

## **The Broad Foundation Announces 2010 Finalists for \$2 Million Broad Prize; Five Urban School Districts Honored for Significant Student Gains**

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LOS ANGELES - [The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation](#) announced today the five school districts that are finalists for the 2010 [Broad Prize for Urban Education](#), an annual \$2 million award that honors urban school districts making the greatest progress in America in raising student achievement.

Making a strong showing by southern states, this year's five finalists are:

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, N.C.
- Gwinnett County Public Schools outside Atlanta
- Montgomery County Public Schools, Md.
- Socorro Independent School District, El Paso, Texas
- 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 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, Oct. 19 in New York City, will receive \$1 million in college scholarships for high school seniors who will graduate in 2011. The four finalist districts will each receive \$250,000 in college scholarships.

"At a time when public schools are in crisis, these five urban school districts are an example for other struggling districts because they have demonstrated that students can achieve and improvement is possible even in challenging times," said Eli Broad, founder of The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. "It is our hope that other districts around the country will learn from the practices these five districts are employing that are leading to sustainable academic gains."

The finalists were selected by a [review board](#) of 18 prominent education researchers, policy leaders, practitioners and executives from leading universities, national education associations, think-tanks and foundations.

In the 2010 Broad Prize finalist districts, a higher percentage of African-American, Hispanic and low-income students performed at the highest achievement level on state assessments in reading and math than did their statewide counterparts in 2009. The districts also made progress in closing academic achievement gaps among minority and low-income students. Additionally, all five districts made notable gains in preparing students academically for college, as shown, for example, by increased participation rates by minority students on SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement exams.

Of the five districts in the running for the 2010 Broad Prize, Gwinnett County and Socorro were finalists last year, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg was a finalist in 2004. Montgomery County and Ysleta are first-time finalists.

Previous Broad Prize winners have been 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); Long Beach Unified School District in California (2003); and the Houston Independent School District (2002).

Every year, [100 of America's largest urban school districts are automatically eligible](#) for The Broad Prize; they cannot apply or be nominated. 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 both with other districts in the state with similar low-income student populations and with the rest of the state as a whole
- 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](http://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.broadeducation.org](http://www.broadeducation.org) and foundation updates are available on Twitter.

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