

THE 2009 BROAD PRIZE FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Summary of District Data Report for Little Rock 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 the Little Rock School District in Little Rock, Arkansas. 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

- Between 2005 and 2008, the district narrowed 56% of its gaps between Hispanic and white students.
- In 2008, 35% of the district's juniors and seniors took at least one Advanced Placement exam and 73% of the district's seniors took the SAT exam. These are among the highest participation rates of the eligible districts.
- In 2008, 100% of the district's internal gaps in reading and math were among the largest in the state of Arkansas.
- In 2008, none of the district's African-American student subgroups at any school level performed at higher absolute proficiency rates than their peers in the rest of the state in reading or math. Between 2005 and 2008, none of the district's African-American student subgroups at any school level increased proficiency rates faster than the state in reading or in math.
- In 2008, the district showed lower-than-expected performance compared to other districts in Arkansas that serve students with similar family income levels in reading and math at the all school levels. Between 2005 and 2008, the district also showed lower-than-expected improvement compared to other similar districts in Arkansas in reading at all school levels and in math at the elementary and middle school levels.
- From 2003 to 2006, the average graduation rate for all students overall and for African-American students decreased an average of -1 percentage point per year.

ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

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

- Of 15 potential gap closures in reading (2005-2008) between Hispanic and white students and African-American and white students at the elementary, middle and high school, only 4 gaps are closing (27%). In addition, 0% of internal reading achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Arkansas while 100% of internal reading gaps are among the largest in the state (bottom two deciles).
- Of the 15 potential gap closures in math (2005-2008) between Hispanic and white students and African-American and white students at the elementary, middle and high school, 10 gaps are closing (67%). In addition, 0% of internal reading achievement gaps in 2008 are among the smallest (top two deciles) in the state of Arkansas while 100% of internal reading gaps are among the largest in the state (bottom two deciles).

*Test data for non-low-income students in Little Rock were not available.

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 14 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the rest of the state* in reading, the district does so in 4 instances in 2008 (29%). Only white students are demonstrating proficiency rates higher than the rest of the state at all school levels in reading.
- From 2005-2008, of 14 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state* in reading, the district only does so in 1 instance (7%). No subgroup in the district is improving proficiency rates in reading faster than the rest of the state except for Hispanic elementary students.
- Of 15 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher proficiency rates than the rest of the state* in math the district does so in 3 instances in 2008 (20%). The only subgroup in the district demonstrating proficiency rates higher than the rest of state in reading is white students, at all school levels.
- From 2005-2008, of 14 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the rest of the state* in math, the district does so in 4 instances (29%). The district's is primarily improving faster than the state in math at the high school level (3 of the 4 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 14 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the state* in reading, the district does so in 2 instances in 2008 (14%).
- From 2005-2008, of 14 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state at the highest achievement level* in reading, the district does so in 3 instances (21%).
- Of 15 possible opportunities to *demonstrate higher rates at the highest achievement level than the state* in math, the district does so in 3 instances in 2008 (21%). Only white students are demonstrating higher rates than their peers in the rest of the state, at all school levels.
- From 2005-2008, of 14 possible opportunities to *improve faster than the state at the highest achievement level* in math, the district does so in 2 instances (14%). Both instances occur at the elementary 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, 0 of 3 performance residuals (elementary, middle and high school) are positive (0%) and 0 of 3 improvement residuals are positive (0%).
- In math, 0 of 3 performance residuals (elementary, middle and high school) are positive (0%) 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 decrease of -1 percentage point per year for the period 2003-2006 (the most recent publicly available data) for all students. The same negative annual trend (-1 percentage point per year) holds for the district's African-American students.
- Using the average for all three graduation rates, the district is graduating an estimated 66% of its students (80% of white students and 61% of 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, 73% of the district's students took the ACT exam (86% of white students and 59% of African-American students, representing a 27 point gap). The mean composite ACT score for all test-takers in 2008 in the district was 20 (24 for white students and 17 for African-American students, representing a 7 point gap). Over the last four years, there has been no increase in the average scores for the district; however, participation rates have increased 3 percentage points per year on average for white students and 1 percentage point per year on average for African-American students.
- In 2008, 35% of the district's students took an AP exam (53% of white students and 23% of African-American students, representing a 30 point gap). The percent of tests taken with scores of 3 or above for all test-takers in the district in 2008 was 25% (34% for white test-takers and 5% for African-American test takers, representing a 29 point gap). Over the last four years, both the participation rates and percent of tests scoring 3 or higher have been flat or declining for all subgroups.

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Broad Prize reviews district AYP status each year.

Overall AYP results by subgroup were not reported by the state education agency.