

Nashville After-Zone Alliance: The Mayor's After-School Initiative and Its Future

LOP 3110 Organizational Theory

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Introduction

In Nashville, one out of every four students does not graduate high school. Middle School is a crucial academic time in the life of a student. Studies have shown that students who are at high risk of dropping out of high school typically start becoming disengaged with school in their adolescent years (NAZA 2013). They “check out mentally” in middle school and stay in school until they are of age to drop out physically. Keeping students engaged and giving them additional support during these vital years may be the difference between graduation and dropout. Thousands of students in Nashville are reported to be unsupervised in the hours immediately after school. Juvenile crime doubles in the hours immediately after school is let out at a national level (After School Alliance).

The lack of supervision and support during these after school hours greatly affects a child’s opportunity for success in school. Nashville Mayor Karl Dean (elected in 2007) made education his number one priority during his election campaign and continues to believe the city has a moral obligation to provide every student a high quality education and the opportunity for success (*Nashville Mayor’s Office Mayor’s Biography*).

In an effort to bridge the achievement gap within Metro Nashville Public Schools, and to address the after-school crisis in Nashville, Mayor Dean launched the **Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA)**. Initially, NAZA was made possible through the Mayor’s advocacy and a budget line item he allocated to it in the city’s annual budget. Under the leadership of its founding Planning Director, Candy Markman, NAZA began. Currently in its third year, NAZA serves close to 1,000 students in the greater Nashville area and wishes to grow and sustain its efforts. Due to being a relatively new organization, NAZA is still in the process of formulating quantitative data to support its success.

In addition, funding issues can threaten the long-term sustainability NAZA desires, NAZA’s long-term sustainability relies on its ability to continually increase awareness of the city’s after-school needs, show its proven success, guarantee necessary funding, and nurture and grow the support of City of Nashville’s future leaders and the Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS).



(Nashville Mayor Karl Dean with NAZA Students)

The Need For NAZA: Explained Through its Official Information Graphics

Nashville After Zone Alliance

Every year, 1.2 million U.S. students drop out of school. That's **7,000 drop outs a day** or one every 26 seconds

IN Nashville

1 out of 4 students do not graduate

The Next IS OUR Generation FOCUS

Students that drop out are . . .

- 8x more likely to go to prison
- More likely to need welfare
- 50% less likely to vote
- Not eligible for 90% of new jobs
- Earn less than half as much as college grads

PREVENTION

- Mentoring
- Service Learning
- Alternative Learning
- After School Opportunities

"Students' decisions to drop out are not based simply on their experiences in high school; instead, the pathway to dropping out appears to start much earlier"

(Reyes et al. 2000; Roderick 1995)

NW Zone

Pearl-Cohn and Whites Creek

NE Zone

Maplewood and Stratford

N.A.Z.A.

SC Zone

Glenciff and Overton

SE Zone

Cone Ridge and Antioch

Coming in 2013

Why Middle Schoolers?

- Changing patterns of thinking and learning
- Searching for personal identity and acceptance
- Yearning for independence

N.A.Z.A.'s impact on students

98%

Are encouraged by NAZA to do well in school

99%

Learn that what they do makes a difference

97%

Feel good about themselves

99%

Make better decisions

N.A.Z.A. offers ...

Safe Environment

I feel safe when I am in our program activities

96%

Supportive Environment

Staff and program leadership really care about me

97%

Interaction

The staff and program leaders challenge me to do my best

96%

Engagement

Program has been interesting

97%

Students are **3-4x** likely to drop out in later years if they enter high school without basic literacy skills.

Students are **5x** more likely to graduate if they have supportive adult relationships

1.5
grade levels

N.A.Z.A.'s program influence on reading ability

Projected Impact by 2013

over 1,000 Students in Nashville

@nashville_z

www.nashvilleZ.org

nashvilleZ

Exhibit 1: Need for NAZA

PASA to NAZA

To investigate the issue that Mayor Dean identified in Nashville, the city researched a similar case in Providence, Rhode Island: Providence After School Alliance (PASA). An established program, PASA, revealed many critical operational strategies that helped the City of Nashville understand:

- What makes an after school program successful?
- Who helps with funding?
- How does it remain sustainable?

