access to Educational Opportunities** – PPS is partnering with Hennepin County Library to increase access for Spanish-speaking families to the county library system. By incorporating the library’s Racial Equity Impact Tool Guide in the development of a bilingual/bi-cultural story time and engaging parents in decision-making about offerings, we hope to see a change in parent behavior and child outcomes.
- **Power Shift** – PPS is working to shift decision-making about the use of some public funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to a partnership-led community decision-making process.
- **Community Connections** – PPS partnered with the Oak Hill Park Village neighborhood to hold a community fair with food, music, games, art activities, community resources and one-on-one interaction with federal, state and local elected officials. Children in the predominantly Somali community were energized to meet an elected official who looks and dresses like them.





## Saint Paul

### About the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood

Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN) is an education partnership that puts children in the Frogtown, Rondo, and Summit-University neighborhoods of Saint Paul on the pathway to college and career success. Housed at the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, SPPN takes a proactive and preventive approach to the education opportunity gap by focusing early in a child's life. SPPN partners with parents and caregivers, early learning providers, four elementary schools, and a wealth of community-based organizations located in the Promise Neighborhood boundaries to deliver programming and reach families.

SPPN partners with four elementary schools in the **PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD:**



### SPPN's 2021 Impact: By the Numbers

#### Academic Support

- SPPN and partners serve 500-plus children through our summer learning loss program
- 77.8% of the respondent scholars thought distance learning through STEM Freedom School was better than distance learning through their school
- 82.4% of the respondent scholars did not think it was hard to use the technology for distance learning in Freedom School
- Of the 17.6% who thought it was difficult, all reported that it was hard at first, but became easier after practicing and getting used to it. (This was an indication of the scholars' adaptability in being exposed to and using virtual platforms such as Google Hangouts, Zoom, Discord, and Seesaw during Freedom School)
- 85.7% of respondent scholars agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed learning about new technology
- **100% of the respondent scholars agreed or strongly agreed that they knew about COVID-19 safety**
- 95.2% of the respondent scholars agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed learning about science





### The People's Fellowship

In 2021, two cohorts of The People's Fellowship (TPF) were completed. The People's Fellowship is a six month journey for African American families to build wealth for themselves, their families, and their community. Through the fellowship, family members learn how to boost income, while being set on the pathway to building wealth and assets for the future with culture at the center.

Of the Fellows completing one of our 2021 cohorts:

- 48 individuals established or built a financial cushion in the form of financial saving
- 21 individuals established or improved credit scores
- 21 individuals received and completed financial coaching that helps them establish plans for the future

Due to the circumstances of this past year, we also secured additional emergency funds to make sure our alumni had resources to maintain their stability while continuing to build assets and wealth for their families. **We secured \$50,000 in emergency support for TPF alumni.** Fellows used resources for the following:

- 57% past-due rent, 20% Xcel energy, 16% utilities, 7% vehicle assistance

While The People's Fellowship takes place over six months, participants can connect with their financial coaches, service providers, and SPPN for as long as they need after graduation. This additional capacity to serve our TPF families was especially valuable given the difficult financial circumstances, exacerbated by COVID, over this last year. Fortunately SPPN was able to secure additional emergency funding to make sure our TPF alumni had resources to maintain their stability while continuing to build assets and wealth for their families during this challenging time. We used the emergency funding we received to launch an alumni-only cohort of The People's Fellowship and were able to help TPF alumni – like Jaclyn\* – continue to thrive.

Jaclyn was able to secure full-time employment with Allina Health while she has been attending school full-time. Through multiple levels of support from The People's Fellowship, she is now on track to achieve the levels of success and wealth creation for herself and her family.

\*Participant's name has been changed to protect their privacy.



## Mental Health & Social-Emotional Supports

Wraparound services are defined as culturally responsive services targeting the whole family and two generations in developing an ecosystem of support for our children and families. We provided wraparound services for 200 families.

**In partnership with Hallie Q. Brown, we served 328 families, and 1,400 kids in the Promise Neighborhood with toys, coats, and food baskets.**

## Civic Engagement

The Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN) is committed to centering our families' lived experiences in our advocacy work. This collaborative approach is grounded in the belief those closest to the problems are also closest to the solutions. Meaning, those most impacted by the barriers standing in the way of social and financial liberation are also those most knowledgeable about what we can do to remove obstacles for everyone to have the opportunity to thrive.

Yet given systemic inequities around race, zip code, and economic status, families who should have the most seats at decision-making tables instead find themselves furthest from the resources, influence, and power to make substantial change happen.

This is where the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood has a strategic role to play. Working alongside our families, we can inspire one another's inherent political power, invest in each other's capacity as community leaders, and bring our voices together as a collective force. **Together through advocacy, we can create a city where every family can thrive by transforming our learning systems, improving educational outcomes, and sparking abundant opportunities from cradle to career.**





## About Partner For Student Success – The Education Initiative of United Way of Central Minnesota

Partner for Student Success began in the Saint Cloud Area School District in 2010. Sartell-St. Stephen School District and Sauk Rapids-Rice School District joined soon after, alongside St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical & Community College, St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce, and over 50 other organizations in the Greater St. Cloud area. The partnership serves over 19,000 students from cradle to career. In 2019, Partner for Student Success merged with United Way of Central Minnesota. The organization is now known as United Way Partner for Student Success (UWPFSS).

### Academic Support

During this time like no other in history, UWPFSS sprung into action with funding, support, connections, advocacy and facilitation to respond to the unique and immediate needs of our learners and families. UWPFSS has responded to emerging needs, as well as crises and opportunities.

