

## THE 2009 BROAD PRIZE FOR URBAN EDUCATION

### Summary of District Data Report for Houston Independent 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 Houston Independent School District in Houston, Texas. Additional details on the data described below may be found in the 2009 district data report available at [www.broadprize.org](http://www.broadprize.org).

#### KEY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Between 2005 and 2008, the district closed 91% of its achievement gaps in reading and math.
- In 2008, the district outperformed other districts in Texas that serve students with similar family income levels in math at the elementary and high school levels. In addition, between 2005 and 2008, the district showed better than expected improvement than other similar Texas school districts in math at the elementary and high school levels.
- In 2008, half of the district's internal gaps were among the largest in the state of Texas.
- Average graduation rates for all students overall, African-American, and Hispanic students decreased from 2003 to 2006.
- In 2008, only white students performed at higher absolute proficiency rates in reading and math at all school levels than their peers in 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 African-American and white students, Hispanic and white students, and low-income and non-low-income students at the elementary, middle and high school levels, 23 gaps are closing (85%). However, 0% of internal reading achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Texas while 56% 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 African-American and white students, Hispanic and white students, and low-income and non-low-income students at the elementary, middle and high school levels, 26 gaps are closing (96%). However, 0% of

internal math achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Texas and 44% 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 3 instances in 2008 (17%). Only white students are performing at higher absolute proficiency rates in reading than their peers in the rest of the state.
- From 2005-2008, of 18 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state in reading*, the district only does so in 8 instances (44%).
- Of 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the state in math*, the district does so in 5 instances in 2008 (28%).
- From 2005-2008, of 18 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state in math*, the district does so in 13 instances (72%). Only white students at the elementary and middle school levels and non-low-income students at all school levels did not improve faster than 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 4 instances in 2008 (22%).
- 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 6 instances (33%). The district is primarily improving faster than the state at the elementary school level (4 of the 6 instances).
- Of 18 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the state in math*, the district does so in 6 instances in 2008 (33%).
- 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 7 instances (39%). The majority of instances occur at the elementary school level (5 of the 7 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, 1 of 3 performance residuals (elementary, middle and high school) is positive (33%) 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 -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 Hispanic students (-2 percentage points per year) and African-American students (-1 percentage point per year), while white students demonstrated no change.
- Using the average for all three graduation rates, the district is graduating an estimated 49% of its students overall, 76% of white students, 47% of African-American students and 44% 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, 49% 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 943 (1,141 for white students and 853 for African-American students, representing a 288 point gap, and 880 for Hispanic students, representing a 261 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, average scores increased for nearly all student groups while participation rates remained steady.
- In 2008, 15% 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 20 (25 for white students and 18 for African-American students, representing a 7 point gap, and 19 for Hispanic students, representing a 6 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, participation rates increased for white students only while average scores remained flat for most student groups.
- In 2008, 18% of the district's juniors and seniors took an AP exam (28% for white students, 11% for African-American students, representing a 17 point gap, and 16% for Hispanic students, representing a 12 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 46% (65% for white students and 21% for African-American students, representing a 44 point gap, and 31% for Hispanic test takers, representing a 34 point gap). Between 2005 and 2008, only Asian students increased their passing rates while all student groups increased their participation rates.

## **ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS**

The Broad Prize reviews district AYP status each year.

- The district did not meet AYP in 2006, 2007 and 2008, but did meet AYP in 2005.
- The percent of schools in the district meeting AYP targets in 2008 was 82% vs. 85% of schools in the state.