Providence After School Alliance (PASA)



Providence After School Alliance is an after school program that has been serving children for over 10 years.

Located in Providence, Rhode Island, PASA was started in 2003 when the former Mayor, David Cicilline, recognized the lack of and necessity for a youth development program in the community. In an effort to improve the 50% ninth grade dropout rate, they sought funding assistance from The Wallace Foundation and The Bank of America. PASA initiated the AfterZone, a hands-on, after school program for middle school aged students that offers a range of academic and enrichment opportunities developed alongside teachers and principals from the students' home schools.

Community support and adequate funding are areas that have led to the sustainability and success of PASA. PASA has become an institution in the city; more or less, "it's what everyone does" when they start middle school. Parents have noticed their childrens' success over the years and want to continue supporting the organization by sending their younger children to the program and encouraging others to attend the program as well.

The public and private donors have increased over the years. The after school program is a line item in the city's budget (where money is allotted to PASA only if the Mayor continues to include in the budget for upcoming years), and the organization continues to leverage and recruit other public and private resources for funding.

Benchmarking PASA

Based on success of the PASA program, Nashville Mayor Karl Dean hired Candy Markham as NAZA's planning director. He tasked her to create a similar program modeled after their strategy and organization.



NAZA Organizational Structure

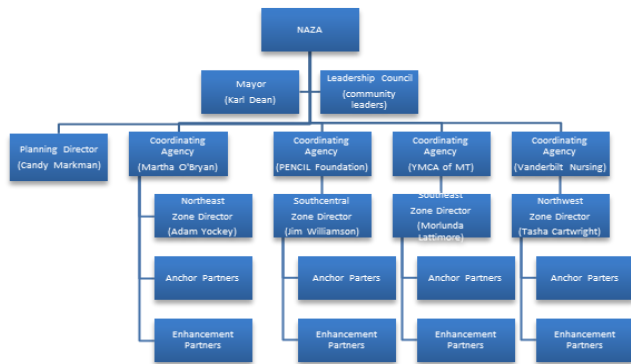


Exhibit 2: NAZA Organizational Chart (See appendix for larger view)

NAZA is governed by a leadership council comprised of twenty-two business, education, and government leaders in the community. Mayor Dean is the council chair. The leadership of Candy Markman has been the catalyst for bringing NAZA where it is today. NAZA joined forces with key *coordinating agencies* that serve as the management of all operations in four zones in different areas in Nashville. Before creating a new zone, NAZA sends out an RFP (request for proposal) and selects a community partner that will act as the coordinating agency. This organization manages all after-school services for the new geographic zone. *Coordinating agencies* responsible for ensuring that high-quality comprehensive afterschool programming is delivered at their own location, on-site at middle schools, or at convenient alternative site. They are all required to follow NAZA's policies and procedures as well as to participate in an extensive quality review process every year.

The coordinating agency implements the coordinated scheduling, marketing, recruitment, tracking, and transportation processes for their specific zone. With a portion of their NAZA budget, the coordinating agency hires a zone director to manage NAZA related duties for their organization. The zone director's job is further defined to find *anchor partners*, *enhancement partners*, and volunteers for the programs in their zone. *Anchor partners* are established organizations throughout the zone that oversee individual afterschool

programs and *anchor partners* must meet program quality standards.

Typical after school programs run Monday through Thursday. Each day, students receive 1 hour of academic time (homework help, tutoring, reading groups, etc.) and one hour of enrichment time. *Enhancement partners* are individuals or organizations that provide enriching activities to middle school students in the afterschool program context. The Nashville Symphony, the Belcourt Theatre, Adventure Science Center, and the Nashville Public Library are a few of the organizations that are NAZA *enhancement partners*. The enrichment hours of the afterschool programs are where many students have found a new personal passion or strength, such as dance, art, science, or music.



