

THE 2009 BROAD PRIZE FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Summary of District Data Report for Cobb County School District

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 Cobb County School District in Marietta, 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 data were not comparable to subsequent years and were not included in change calculations. The high school reading test has changed every year. Therefore, no years were comparable and average change could not be calculated.

KEY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- In 2008, nearly all subgroups in the district performed at higher absolute proficiency rates in reading and math than their peers in the rest of the state. In addition, of 36 possible opportunities to demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the rest of the state in reading and math, the district does so in 30 instances in 2008.
- Between 2005 and 2008, participation rates on the SAT, ACT, and Advanced Placement exams have increased for nearly all student groups.
- Overall, between 2005 and 2008, the district narrowed 80% of its achievement gaps in reading and math.
- In 2008, the district outperformed other districts in Georgia 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 2003 and 2006, the average graduation rate for all students overall and for African-American and Hispanic students declined 1 percentage point per year on average.

ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

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

- Of 18 potential gap closures in reading (2006-2008) between Hispanic and white students, African-American and white students, and low-income and non-low-income students at the elementary and middle school levels, 16 gaps are closing (89%). However, 0% of internal reading achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Georgia and 11% of internal reading gaps are among the largest in the state (bottom two deciles).
- Of the 27 potential gap closures in math (2006-2008) 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, 20 gaps are closing (74%). However, 0% of internal reading achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Georgia and 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 rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in 16 instances in 2008 (89%). All subgroups in the district are performing at higher absolute proficiency rates in reading than their peers in the rest of the state, with the exception of Hispanic students at the elementary and high school levels.
- From 2006-2008, of 12 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in 3 instances (25%).
- Of 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the rest of the state* in math, the district does so in 15 instances in 2008 (83%). All subgroups in the district, except Hispanic students at all school levels, are performing at higher absolute proficiency rates in math than their peers in the rest of the state.
- From 2006-2008, of 18 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state* in math, the district does so in 4 instances (22%).

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 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in 15 instances in 2008 (83%). Only Hispanic students at all school levels are not demonstrating higher rates than their peers in the state.
- 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 5 instances (42%).
- Of 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the rest of the state* in math, the district does so in 15 instances in 2008 (83%).
- From 2006-2008, of 18 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 (33%).

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 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 decrease of -1 percentage point per year for the period 2003-2006 (the most recent publicly available data) for all students. A similar negative trend can be seen for African-American students (-1 percentage point per year) and Hispanic students (-1 percentage point per year) while white students are demonstrating an average annual increase (1 percentage point per year).
- Using the average for all three graduation rates, the district is graduating an estimated 71% of its students overall, 81% of its white students, 59% of its African-American students, and 49% 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, 75% 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 1,024 (1,077 for white students and 888 for African-American students, representing a 189 point gap, and 959 for Hispanic students, representing a 118 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, there has been a decrease in the average score for the district; however, participation rates have increased for nearly all subgroups.
- In 2008, 38% 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 22 (23 for white students and 19 for African-American students, representing a 4 point gap, and 20 for Hispanic students, representing a 3 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, there has been no change in the average score for the district while participation rates have increased 3 to 4 percentage points per year on average for all subgroups.
- In 2008, 26% of the district's juniors and seniors took an AP exam (28% of white students and 15% of African-American students, representing a 13 point gap, and 23% of Hispanic students, representing a 5% 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 58% (65% for white test-takers and 28% for African-American test takers, representing a 37 point gap, and 52% for Hispanic test takers, representing a 13 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008s, the percent of tests scoring 3 or higher has decreased for all subgroups, but participation rates have 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 86% vs. 80% of schools in the state.