THE 2009 BROAD PRIZE FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Summary of District Data Report for Boston 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 Boston Public Schools in Boston, Massachusetts. 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 Massachusetts student achievement data: The Broad Prize typically includes data for the last four years (2005 – 2008) when analyzing average change over time. However, at the elementary and middle school levels, additional grades were tested in 2006. As a result, 2005 proficiency rates were not comparable and were not included in change calculations.

KEY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Average graduation rates, for all students overall and for white, African-American, and Hispanic students separately, have all increased from 2003 to 2006. Graduation rates for Hispanic students increased an average of 3 percentage points per year, one of the highest rates among the Broad Prize districts.
- Between 2005 and 2008, participation rates on the Advanced Placement exam increased for nearly all student groups. Both participation and passing rates increased for African-American students during this period.
- In 2008, the district outperformed other districts in Massachusetts that serve students with similar family income levels in reading at all school levels and in math at the middle and high school levels
- Between 2005 and 2008, the district narrowed all achievement gaps in reading and math at the high school level.
- In 2008, almost none of the student groups at the elementary and middle school levels in the district are performing at higher absolute proficiency rates in reading or in math than their peers in the rest of the state.

ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

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

- Of 27 potential gap closures in reading (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, 16 gaps are closing (59%). In addition, 11% of internal reading achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Massachusetts while 33% of internal reading gaps are among the largest in the state (bottom two deciles).
- Of the 27 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, 12 gaps are closing (44%). In addition, 22% of internal math achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Massachusetts while 33% 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 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the state* in reading, the district does so in 2 instances in 2008 (11%). Both instances occur at the high school level.
- From 2005-2008, of 18 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state* in reading, the district only does so in 9 instances (50%). All student subgroups at the high school level are improving faster relative to their peers in the state except for Asian students.
- Of 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the state* in math, the district does so in 4 instances in 2008 (22%). Three of the four instances occur at the high school level.
- From 2005-2008, of 18 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state* in math, the district does so in 10 instances (56%). The district demonstrates faster improvement in math relative to the state primarily at the high school level (6 of the 10 instances).

The Broad Prize analysis also looks at whether or not a higher percentage of a district's students are 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 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the state* in reading, the district does so in 3 instances in 2008 (17%). All three instances occur at the high school level.
- From 2005-2008, of 18 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state at the highest achievement level* in reading, the district does so in 4 instances (22%). The district demonstrates faster improvement in reading relative to the state primarily at the high school level (3 of the 4 instances).
- Of 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the state* in math, the district does so in 4 instances in 2008 (22%). All four instances occur at the high school level.

- From 2005-2008, of 18 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state at the highest achievement level* in math, the district does so in 4 instances (22%). All four instances occur at the high school level.

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 1 of 3 improvement residuals is positive (33%).
- In math, 2 of 3 performance residuals (elementary, middle and high school) are positive (67%) and 1 of 3 improvement residuals is positive (33%).

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 2 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 white students (2 percentage points per year), African-American students (1 percentage point per year), and for Hispanic students (3 percentage points per year).
- Using the average for all three graduation rates, the district is graduating an estimated 61% of its students overall, 72% of its white students, 59% of its African-American students, and 56% of its Hispanic students.

COLLEGE READINESS

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

- In 2008, 67% of the district's seniors took the SAT exam. The mean composite SAT score for all senior test-takers in 2008 in the district was 894 (1,102 for white students and 818 for African-American students, representing a 284 point gap, and 813 for Hispanic students, representing a 289 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, average scores as well as participation rates increased for all students overall.
- In 2008, 20% of the district's juniors and seniors took an AP exam (32% of white students and 11% of African-American students, representing a 21 point gap, and 10% of Hispanic students, representing a 22 point gap). The percent of tests taken with scores of 3 or above for all junior and senior test-takers in the district in 2008 was 49% (67% for white test-takers and 23% for African-American test takers, representing a 44 point gap, and 28% for Hispanic test takers, representing a 39 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, the participation rate increased for all subgroups except for Hispanic students; during this period the percent of tests scoring 3 or higher increased for African-American and Asian students.

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 10% vs. 34% of schools in the state.