Responding to affinity group listening sessions in the community, and understanding the unique learning needs for summer, UWPFSS developed and supported a variety of learning and social-emotional support sites across the community, including:

- Sites in partnership at Boys and Girls Club and Kidstop locations where additional programming was supported, including access to theatre programming, social circles, career exploration opportunities, pollinator programming, and more.
- Sites at culturally-welcoming locations, including churches, faith centers, and community agencies such as Promise Neighborhood of Central Minnesota, Too Much Talent, Higher Works Collaborative, City of Grace Education Center, St. Cloud Islamic Center and The Yes Network, which brings activities, opportunities, and access to meals directly to neighborhoods mainly through youth leaders.

### These sites provided over 1,000 of our communities' young people and families with:

- Consistent internet access
- Two or three meals per day for students who regularly depend on free and reduced lunch at school
- School district connections for utilizing distance learning platforms, and
- Resource navigators to provide whole-family supports in accessing health and social services.



## American Reading Curriculum

We provide many of these centers with training and access to a school district-aligned curriculum specifically used for multilingual learners and students reading below grade level. During time students engaged in the program, **over 70% sustained or increased reading levels**. These numbers are encouraging, as the students in these programs are also the students who demographically were more likely to be adversely affected by the impacts of COVID-19.

## 10th Grade Rising Program

UWPFSS partnered with the St. Cloud Area School District, St. Cloud Technical & Community College, St. Cloud State University, Boys and Girls Club of Central Minnesota, Boy Scouts of America, Career Solutions and others to provide a summer enrichment and credit recovery experience for rising 10th graders who needed additional support. Through the collaboration, soon-to-be 10th grade students were able to take academic courses for credit recovery in the morning and then participate in career exploration and enrichment activities in the afternoon, including visiting different college campuses, having hands-on career experiences in areas like health care and law enforcement, visiting a planetarium and going bowling.

## Parent Engagement

Listening to our families, parents and core caregivers to inform our work, specifically with families that have been historically and institutionally underserved, is pivotal to our efforts. We support community-led parent engagement sessions that focus on topics of health, education, and community engagement. Through these sessions, we continue to connect resources and opportunities, including access to education around COVID-19 and vaccinations to connections between our schools and families to find solutions to issues around communication, cultural understanding and opportunities to partner.

## Mental Health and Social-Emotional Wellness

We have trained partners and staff in both Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid at no cost. We are working with our district, Central Minnesota Mental Health Center and community partners to best leverage the Kognito program across our community. We are also investing over \$150,000 in mental health programming support, including: SMART Moves programming; mental health triage supports for kindergarten staff and students; and St. Cloud Area Child Responses Initiative that provides early intervention and prevention for children who have experienced violence or trauma.



## AUSTIN



With the support of community partners, Austin YMCA, and United Congregational Church, **47 students participated** in nearly **900 hours of free tutoring** in early 2021.

## MINNEAPOLIS



NORTHSIDE  
ACHIEVEMENT  
ZONE



**NAZ distributed more than \$3.7M in resources** across the Northside during the past 18 months. This included digital devices, cash assistance, rent relief, summer programming, tutoring, PPE, food, and Early Childhood scholarships.

## NORTHFIELD



Supported the continued growth of the **Northfield Community College Collaborative, serving 73 students in 249 classes**. Students can earn an associate degree without leaving Northfield, through in-person and supported online courses. First-generation college students comprise 98% of the students, and 80% are students of color.

## RED WING



Every Hand Joined **provided 238 students with targeted academic support services** from 3 in-school and 3 community-based programs.

## ROCHESTER

excellence for everyone

Cradle2Career



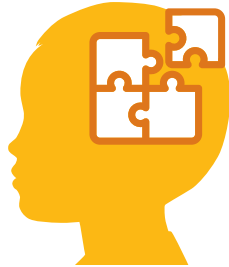
**Engaged more than 160 youth in providing feedback** on Cradle2Career programs, attending collective impact network meetings, and participating in interviews and focus groups on community initiatives.



## SAINT CLOUD



United Way  
of Central Minnesota



United Way Partner for Student Success invested **\$150,000 in mental health programming support for kindergarten staff and students**, as well as in the St. Cloud Area Child Responses Initiative, which provides early intervention and prevention for children who have experienced violence or trauma.

## SAINT LOUIS PARK



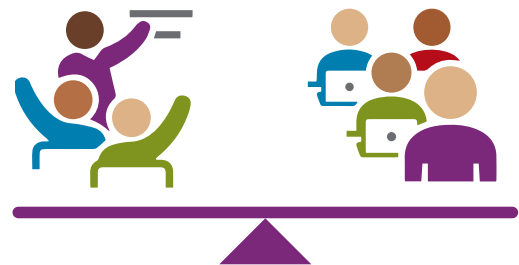
Park Partnership for Success hosted **24 local high school students in the inaugural Certified Nursing Assistant class**. This is part of an effort by Partnership team members to improve mental and physical health outcomes by increasing access to health and dental care.

## SAINT PAUL



Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood and partners **served more than 500 children through summer learning loss prevention** programming.

## TWIN CITIES



Generation Next asked providers, school district leaders, and community partners across the state about **equitable learning recovery programming** provided last summer through COVID relief funds. Of the respondents, **82% agreed that \*new\* opportunities and strategies** tried in response to the pandemic in summer 2021 should continue in the future.





**Thank you for supporting the Education Partnerships Coalition (EPC) to help youth and families across the state thrive.**

**While the EPC has accomplished so much with your support, there are more children and families in need.**

**The EPC looks forward to continuing to work with you to eliminate Minnesota's opportunity gaps!**

This report fulfills the requirements outlined in Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124D.99; subdivision 6.