(One of the Enhancement Partners offering Music Lessons to NAZA Students)

Markman, the NAZA Director, reports to the Mayor's office whereas the Directors of each of the four zones report to their respective *coordinating agencies*: Martha O'Bryan Center, the PENCIL Foundation, YMCA of Middle Tennessee, and Vanderbilt School of Nursing. While Markman is the face of NAZA, and leads the organization, none of the Zone Directors report to her. They go through important and sometimes very expensive quality review and improvement trainings together; they meet regularly, work as a team, and keep each other accountable to their roles, and responsibilities.

Candy Markman: The Solo Warrior

Candy Markman plays many different roles in order to fulfill all the demands of her position as the Planning Director for NAZA. When Mayor Dean brought her on board, she made a commitment to get the job done without having to hire any more personnel so that money could be spent on students and programs. As the single employee for NAZA at the Mayor's office, she has lived up to that commitment by overseeing all NAZA functions, and coordination till date. In a typical week, Markman communicates and coordinates activities with a dozen organizations and entities. She provides all the Financial Oversight NAZA needs.

She meets with the zone directors each week to coordinate and evaluate all operational processes. She also plans gatherings for all the after-school providers and their key leaders in every zone to engage in a system-wide process and content review. In addition, she collaborates at both the city and national level to bring state of the art professional development programs for NAZA affiliates. Recently, she has been working with national entities like the American Institute of Research and the University of Chicago as they help NAZA implement their data systems to create a communication and data-sharing interface between the MNPS and NAZA. Currently one of Candy's largest challenges is finding the time for more marketing and outreach in order to continue to grow the organization.

One of the dozen national partners of *Every Hour Counts*, a national trade association for after-school programs, NAZA has worked hard to both gain from and give back to the national platform of after-school program, development, and advocacy. *Every Hour Counts* have lobbyists in D.C. trying to shape the national policy in favor of America's after-school needs and partners are encouraged to speak to their state representatives. Candy has flown to D.C. to speak with Tennessee Senators and Congressmen on the hill regarding the need for their support and advocacy for after-school programs like NAZA. Additionally, she travels to various national after-school conferences for advocacy, networking, and training.

Despite challenges and demands of her position, Markman finds her biggest achievement in the fact that she has turned the Mayor's vision into

reality. She also understands that as NAZA grows and moves beyond Mayor Dean's term, which ends in 2015, the staffing and organizational structure at NAZA may have to change. She understands that her role and the future structuring of the NAZA central office will have to be evaluated more critically.

NAZA Financial Structure

Transportation

Solving the transportation logistics is a key factor in NAZA's ability to serve the students who need its services the most. For its first operating year (2009-2010), NAZA used four MNPS buses after hours to drop students free of charge. In the 2010-2011 school year, MNPS began charging NAZA \$10K per bus per year. This was the best deal available to NAZA at the current time as no other private company knew the neighborhood and MNPS logistics or could provide a better price. The partnership with MNPS is critical for NAZA as an efficient transportation system is imperative to its operation. Transportation is also one of the reasons why independent non-profits can have serious limitations in reaching out and serving a large number of public school students after school. Without NAZA, *coordinating agencies* could not access the MNPS buses or serve the public school students they are able to serve in their respective zones.



(NAZA Students on a Field Trip to the Parthenon)

Specific Financials

NAZA started serving students in January 2010. In the 2009-2010 school year NAZA spent a total of \$319K to launch with one employee, Candy Markman. Markman started with one coordinating agency (the Martha O'Bryan Center -MOBC) in the first year of NAZA's operation.

NAZA has traditionally budgeted \$100K on average per annum for the total overhead cost of

operation at each zone working with a coordinating agency. In Exhibit 3 (See Exhibit 3 in appendix) (see appendix), the \$200K amount dedicated to NAZA’s first zone partnership with MOBC accounted for expenses such as the Zone Director’s salary, office supplies, student benefit items, and a \$1,000 funding per student . Since this was the first year of operation, a significant amount of training and development was needed to create a solid foundation the future partnerships and zones could be built on. Therefore, a \$50K budget was allocated to professional development and became accessible to all staff at the MOBC and its sub-programming partners. The close to \$80K savings in the actual budget (See Exhibit 3 in appendix) was partly due to starting the program mid-year (January 2010) and launching some aspects of the program a little later than originally projected.

