

Brownsville Independent School District Named Finalist for \$1 Million Broad Prize; One of Top Districts in Country for Student Gains

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LOS ANGELES - The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation announced today that the Brownsville Independent School District is among five school districts that have been chosen as finalists for the 2008 Broad Prize for Urban Education, an annual \$1 million award that honors urban school districts across the country that are making the greatest progress in raising student achievement.

Other finalists this year include:

- Aldine Independent School District, near Houston
- Broward County Public Schools, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
- Long Beach Unified School District, Calif.
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools



The Broad (rhymes with “road”) Prize for Urban Education honors urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between high- and low- income students.

The winner of The Broad Prize, to be announced on Tuesday, Oct. 14 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, will receive \$500,000 in scholarships for graduating seniors. Each of the four finalist districts will receive \$125,000 in scholarships.

“While numerous urban school districts are struggling to prepare students today for the jobs of tomorrow, these finalists are demonstrating that academic progress in our cities is possible and is happening,” said Eli Broad, founder of The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. “Everyone involved, from parents to teachers to staff in these districts, can be proud of their success. Their progress in improving student achievement is a model for other districts around the country.”

This is the first time the Brownsville Independent School District has been named a finalist. In addition, Brownsville is the fourth Texas district to be in the running since the award began in 2002. The Houston Independent School District won The Broad Prize in 2002. The Aldine Independent School District returns this year as a finalist for the third time. Last year, the Northside Independent School District in San Antonio was a finalist. Previous Broad Prize winners also include the New York City Department of Education (2007); Boston Public Schools (2006); Norfolk Public Schools (2005), Va.; the Garden Grove Unified School District (2004), Calif.; the Long Beach Unified School District (2003), Calif.; and the Houston Independent School District (2002).

This year, 100 of the largest urban school districts nationwide were eligible for The Broad Prize. The five finalist districts were selected by a review board of 19 prominent education researchers, policy leaders, practitioners and executives from leading universities, national education associations, think-tanks and foundations. The review board evaluated publicly available data compiled and analyzed by MPR Associates, Inc., a leading national education research consulting firm, and selected the five districts.

Among the reasons that Brownsville was chosen as a Broad Prize finalist:

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- In 2007:
 - *Brownsville outperformed other Texas districts serving students with similar income levels* in reading and math at all grade levels (elementary, middle and high school), according to The Broad Prize methodology. In addition, Brownsville's Hispanic and low-income students outperformed their peers in similar districts in reading and math at all grade levels.
 - *Brownsville's Hispanic and low-income students achieved higher average proficiency rates than their statewide counterparts* in math at all grade levels and in elementary reading.
- Between 2004 and 2007:
 - *Brownsville showed greater improvement than other Texas districts serving similar income levels* in math at all grade levels and in elementary and high school reading, according to The Broad Prize methodology. In addition, Brownsville's Hispanic students showed greater improvement than their peers in similar districts in reading and math at all grade levels, and low-income students showed greater improvement than their peers in similar districts in math at all grade levels and in elementary and high school reading.
 - *Brownsville narrowed achievement gaps between its Hispanic students and the statewide average for white students* in reading and math at all grade levels. For example, Brownsville reduced the gap between its Hispanic students and the statewide average for white students by 12 percentage points in middle school math.
 - *Brownsville narrowed achievement gaps between its low-income students and the state average for non-low income students* in reading and math at all grade levels. For example, Brownsville reduced the gap between its low-income students and the state average for non-low-income students by 9 percentage points in high school reading.
 - *Brownsville increased the percentage of Hispanic and low-income students who achieved proficiency* in math at all grade levels and in elementary and high school reading faster than the state.
 - *SAT and Advanced Placement exam participation rates for Hispanic students rose, as did the average SAT score for Hispanic students.*

Over the next two months, teams of educational researchers and practitioners led by SchoolWorks, an educational consulting company, will conduct site visits in each finalist district to gather qualitative information, interview district administrators, conduct focus groups with teachers and principals and observe classrooms. The teams will also talk to parents, community leaders, school board members and union representatives. A selection jury of prominent individuals from business, industry, education and public service will then review both the performance data and the qualitative site visit reports to choose the winning school district.

For more information about The Broad Prize, this year's finalists and the review board, please visit www.broadprize.org.

MPR Associates, Inc., one of the nation's leading education research consulting firms, is committed to strengthening elementary, secondary and postsecondary education and to expanding opportunities for youth and adults. With offices in Berkeley, Calif. and Washington D.C., MPR Associates manages the rigorous Broad Prize selection process. For more information, please visit www.mprinc.com.

SchoolWorks is an educational consulting company based in Beverly, Mass. Using a research-based rubric for district quality, SchoolWorks leads a site visit team of researchers and practitioners through the collection and analysis of interviews, documents and observations of Broad Prize finalist district practices. For more information, please visit www.schoolworks.com.

The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation is a national venture philanthropy established by entrepreneur and philanthropist Eli Broad to advance entrepreneurship for the public good in education, science and the arts. The Broad Foundation's education work is focused on dramatically improving urban K-12 public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition. The Broad Foundation's Internet address is www.broadfoundation.org.