

THE 2009 BROAD PRIZE FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Summary of District Data Report for Fairfax County 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 Fairfax County Public Schools in Fairfax, Virginia. 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 Virginia student achievement data: The Broad Prize typically includes data for the last four years (2005 – 2008) when analyzing average change over time. However, in 2006, test standards changed at the elementary and middle school levels. As a result, previous years' proficiency results were not comparable and were not included in change calculations. In 2007, testing policies in reading changed for ELL students at all grades and changed again in 2008 for ELLs in grades 3-8. As a result, change in high school reading performance was based only on 2007 and 2008 results, and change in reading performance at the elementary and middle school levels could not be calculated.

KEY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- In 2008, nearly all subgroups at all school levels in the district performed at higher absolute proficiency rates in reading than their peers in the rest of the state. Moreover, nearly all subgroups at all school levels also demonstrated higher rates at the highest achievement level than their peers in the rest of the state.
- Between 2005 and 2008, participation rates on ACT, SAT and Advanced Placement exams increased for all student subgroups.
- In 2008, the district outperformed other districts in Virginia 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 74% of its achievement gaps in math overall and 100% of its internal achievement gaps in math.
- Using the average for all three graduate rates, the district graduated an estimated 80% of its students overall and 71% of its African-American students in 2006. These are two of the highest rates among the Broad Prize districts.

- From 2005-2008, of 23 possible opportunities to improve faster than the rest of the state in reading and math, the district does so in only 2 instances (9%).
- Average graduation rates, for all students overall and for white, African-American, and Hispanic students separately, have all decreased from 2003 to 2006.

ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

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

- Of 8 potential gap closures in reading (2007-2008) between Hispanic and white students, African-American and white students, and low-income and non-low-income students at the high school level, 2 gaps are closing (25%). In addition, 0% of internal reading achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Virginia while 11% 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, 20 gaps are closing (74%). In addition, 0% of internal math achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Virginia while 89% 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 16 instances in 2008 (89%). Only African-American students at the elementary and high school levels are not performing at higher absolute proficiency rates in reading than their peers in the rest of the state.
- From 2007-2008, of 5 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state* in reading, the district only does so in only 1 instance (20%). The district is only improving faster relative to the state in high school reading with non-low income students.
- Of 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the state* in math, the district does so in 9 instances in 2008 (50%). White and non-low income students in the district are performing at higher absolute proficiency rates in math than their peers in the rest of the state at all school levels.
- From 2005-2008, of 18 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state* in math, the district does so in only 1 instance (6%). Only African-American students at the high school level are improving faster in math than their peers in the state.

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 16 instances in 2008 (89%). Hispanic and low-income students at the high school level are not demonstrating higher rates in reading than their peers in the rest of the state.

- From 2007-2008, of 5 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state at the highest achievement level* in reading, the district does so in only 1 instance (20%). The district demonstrates faster improvement in reading relative to the state only at the high school level with African-American students.
- Of 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the state* in math, the district does so in 13 instances in 2008 (72%).
- 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 1 instance (6%). The district demonstrates faster improvement in math relative to the state at the high school level with African-American students.

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 0 of 3 improvement residuals are positive (0%).

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 -2 percentage points 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 (-4 percentage points per year), and for Hispanic students (-2 percentage points per year) while there was no change for white students (0 percentage points per year).
- Using the average for all three graduation rates, the district is graduating an estimated 80% of its students overall, 90% of its white students, 71% of its African-American students, and 59% 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, 77% 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 1,112 (1,147 for white students and 937 for African-American students, representing a 210 point gap, and 992 for Hispanic students, representing a 155 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, participation rates increased for all student subgroups, but only African-American and Asian students simultaneously showed an increase in average scores.
- In 2008, 23% 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 24 (24 for white students and 19 for African-American students, representing a 5 point gap, and 22 for Hispanic students, representing a 2 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, the average scores across subgroups remained flat with the exception of Asian students; however, participation rates increased for all student subgroups.

- In 2008, 41% of the district's juniors and seniors took an AP exam (43% of white students and 19% of African-American students, representing a 24 point gap, and 21% 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 67% (71% for white test-takers and 48% for African-American test takers, representing a 23 point gap, and 60% for Hispanic test takers, representing a 11 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, the participation rate increased for all student subgroups, while the percent of tests scoring 3 or higher increased for African-American and Asian students only.

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Broad Prize reviews district AYP status each year.

- The district met AYP in 2005, 2006, and 2008, but did not meet AYP in 2007.
- The percent of schools in the district meeting AYP targets in 2008 was 74% vs. 75% of schools in the state.