For the 2010-2011 school year, NAZA was supported by the Metro Government and Education First funds. The Metro fund was what the Mayor allocated for NAZA as the city’s official After-School Initiative. The Education First funding was a grant NAZA received in the amounts of \$287K, which Markman has been incrementally allocating to every year’s budget. To date the Education Fund still holds nearly 90K – thanks to Markman’s extreme control over the budget, and long term planning. NAZA was awarded \$765K through Wallace Funds later that year that could be spent in increments over a period of four years.

pays \$1,000 per student per year to the *coordinating agencies* while it estimates that each of them end up spending close to \$1,000 more per student per year that does not show up on NAZA’s budget. The *coordinating agencies* secure the additional funds on their own through various grants such as the Community Enhancement, 21st Century Learning, Tennessee/Metro Arts commission, and other private donations and sponsorships.

NAZA hopes to eventually expand to a fifth zone, covering the Eastern part of Nashville – the only major of the county not yet covered by NAZA. This is a feasible goal, as Exhibit 5 shows, the more students in NAZA’s network, the lesser the cost to serve each student.

Exhibit 5: NAZA’s Formula to Expand Each Additional Zone

No. of Zones	1	2	3	4	5
Admin Costs (central office, incl data mgmt & communication)	130,000	130,000	130,000	140,000	145,000
Youth Program Quality intervention with evaluation + \$7,500 with expansion	42,500	42,500	42,500	45,000	47,500
Coordinating Agency@1per zone, incl 1MNPS bus	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000
Slots in 24 week (with avg of 75 add'l student s/zones penefiting)	1,000	500,000	750,000	1,000,000	1,250,000
Total operating costs	273,500	872,500	1,222,500	1,585,000	1,942,500
Cost per Slote		1,745	1,638	1,585	1,554
No. of slots in 24 weeks	250	500	750	1,000	1,250
Cost per Student	1000	1,342	1,260	1,219	1,195

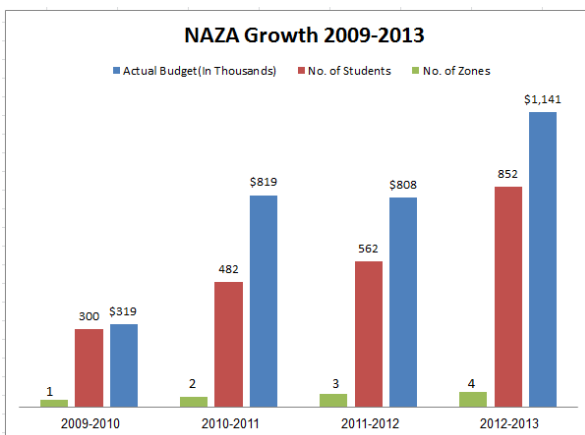


Exhibit 4: NAZA’s Growth 2009-2013

In the current 2013-2014 School Year, NAZA continues to work with the four *coordinating agencies* at the four zones it operates in. NAZA

Coordinating Agencies

NAZA's *coordinating agencies* and their *anchor partners* gain access to the public school system data for the student population they serve. NAZA's professional development and program assessments have tremendously improved the quality of afterschool programs offered by their partners. The improvement trend and the qualitative data add to each organization's credibility and could be used as evidence to leverage more funding.

Partnership with NAZA guarantees automatic enrollment of students, as many times the schools would partner with NAZA and identify the students that need the services the most. The more students the organization serves, the greater NAZA's chance to qualify and receive additional funding to fulfill their mission. *Coordinating agencies* and their partners can access public school facilities for their programs after business hours.

NAZA does not work for all schools or all non-profits serving the Nashville community. Time and other logistical constraints are areas of resistance for charter schools and other non-traditional school systems. Seeing that NAZA requires a high level of quality and commitment from their coordinating agencies, not all agencies would be able to adhere to their standards.



