



Nashville After Zone Alliance 2017-2018 Program Quality Brief

Student Feedback/Youth-Level Outcomes

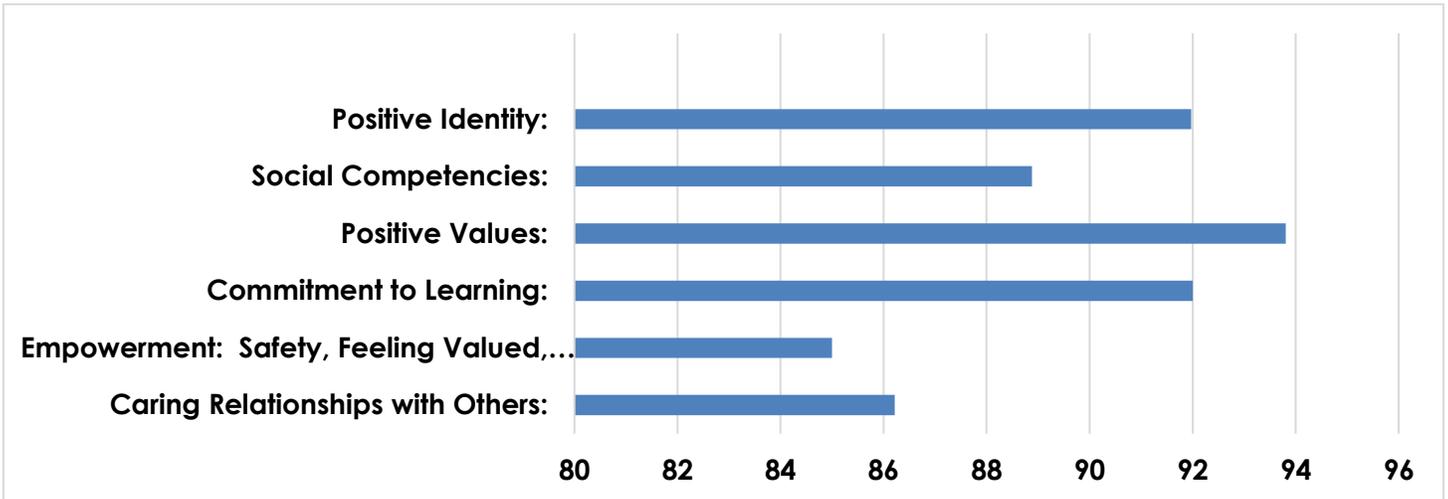
During the fall of 2017, NAZA-funded sites administered the YMCA of the USA's Youth Asset Survey, which is based on the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, to 719 NAZA students. The survey is "designed to capture youth reports of (a) external assets: the amount of support they have in their lives, the extent to which they feel empowered, what kinds of boundaries and expectations they have, and how constructively they spend their time, and (b) internal assets: how committed they are to their own learning, the amount of positive values they hold, social competencies, and the extent to which they have a positive identity."¹ According to the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality's (Weikart Center) analysis of the student feedback, "the results of this survey indicate that **the majority of youth participating in NAZA-funded programs feel that the programs are appropriately supporting their socio-emotional development and well-being.**¹ Over 90% of the youth indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with all of the statements comprised within the following scales: Boundaries and Expectations, Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, and Positive Identity. According to Weikart, "this suggests that a majority of youth within the NAZA network feel that their programs **are facilitating the development of known boundaries and healthy expectations, as well as a sense of educational commitment, positive self-identity, and positive values.**"¹

Areas identified for improvement include 1) Some items within the "Support" scale including an item on peer-to-peer relations; 2) An item within the "Constructive Use of Time" scale focused on whether programs were viewed as challenging; and 3) An item within the "Empowerment" scale that centers on whether you are offered opportunities to plan, choose, or lead activities. NAZA will target professional development and coaching in the 2018-2019 school year in alignment with the abovementioned areas identified for improvement in an effort to improve the overall experience of youth in NAZA-funded programs.

While NAZA funds out-of-school time programming that increases youths' access to extra academic support and enrichment opportunities, the core emphasis of funded programming is on social and emotional development opportunities. NAZA's goal as a system is to help youth spark an interest and motivation in academic learning by introducing innovative learning techniques and helping them build a sense of purpose around education without specifically focusing on changing their grades or test scores. The "Commitment to Learning" domain as seen in Figure 1 below is a good indicator that NAZA's program partners are successfully promoting academic learning.

