



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is The Broad Prize for Urban Education?

The Broad Prize for Urban Education is the largest education prize in the country given to a single school district. The \$1 million Broad Prize is awarded each year to urban school districts making the greatest overall improvement in student achievement while at the same time reducing the performance gaps among ethnic groups and between high- and low-income students.

What is the goal of The Broad Prize?

The Broad Prize for Urban Education was established in 2002 and has four goals:

- Restore the public's confidence in our nation's public schools by highlighting success stories;
- Reward districts that have improved the achievement levels of disadvantaged students;
- Create competition among districts and an incentive for them to improve;
- Showcase the best practices of successful districts.

Who are the finalists for the 2005 Broad Prize?

This year's finalists are:

- Aldine Independent School District near Houston
- Boston Public Schools
- New York City Department of Education
- Norfolk Public Schools in Virginia
- San Francisco Unified School District

This is the fourth year Boston has been a finalist, the third year for Norfolk and the second for Aldine.

How is the winner of The Broad Prize for Urban Education selected?

The Broad Education Foundation works with the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) to manage The Broad Prize selection process. The 2005 selection process involved four steps:

- (1) More than 80 urban school districts were identified as eligible candidates for the Prize, based on size, low-income enrollment, minority enrollment, and urban environment.
- (2) A Review Board comprised of 17 prominent education leaders from across the country analyzed extensive quantitative data and used their collective knowledge and experience to determine the finalists.
- (3) In April and May 2005, a team of experienced researchers and practitioners conducted site visits to each finalist district to gather additional quantitative and qualitative data;
- (4) A Selection Jury comprised of eight nationally prominent individuals from business and industry, government and public service met in summer 2005 to review the statistical data and on-site reports for each district and select the winner.

What is the specific data examined by NCEA and studied by the Review Board?

NCEA and the Review Board consider the following:

- Mandated state tests in reading and math for elementary, middle and high schools. They also look at the percentage of students tested.
- Performance of a district compared with itself and compared with expected performance for similar districts (based on poverty levels) in the state.
- Achievement gaps between ethnic groups and between low-income and non-low-income students (as compared to the state average)
- Graduation rate – we ask each district for demographic data and then calculate the graduation rate based on the Manhattan Institute methodology.
- SAT and ACT scores
- Student demographic data (income, language, ethnicity)

The Review Board then looks at the data, meets and discusses the results. There is no formula to choose the finalists.

What's involved in the site visits?

NCEA has developed a “best practices” framework. The site visits look for evidence of the five best practices areas at the district, school and classroom level:

1. Curriculum and academic goals
2. Staff selection, leadership and capacity building
3. Instructional programs, practices and arrangements
4. Monitoring, analysis and use of data
5. Recognition, interventions and adjustments

The teams visit one elementary, one middle and one high school in each district during the three-day site visits. In addition to interviewing the district superintendent, school board president, union leaders, parent and community representatives, principals and teachers, the team also conducts classroom observations and focus groups with new and experienced principals and teachers.

How will the districts use the money?

The \$1 million award funds scholarships for graduating high school seniors to attend college or other post-secondary training. The winning district will receive \$500,000 in scholarships; the four finalists will each receive \$125,000 in scholarships.

How are the scholarship recipients selected? How much are the scholarships?

The 2005 Broad Prize scholarships will be awarded to graduating high school seniors who have exemplary academic achievement and financial need and who have a demonstrated record of improvement during their high school career. Seniors from each of the winning and finalist districts are eligible for two- or four-year scholarships depending on the type of institution they choose to attend. Students who enroll in four-year institutions receive \$10,000 scholarships paid out over four years (\$2,500 per year). Students who enroll in two-year institutions receive \$2,500 scholarships paid out over two years (\$1,250 per year). The scholarship selection and disbursement process is jointly managed by the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and by Scholarship and Recognition Programs, a program of The College Board administered by the Educational Testing Service.

What school districts have won the Broad Prize in the past?

The Broad Prize was started in 2002. The first winner was the Houston Independent School District. In 2003, the winner was the Long Beach Unified School District, and last year the winner was the Garden Grove Unified School District.

What is NCEA?

Based in Austin, Texas, the National Center for Educational Accountability is a collaborative effort of the Education Commission of the States, the University of Texas at Austin, and Just for the Kids to improve learning through the effective use of school and student data and the identification of best practices. The Broad Prize has given NCEA the opportunity to explore the best methods for comparing performance in districts across state boundaries and to closely examine the practices of some of the nation's top urban districts. In addition, NCEA has developed an organizing tool as a method to share practices and network practitioners together to promote widespread school improvement.

What is The Broad Foundation?

The Broad Foundation is a Los Angeles-based venture philanthropic organization established in 1999 by Eli and Edythe Broad. The Foundation's mission is to dramatically improve K-12 urban public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition. In addition to The Broad Prize, the Foundation's other major initiatives include The Broad Superintendents Academy, a ten-month executive management program to train working CEOs and other top executives from business, non-profit, military, government and education backgrounds to lead urban public school systems; The Broad Residency, a two-year management development program that trains emerging business leaders for senior management positions in urban school districts; and The Broad Institute for School Boards, an annual training program for newly elected school board members designed to increase student achievement through improved governance. The Broad Foundation's Internet address is www.broadfoundation.org.