(NAZA Students in their Logoed T-Shirt)

NAZA Success

Since the NAZA program has been running for less than three years, there is not a substantial amount of concrete quantitative data to show just how effective it has been for the Nashville community. There is no doubt, however, that NAZA has pointed the city in the right direction to making huge strides in education. NAZA zone directors feel confident that the data will come back in their favor based on the successes they have witnessed personally within their zone.

Since NAZA began in the spring of 2010, the program has expanded from serving four middle schools to now serving nineteen middle schools in the area. Northeast zone director Adam Yockey views the fact that his zone no longer needs to recruit for their program as a huge success. Seven out of the nine sites in his zone are fully enrolled before the school year begins (Yockey). He says the programs he oversees are receiving great feedback from parents, students, and school principals. Jim Williamson, south-central zone director, says he has seen large successes in his zone, particularly in the Center for Refugees site and their RISE program (focusing on ELL student programs) (Williamson).

➤ The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality annually evaluates NAZA and its program assessment and quality improvement process. **Program quality has increased significantly.** Greatest improvement last year was in the area of youth engagement, which is crucial to attracting and retaining 10-14 year-olds. See figure below, where on the 0-5 scale, 5 indicates the highest quality.

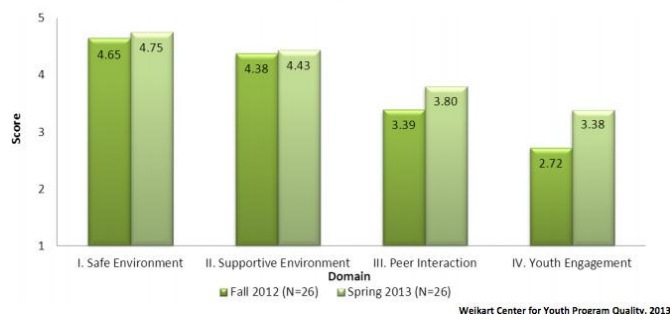


Exhibit 6: Youth Program Quality

Individual Student Success

Individual student successes are another way NAZA measures its achievement. Not only is NAZA striving to make macro improvements in academic achievement but also seeks to build relationships with the students in the programs and transform their lives through a holistic approach. NAZA programs intend to be a place for a majority of the MNPS middle school students (approximately 15,000) who do not already

participate in an after-school sports team, or a club, and can engage in self-discovery. Mr. Yockey described a particular student who transferred to a school in his zone. On the first day of school, the student's parents met with the principal to inform him that their child had a history of severe behavior problems and would most likely be in his office everyday. The principal suggested the parents enroll their child in the NAZA program. During the enrichment hour at NAZA, the student was introduced to a step team. The student grew a passion for stepping and was motivated to stay out of trouble at school in order to be able to continue working with the step team. The student was never called to the principal's office after enrollment in NAZA (Yockey).

Unified System

NAZA has also been successful in creating a uniform system for after school programs across the city. It has raised the level of quality for programs by providing professional development for all organizations and staff affiliated with NAZA and its *coordinating agencies*; opening up this training to any organization who is interested free of charge. NAZA also provides quality measures through the Center for Youth Program Quality (see appendix).

Relationships

NAZA has a great relationship with Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), enabling NAZA to be the first organization of which MNPS has shared any identifying student data. NAZA is learning how to effectively and safely use this data to help students achieve in all areas: academics, discipline, social skills, home life, and more. For example, a NAZA program coordinator will receive data about every student in their program. Once, a NAZA staff member recalled looking at the data and seeing that one of their students was constantly receiving discipline referrals at school for violating the dress code because he never wore a belt, which was a required part of the uniform at this particular school. The staff member then asked the student why he never wore his belt to school. The student replied that there was only one belt in his household, and he had to trade off days with his younger brother to wear it. By looking at the data

and taking the time to engage with this student and ask questions, the NAZA staff member was able to find a simple solution to a big problem.



