

THE 2009 BROAD PRIZE FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Summary of District Data Report for Birmingham City 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 Birmingham City Schools in Birmingham, Alabama. Additional details on the data described below may be found in the 2009 district data report available at www.broadprize.org.

KEY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- In 2008, half of the district's achievement gaps between non-low-income and low-income students were among the smallest in the state of Alabama.
- Between 2005 and 2008, the district showed better than expected improvement than other Alabama districts that serve students with similar family income levels in reading at all school levels (elementary, middle, high school) and in math at the middle and high school levels.
- Between 2003 and 2006, graduation rates for all students overall increased an average of 3 percentage points per year.
- The district is only closing one-third of its achievement gaps. The district is not closing any gaps at the elementary school level in reading or in math.
- In 2008, out of 24 possible comparisons in reading and math, in only one comparison did a student group in the district perform at higher absolute proficiency rates than their peers in the rest of the state.
- In 2008, the district did not beat expectations in performance nor in improvement at any school level (elementary, middle, high), even after taking into account the district's poverty level.
- Between 2005 and 2008, participation rates on ACT tests declined an average of 2 percentage points per year, and in 2008, only 5% of the district's juniors and seniors took an AP exam.

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 (2005-2008) between African-American and white students, and low-income and non-low-income students at the elementary, middle and high school levels, 2 gaps are closing (17%). In addition, 33% of internal reading achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Alabama while 33% of internal reading gaps are among the largest in the state (bottom two deciles).
- Of the 12 potential gap closures in math (2005-2008) between African-American and white students, and low-income and non-low-income students at the elementary, middle and high school levels, 6 gaps are closing (50%). In addition, 67% of internal math achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Alabama while 0% 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 gains than the rest of the state and whether or not the district is improving proficiency rates faster than the rest of the state.

- Of 12 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in only 1 instance in 2008 (8%). Only high school African-American students in the district are performing at higher absolute proficiency rates in reading than their peers in the rest of the state.
- From 2005-2008, of 12 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher improvement rates than the rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in 8 instances (67%).
- Of 12 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the rest of the state* in math, the district does so in 0 instances in 2008 (0%). No subgroup in the district is performing at higher absolute proficiency rates in math than their peers in the rest of the state.
- From 2005-2008, of 12 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state* in math, the district does so in 9 instances (75%). The district's strongest improvement relative to the state is at the middle and high school levels (8 of the 9 instances).

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 12 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in 0 instances in 2008 (0%).
- From 2007-2008, 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 4 instances (33%).
- Of 12 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the rest of the state* in math, the district does so in only 1 instance in 2008 (8%).
- From 2005-2008, of 12 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state at the highest achievement level* in math, the district does so in 6 instances (50%). The district's strongest improvement in math relative to the state is at the middle school level (3 of the 6 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, 0 of 3 performance residuals (elementary, middle and high school) are positive (0%), while 3 of 3 improvement residuals are positive (100%).
- In math, 0 of 3 performance residuals (elementary, middle and high school) are positive (0%), 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 district is demonstrating an average annual increase of 3 percentage points per year for the period 2003-2006 (the most recent publicly available data) for all students. A similar positive trend can be seen for African-American students (2 percentage points per year).
- Using the average for all three graduation rates, the district is graduating an estimated 60% of its students overall and 60% of its African-American students.

COLLEGE READINESS

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

- In 2008, 47% 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 18 (26 for white students and 17 for African-American students, representing a 9 point gap). Over the last four years, there has been no change in the average score for the district; participation rates demonstrated an average annual decrease for all students and African-American students.
- In 2008, 5% of the district's juniors and seniors took an AP exam (also 5% of African-American students, the only subgroup with data). The percent of tests taken with scores of 3 or above for all junior and senior test-takers in the district in 2008 was 14% (also 14% for African-American test takers, the only group with data available). Over the last four years, the participation rate for African-American students has increased by about 1 percentage point per year on average.

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Broad Prize reviews district AYP status each year.

- The district met AYP in 2006, 2007, and 2008.
- The percent of schools in the district meeting AYP targets in 2008 was 83% vs. 84% of schools in the state.