¹ Nashville After Zone Alliance Quality Improvement intervention, 2017-2018 Findings from the NAZA AfterZone Report to the Nashville After Zone Alliance of Nashville Public Library

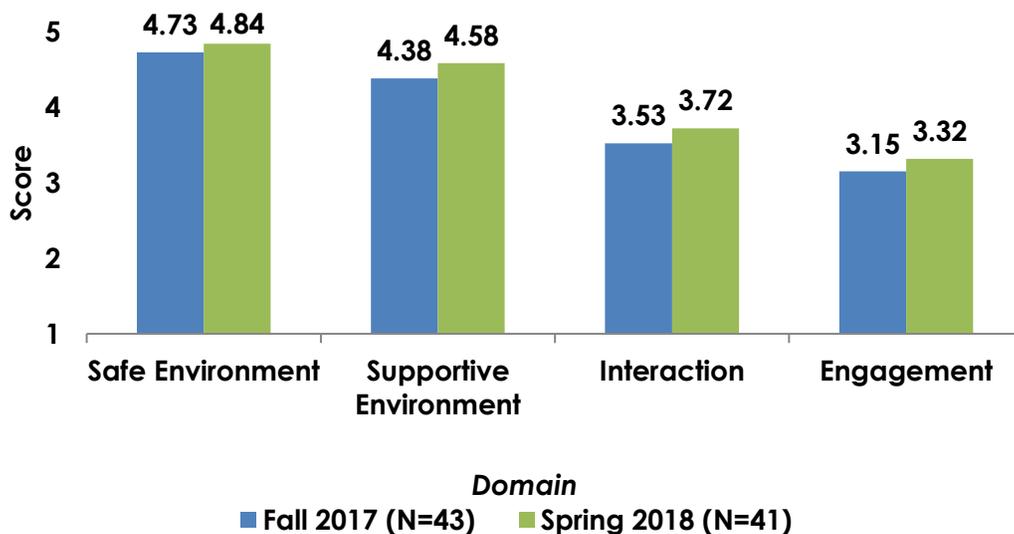
Figure 1



Program-Level Outcomes

In the 2017-2018 school year, NAZA completed its ninth year implementing the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) in partnership with the Weikart Center. According to Weikart, the YPQI “is an assessment-driven continuous improvement process designed to: (a) build managers’ continuous quality improvement skills; (b) increase the quality of instructional practices delivered in youth development programs; and, ultimately, (c) increase students’ engagement with program content and opportunities for skill-building.”¹ All 43 NAZA-funded sites participated in the YPQI in the fall semester and 41 sites participated in the spring semester, as two sites ceased operations. In practice, the funded NAZA sites, which were operated by 20 partners at school and community locations, were assessed in the fall and spring utilizing the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) tool and provided with professional development, coaching, and other resources. Please see Figure 2 to view how the funded sites scored in aggregate on the four domains during the pre-and post-assessments. The domains align with Nashville’s 5 Principles of Positive Youth Development (adopted in 2009).

Figure 2



In aggregate, the funded sites demonstrated gains in all domains of the YPQA. The largest gains were in the Supportive Environment and Interaction scales. The aggregate instructional quality score improved from the pre- to the post-assessment, which indicates that NAZA-funded site staff improved their instructional practices with youth. On an individual site level, nearly two-thirds of sites improved their program quality (26/41) and all sites were successful improving the areas that they identified for improvement. This is particularly compelling given the high turnover in the frontline staff positions which is common in NAZA-funded programs and the field in general. In terms of longitudinal gains, according to Weikart, “the average scores in all NAZA Zones have maintained a moderate but steady improvement trajectory since the 2010 pilot.”¹

In addition to the funded sites, 10 Affiliated Partner sites were assessed before and after staff participated in foundational NAZA trainings. The goal of the Affiliated Partner pilot in the 2017-2018 school year was to measure the potential impact of professional development opportunities that are available to the Nashville community at no cost through NAZA. The Affiliated Partner sites demonstrated gains in all domains of the YPQA, except the Interaction domain. The largest gains were in the Supportive Environment and Engagement domains. The aggregate total instructional quality score of Affiliated Partners increased from 2.82/5 to 3.15/5 from the pre- to the post-assessment. There was significant improvement in the “Active Engagement” scale (0.88), “Choice” scale (1.13), and “Skill Building” scale (0.92) from the pre- to the post-assessment which validates the effectiveness of the professional development focused on these domains. That being said, the Affiliated Partner sites scored significantly lower than the funded sites on all domains of the pre- and post-assessment. Based on this data, NAZA will explore the impact of providing coaching supports in addition to professional development to the returning Affiliated Partner sites in the 2018-2019 school year. Please see Figure 3 below to view how the Affiliated Partner sites scored in aggregate on the four domains during the pre-and post-assessments.

Figure 3