(NAZA Students with a Teacher Showing their Reading Certificates)

The data also showed that another student was constantly tardy for school. The student's tardiness was affecting his grades because he was consistently missing important academic instruction. A NAZA staff member sat down with the student to find out why he was constantly late for school. As it turned out, the student's parents left for work very early in the morning, and the student had no one to wake him up for school. In response, the NAZA staff member found an alarm clock for the student and showed him how to use it.

These are just a few examples of how NAZA is using school data to effectively support student achievement. This information will ultimately be used to identify how NAZA program participation affects student achievement. NAZA has partnered with the American Institute of Research to create formulas and algorithms that will measure the effectiveness of the program using this data.

Conclusion

The Mayor's support and the efforts of the planning director have been critical to NAZA's mission. Without the Mayor's advocacy, and support, and Markman's leadership, NAZA could not have come this far.

While many for-profit, non-profit, community, and faith-based programs are trying to do their share to reach out to children during the after-school period, NAZA's ability to partner with the public school system is invaluable. The participating schools and the NAZA staff share a dashboard that shows selected student data. The NAZA staff uses the data to plan after-school interventions to address all identified areas of improvement. The public school partnership also helps NAZA systematically target high need neighborhoods.

All *coordinating agencies* and *anchor partners* testify to the significant improvement in the quality of their after-school programs as a result of partnering with NAZA and its rigorous quality improvement process. Since its inception, NAZA has invested over \$200K in program assessment and improvement and over \$87K in Communication, IT, and Data Systems. This level of funding and commitment to quality sets high standards for a city's after-school initiatives and would not have been possible without the major push from elected officials, city leaders, and high profile *coordinating agencies*.

In summary, NAZA has a unique level of access and quality, which would be very difficult for a non-affiliated non-profit to reach. The city's public school system and neighborhoods, and *coordinating agencies* have been positively affected by receiving intervention for its highest risk students. Neighborhoods benefit from NAZA programs seeing its youth spending time productively after hours, and the non-profits are also able to reap the benefits by serving more youth, improving quality, attracting more funding, and living up to their mission. NAZA is a highly efficient after-school model more and more cities nationwide are trying to replicate.

Major Challenges Going Forward

Sticking to the Original Vision

Markman continues to make sure that as NAZA expands, the original commitment to quality is maintained while increasing the number of students served.

Quantitative Data

While Markman is working on a project to do a quantitative assessment, no such data is available yet to quantify the progress the NAZA students have had in terms of measurable progress in Attendance, Discipline, and Academics.

Sustainability:

This is a major item Markman continuously have to pay attention to. Since the city funding can fluctuate, and the public and private funding NAZA currently enjoys is not guaranteed, NAZA and its *coordinating agencies* can have serious setback with any reduction in funding. The *coordinating agencies*, for example, will no longer be able to sustain themselves with the lack of current level of funding as they depend on the \$100K NAZA allocation to each zone for overhead costs in addition to the \$1,000 it pays the zones for each student every year.

Post Mayor Continuity:

NAZA funding and employee contracts are attached to the Mayor's term. Mayor Dean's budget for NAZA and advocacy for public and private funds is what fueled the program and fostered citywide collaborations. While Markman is working hard to increase NAZA's brand awareness, and recruit champions that will support NAZA beyond Mayor Dean, the future of NAZA is not certain if it is not able to enjoy the same level of support from the city in the post Mayor Dean campaign.

Preliminary Questions

In light of these challenges, the following are strategic questions NAZA needs to answer:

Evaluating Markman's current roles, which of her roles need to expand and become stand-alone staff positions?

After the Mayor's term, should NAZA become an independent entity or move under the umbrella of another city organization?

How are they going to continue to liaison with the city, future elected officials, and city's budget?

What should be the strategy to sustain the NAZA's operation beyond city funding?

As NAZA's level of complexity increase – how does that impact its structure?

How should the post-Mayor Dean NAZA structure look like? Examine the complexities of NAZA in the post-

Mayoral era, and suggest how Candy Markman's role and her central office has to be restructured applying the

Organizational theories:

How does leveraging intellect help us structure the post-Mayor NAZA?

How can NAZA continue to influence city partners – public and private – in the future?



Candy Markman (left) with Mayor Karl Dean

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