

**The Broad Foundation Announces 2009 Finalists for \$2 Million Broad Prize;
Five Urban School Districts Honored for Significant Student Gains**

- All five make notable reductions in academic achievement gaps -

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LOS ANGELES - The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation announced today the five school districts that are finalists for the 2009 Broad Prize for Urban Education, an annual \$2 million award that honors urban school districts making the greatest progress nationwide in raising student achievement.

This year's five finalists are:

- Aldine Independent School District, near Houston
- Broward County Public Schools, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
- Gwinnett County Public Schools outside Atlanta
- Long Beach Unified School District, Calif.
- Socorro 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 school districts that demonstrate the best overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between low- and non-low-income students.

The winner of The Broad Prize, to be announced on Wednesday, Sept. 16 in Washington, D.C., will receive \$1 million in scholarships for high school seniors who will graduate in 2010. The four finalist districts will each receive \$250,000 in scholarships.

“These five districts are among the most impressive in the country because they have demonstrated an unwavering focus on student achievement above all else,” said Eli Broad, founder of The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. “They stand as a beacon for other urban districts facing similar challenges and are exemplars of practices that can be replicated elsewhere across the country to improve our public schools.”

The finalists were selected by a review board of 20 prominent education researchers, policy leaders, practitioners and executives from leading universities, national education associations, think-tanks and foundations.

One commonality among this year's finalists, which all serve significant percentages of low-income and minority students, is that all five made notable gains in reducing achievement gaps chronically present in large urban districts in the United States. For example, between 2005 and 2008, all five districts narrowed achievement gaps between Hispanic students and the state average for white students in reading and math at multiple school levels. In addition, a higher percentage of low-income students in these five districts performed at the highest achievement level on state assessments in reading and math than did their counterparts statewide in 2008.

The districts in the running for the 2009 Broad Prize include four-time finalist Aldine, two-time finalist Broward County, three-time finalist and former Broad Prize winner Long Beach, and two first-time finalists, Gwinnett County and Socorro.

Previous Broad Prize winners have included the Brownsville Independent School District (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); and the Houston Independent School District (2002).

Every year, 100 of America's largest urban school districts are eligible for The Broad Prize. In selecting the five finalists, the review board evaluated publicly available academic performance data on each district that was compiled and analyzed by MPR Associates, Inc., a leading national education research consulting firm. The review board chose five districts that stood out in areas including:

- Academic performance and improvement on state exams compared with other districts in the state with similar low-income student populations and with the rest of the state as a whole
- Closure of income and ethnic achievement gaps
- College readiness indicators such as graduation rates, SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement exam data

Over the next two months, teams of educational researchers and practitioners led by SchoolWorks, an educational consulting company based in Beverly, Mass., 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 talk to 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 and the review board, 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 urban K-12 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.