

THE 2009 BROAD PRIZE FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Summary of District Data Report for Atlanta Public Schools

The Broad Prize for Urban Education uses student achievement data across several elements to identify urban school systems that are attaining high levels of performance as well as improving over time. Six elements are considered when determining the winner and finalists for the annual \$2 million Broad Prize:

1. Progress in closing achievement gaps between subgroups.
2. Absolute proficiency rates and growth in proficiency rates vs. the state.
3. Residuals that indicate whether a district is outperforming expectations given its poverty rate.
4. Graduation rates.
5. Performance on college readiness tests.
6. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

The information that follows represents a summary of The 2009 Broad Prize data for Atlanta Public Schools in Atlanta, Georgia. Additional details on the data described below may be found in the 2009 district data report available at www.broadprize.org.

A special note regarding Georgia student achievement data: The Broad Prize typically includes data for the last four years (2005 – 2008) when analyzing average change over time. Reading test standards changed in 2006 at the elementary and middle school levels; as a result, 2005 proficiency data were not comparable to subsequent years. The high school reading test has changed every year; as a result, no years were comparable. Math test standards changed at the elementary school level in 2008 and data were not comparable to previous years. Math test standards changed at the middle school level in 2005 and data were not comparable to later years.

KEY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Between 2005 and 2008, the district narrowed achievement gaps between African-American and white students and between low-income and non-low-income students in reading and math at the elementary and middle school levels.
- Between 2005 and 2008, the district narrowed achievement gaps between its African-American students and the state's white students and between its low-income students and the state's non-low-income students in reading and math at the elementary and middle school levels.
- From 2006-2008, of 27 possible opportunities to improve faster than the rest of the state at the highest achievement level in reading and math, the district did so in 23 instances (85%).
- In 2008, the district outperformed and out-improved other districts in Georgia that serve students with similar family income levels in reading at all school levels and in math at the elementary and middle school levels.
- Using the average for all three graduation rates, in 2006 the district graduated an estimated 48% of its students overall. This is one of the lowest graduation rates among the eligible districts.

- In 2008, 8% of the district's juniors and seniors took an Advanced Placement exam. Between 2005 and 2008, the participation rate experienced an average annual decline of 1 percentage point per year.

ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

The Broad Prize analysis looks at whether or not a district is closing achievement gaps among income and ethnic groups.

- Of 12 potential gap closures in reading (2006-2008) between African-American and white students and low-income and non-low-income students at the elementary and middle school levels, all 12 gaps are closing (100%). However, 0% of internal reading achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest in the state of Georgia (top two deciles) and 20% of internal reading gaps are among the largest in the state (bottom two deciles).
- Of the 19 potential gap closures in math (2005-2008) between Hispanic and white students, African-American and white students, and low-income and non-low-income students at the elementary, middle and high school levels, 15 gaps are closing (79%). However, 0% of internal math achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest in the state of Georgia (top two deciles) and 50% of internal math gaps are among the largest in the state (bottom two deciles).

PROFICIENCY RATES VS. THE STATE

The Broad Prize analysis looks at whether or not a district is demonstrating higher proficiency rates than the rest of the state and whether or not the district is improving proficiency rates faster than the rest of the state.

- Of 14 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in 5 instances in 2008 (36%). The district's strongest performance in reading relative to the rest of the state is at the elementary level, where all of its student subgroups performed at higher absolute proficiency rates than their peers in the rest of the state (4 of the 5 instances).
- From 2006-2008, of 10 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in 8 instances (80%). The only student group in which the district is *not* improving faster than the state is white students. However, proficiency rates for white students in 2008 were 98% at both the elementary and middle school levels; therefore, ceiling effects may be a factor.
- Of 15 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the rest of the state* in math, the district does so in 5 instances in 2008 (33%). The district's strongest performance in math relative to the rest of the state is at the elementary school level, where all of its student subgroups performed at higher absolute proficiency rates than their peers in the rest of the state (4 of the 5 instances).
- From 2005-2008, of 15 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state* in math, the district does so in 8 instances (53%). Of the district's largest subgroups (African-American and low-income students), the district's strongest improvement in math relative to the state is at the middle school level with African American students.

The Broad Prize analysis also looks at whether or not a higher percentage of a district's students is performing at the highest achievement level on the state assessment than their peers in the rest of the state and whether or not the district is improving rates at the highest achievement level faster than the rest of the state. This analysis is particularly relevant for states where ceiling effects may be a factor.

- Of 14 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in 9 instances in 2008 (64%).

- From 2006-2008, of 12 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state at the highest achievement level in reading*, the district does so in all 12 instances (100%).
- Of 15 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the rest of the state in math*, the district does so in 7 instances in 2008 (47%).
- From 2005-2008, of 15 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state at the highest achievement level in math*, the district does so in 11 instances (73%). The district's weakest improvement in math relative to the state is at the high school level (1 of the 11 instances).

STANDARDIZED RESIDUALS

The Broad Prize runs regressions for all districts in the state to determine whether or not a district is demonstrating greater-than-expected performance (2008 proficiency levels) and/or greater-than-expected improvement (trend data from 2005 to 2008) given the district's poverty level. A positive residual signifies that the district is beating expectations given its level of poverty.

- In reading, 3 of 3 performance residuals (elementary, middle and high school) are positive (100%) and 3 of 3 improvement residuals are positive (100%).
- In math, 2 of 3 performance residuals (elementary, middle and high school) are positive (67%) and 2 of 3 improvement residuals are positive (67%).

GRADUATION RATES

The Broad Prize uses three national definitions to determine an estimated graduation rate for the district. The calculations used are the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate, the Urban Institute Method, and the Manhattan Institute Method.

- Using the average for all three graduation rates, the graduation rate for all students overall has not changed significantly for the period 2003-2006 (the most recent publicly available data). A similar flat trend can be seen for African-American students.
- Using the average for all three graduation rates, in 2006 the district graduated an estimated 48% of its students overall (47% of its African-American students and 78% of its white students, representing a 31 point gap).

COLLEGE READINESS

The Broad Prize analyzes SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement (AP) scores and participation rates as proxies for college readiness.

- In 2008, 39% of the district's seniors took the SAT exam. The mean total SAT score for all senior test-takers in 2008 in the district was 862 (1,174 for white students and 819 for African-American students, representing a 355 point gap, and 957 for Hispanic students, representing a 217 point gap). From 2005 to 2008, mean total scores and participation rates for all senior test-takers overall decreased simultaneously.
- In 2008, 31% of the district's seniors took the ACT exam. The mean composite ACT score for all senior test-takers in 2008 in the district was 17 (26 for white students and 17 for African-American students, representing a 9 point gap). From 2005 to 2008, there was no change in the average ACT score for the district; however, participation rates increased.
- In 2008, 8% of the district's juniors and seniors took an AP exam (6% of African-American students). The percent of tests taken with scores of 3 or above for all junior and senior test-takers in the district in 2008 was 30% (54% for white students and 14% for African-American students, representing a 40 point gap, and 15% for Hispanic students, representing a 39 point gap). From 2005 to 2008, the participation rate decreased, while the percent of tests scoring 3 or higher increased.

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Broad Prize reviews district AYP status each year.

- The district did not meet AYP in 2005, 2006, 2007 or 2008.
- The percent of schools in the district meeting AYP targets in 2008 was 78% vs. 80% of schools in the state.