

The Broad Foundation Announces 2011 Finalists for \$1 Million Broad Prize; Four Urban School Districts Honored for Significant Student Gains

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LOS ANGELES - [The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation](#) announced today the four school districts that are finalists for the 2011 [Broad Prize for Urban Education](#), an annual \$1 million award that honors large urban school districts making the greatest progress in America in raising student achievement.

This year's four finalists – all of which are previous finalists – are:

- Broward County Public Schools, Fla.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, N.C.
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Fla.
- Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, Texas

The Broad (rhymes with “road”) Prize for Urban Education is the largest education award in the country given to urban school districts that demonstrate the best overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among poor and minority students.

The winner of The Broad Prize, to be announced on Tuesday, Sept. 20 in Washington, D.C., will receive \$550,000 in college scholarships for high school seniors who will graduate in 2012. The three finalist districts will each receive \$150,000 in college scholarships, for a total distribution of \$1 million in Broad Prize scholarships.

“As we celebrate our 10th year of The Broad Prize, it is significant that all four finalists this year have been finalists before,” said Eli Broad, founder of The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. “One of the most difficult challenges in public education is sustaining progress, but these districts have demonstrated that their steady focus on student achievement has indeed resulted in continued academic gains.”

The finalists were selected by a [review board](#) of 21 prominent education researchers, policy leaders, practitioners and executives from leading universities, national education associations, think-tanks and foundations. The Broad Foundation does not play a role in selecting the finalists or the winner.

In the 2011 Broad Prize finalist districts, the percent of African-American and Hispanic students performing at the highest achievement levels on state reading and math assessments were among the top third of all districts in their respective states. These districts also made progress in closing academic achievement gaps between minority students and their white peers at the state level, as well as between low-income students and their non-low-income peers at the state level. Additionally, in all four finalist districts, Hispanic student participation rates increased on Advanced Placement exams.

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All four 2011 Broad Prize finalists have previously been finalists. Ysleta was a finalist last year, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg was a finalist in 2010 and in 2004. Miami-Dade County returns as a finalist for the fourth year, after being a finalist in 2006, 2007 and 2008. Broward returns as a three-time finalist, previously recognized in 2008 and 2009.

Previous Broad Prize winners have been Gwinnett County Public Schools outside Atlanta (2010), the Aldine Independent School District near Houston (2009), the Brownsville Independent School District in Texas (2008); the New York City Department of Education (2007); Boston Public Schools (2006); Norfolk Public Schools in Virginia (2005); the Garden Grove Unified School District in California (2004); the Long Beach Unified School District in California (2003); and the Houston Independent School District (2002).

Given changes in urban and suburban demographics over the last decade, The Broad Foundation narrowed the eligibility and selection requirements for The Broad Prize this year to ensure a comparison of large urban school districts. As a result, 75 large urban school districts were automatically eligible and considered for The Broad Prize. School districts cannot apply or be nominated. In selecting the four finalists, the review board evaluated publicly available academic performance data on each district that were compiled and analyzed by [MPR Associates, Inc.](#), a leading national education research consulting firm. The review board chose four districts that stood out in areas including:

- Academic performance and improvement on state exams compared both with other districts in the state with similar low-income student populations and with all other school districts regardless of income levels served
- Narrowing income and ethnic achievement gaps
- Improving college readiness, as evidenced by graduation rates, SAT and ACT exam scores and participation rates, and Advanced Placement exam participation and passing rates

Over the next two months, teams of educational researchers and practitioners led by the education consulting company [RMC Research Corporation](#) will conduct site visits in each finalist district to gather qualitative information, interview district administrators, conduct focus groups with teachers and principals and observe classrooms. The teams will also interview parents, community leaders, school board members and union representatives. A [selection jury](#) of prominent individuals from business, industry, education and public service will then review all resulting quantitative and qualitative data to choose the winning school district.

For more information about The Broad Prize, this year's finalists, the review board and selection jury, please visit www.broadprize.org.

[The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation](#) is a national venture philanthropy established by entrepreneur Eli Broad to advance entrepreneurship for the public good in education, science and the arts. The Broad Foundation's education work is focused on dramatically improving K-12 urban public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition. The Broad Foundation's Internet address is www.broadfoundation.org, and foundation updates are available on Twitter.

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