



news release

\$2 Million Broad Prize for Urban Education Awarded to Brownsville Independent School District, Four Finalist Districts

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RELEASE
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NEW YORK – The Brownsville Independent School District (BISD) in Texas won the 2008 Broad Prize for Urban Education, the largest education prize in the country awarded to the most improved urban school district, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation announced today. Brownsville, located at the southern-most tip of Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border, serves one of the poorest urban populations in America—with 94 percent of its students qualifying for free and reduced-priced school lunch.

Former U.S. Secretaries of Education Rod Paige and Richard Riley joined philanthropist Eli Broad at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City to announce the winner. NBC News Special Correspondent Tom Brokaw delivered the keynote address at a celebratory Broad Prize luncheon following the announcement.

The \$2 million Broad (rhymes with “road”) Prize is an annual award that honors large urban school districts that demonstrate the strongest student achievement and improvement in America while narrowing achievement gaps between income and ethnic groups. The money goes directly to graduating high school seniors for college scholarships. The winner was selected by a jury of 10 prominent American leaders from government, education, business and civic sectors, including two former U.S. secretaries of education from both parties.

“Brownsville is the best kept secret in America,” said Eli Broad, founder of The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. “In the face of stark poverty, Brownsville is outpacing other large urban districts nationwide because it is smartly focusing all resources on directly supporting students and teachers. Other school districts can learn a great deal from Brownsville’s success.”

As the winner of The Broad Prize, the Brownsville Independent School District will receive \$1 million in college scholarships for graduating seniors next spring. The four finalists—Aldine Independent School District, Texas; Broward County Public Schools, Fla.; Long Beach Unified School District in California and Miami-Dade County Public Schools—will each receive \$250,000 in college scholarships. Long Beach won the 2003 Broad Prize, and this marked the second year that the former winner returned as a finalist. Both Aldine and Miami-Dade are three-time finalists, while this is Brownsville’s and Broward’s first year in the running.

Among the reasons Brownsville stood out among large urban school districts:

- **Outperforming other similar Texas districts.** In 2007, Brownsville outperformed other Texas districts serving students with similar income levels in reading and math at all grade levels, according to The Broad Prize methodology. In addition, Brownsville's Hispanic and low-income students outperformed their peers in similar districts in reading and math at all grade levels.
- **Greater improvement by ethnic and income subgroups.** Between 2004 and 2007, Brownsville's Hispanic students showed greater improvement than their peers in similar Texas districts in reading and math at all grade levels, according to The Broad Prize methodology. Brownsville's low-income students also showed greater improvement than their peers in similar Texas districts in math at all grade levels and in elementary and high school reading. From 2004 to 2007, Brownsville surpassed the state average in raising the percentage of Hispanic and low-income students who achieved math proficiency at all grade levels and in elementary and high school reading proficiency.
- **Closing achievement gaps.** Brownsville is narrowing income and ethnic achievement gaps in reading and math at all grade levels. For example, between 2004 and 2007, Brownsville reduced the gap between Hispanic students and the state average for white students by 12 percentage points in middle school math and reduced the gap between low-income students and Texas' non-low-income student average by nine percentage points in high school reading.
- **Strong district-wide policies and practices.** Brownsville's strategic, district-wide approach puts student needs first, offering them a challenging curriculum and a range of enrichment opportunities. The district has effective fiscal practices, directs funds to the classroom, continuously reviews and updates its curriculum and holds all staff accountable for results.

Each year, 100 of the largest urban school districts nationwide are automatically eligible for The Broad Prize. Districts cannot apply for or be nominated for this award.

For a full electronic press kit, including additional student outcomes and key policies and practices that made Brownsville stand out among large urban American districts, as well as details on all the finalists, please visit www.broadprize.org.

The Broad Prize was started in 2002. Previous winners include the New York City Department of Education (2007), Boston Public Schools (2006), Norfolk Public Schools, Va. (2005), Garden Grove Unified School District, Calif. (2004), Long Beach Unified School District, Calif. (2003) and the Houston Independent School District (2002).

The selection jury that chose this year's winner included:

- **Henry Cisneros**, chairman and CEO, CityView America, former president of Univision and former U.S. secretary of housing and urban development
- **John Engler**, president and CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers and former governor of Michigan

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- **Louis V. Gerstner, Jr.**, retired chairman and CEO, IBM Corporation
- **Susan Hockfield**, president, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- **James B. Hunt, Jr.**, chairman of the board, Hunt Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy and former governor of North Carolina
- **Shirley Ann Jackson**, president, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- **Roderick Paige**, chairman and founder, Chartwell Education Group and former U.S. secretary of education
- **Richard W. Riley**, former U.S. secretary of education and former governor of South Carolina
- **Andrew L. Stern**, international president of Service Employees International Union
- **Lawrence Summers**, Charles W. Eliot university professor at Harvard University and former president of Harvard University

The selection jury evaluated quantitative data on the finalists, consisting of publicly available student performance data compiled and analyzed by MPR Associates, Inc., a leading national education research consulting firm. In addition, the jury evaluated the five finalist districts' policies and practices based on site visits, interviews with administrators, teachers, principals, parents, community leaders, school board members and union representatives and classroom observations. The site visits were conducted by a site visit team led by SchoolWorks, an education consulting company based in Beverly, Mass.

Brownsville was originally selected as a finalist by a "review board" of 19 prominent education researchers, policy leaders, practitioners and executives from leading universities, national education associations, think-tanks and foundations that evaluated publicly available student performance data.

Because Brownsville won the 2008 Broad Prize, Brownsville high school seniors who graduate in 2009 will be eligible for \$1 million in college scholarships. Broad Prize scholarships are awarded to students who demonstrate significant financial need and show a record of academic improvement during their high school careers. Scholarship recipients who enroll in four-year colleges will receive up to \$20,000 paid out over four years (\$5,000 per year). Broad Prize scholars who enroll in two-year colleges receive up to \$5,000 scholarships paid out over two years (\$2,500 per year). The scholarship process is managed by Scholarship and Recognition Programs, a unit of the Educational Testing Service. For more information, please visit www.broadprize.org/scholarship_program.

The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation is a national venture philanthropy established by entrepreneur and philanthropist 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 urban K-12 public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition. The Broad Foundation's Internet address is www.broadfoundation.org.

Note: Photos of the event will be available on the AP wire after 4 p.m. on October 14, 2008.

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