

The 2009 Broad Prize

Announcement of Winner

September 16, 2009 ▪ United States Capitol, Washington, D.C.



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Eli Broad, Founder, The Broad Foundations

Adrian Fenty, Mayor, Washington, D.C.

Cindy Legagneur, 2003 Broad Prize scholarship recipient

Karen Levesque, Director of K-12 School Improvement, MPR Associates

Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education

Wanda Bamberg, Superintendent, Aldine Independent School District, Texas

Speaker Nancy Pelosi

Representative George Miller

Representative John Kline

Representative Gene Green

ELI BROAD: Good morning. Welcome to the U.S. Capitol for the announcement of the winner of the 2009 Broad Prize for Urban Education.

We're honored to have with us today U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who later is going to announce the winner of the \$2 million Broad Prize. We're pleased to have former Secretary of Education Rod Paige with us today, who's a member of the selection jury that chose this year's winner. In addition, we're joined by many others—members of Congress, a number of elected officials, education school district leaders from around the country. In fact, we even have a world-prominent artist, Jeff Koons, here today. In addition, I understand that Laura Richardson, the Congresswoman representing Long Beach, is with us. Delighted you're here. I'll introduce others a bit later.

We're joined by officials from this year's Broad Prize finalist school districts: Aldine, Texas; Broward County, Florida; Gwinnett County, Georgia; Long Beach, California; and Socorro, Texas. Will those of you representing these districts please stand for a moment.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: Thank you.

This year, for the first time we're also webcasting the announcements, so I would like to extend a welcome to our remote audiences watching this event today.

I want to introduce my partner in philanthropy, my wife of 54 years, Edy Broad. Edye, stand for a moment.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: I think we can all agree this has been an interesting year. We live in a most resilient nation, but we've dealt with many, many challenges this year. When we gathered in New York City a year ago, Wall Street was just starting to tumble and the financial system was on the verge of collapse. Then came the housing and automotive problems, many budget cuts and layoffs throughout the country, and our schools were spiraling through unparalleled times.

We're all looking for ways to jump start our economy, to do more with less, and the like. While we may not all agree on the best way to dramatically increase American student achievement, I think we can all

agree there's no more important area in which to smartly invest in this economy than to invest in our public schools and our workforce of tomorrow.

Now we have more than \$100 billion, an unprecedented amount, in federal funding for our public schools, with an unprecedented opportunity to do some very important things in the name of reform with a lot of that money. I know we'll look forward to hearing about this vision from Secretary Duncan a bit later.

We're more hopeful now than ever before that true change is taking place and will take place in America's public schools, and there are valuable lessons to be learned from this year's Broad Prize finalists. So we're delighted that you're all here to celebrate and learn from their success.

To begin with, it's my pleasure to introduce a man who's responsible for ensuring that students in classrooms just blocks from here are getting a higher quality education than they did just a few years ago. That is D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty. Like a growing number of courageous mayors around the country, Mayor Fenty has deemed the work of improving his public schools so important that he personally took on the job and wants to be responsible for the performance of the schools in D.C.

After two years working hand in hand with reform-minded Chancellor Michelle Rhee, Mayor Fenty can tell you the work is difficult. There's no line of work more political or controversial than educating young people. But the stakes are worth it.

Please join me in welcoming D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty.

[Applause.]

MAYOR ADRIAN FENTY: Good morning. Thank you very much, Eli Broad. On behalf of the District of Columbia, let me welcome everyone to our nation's capital. This is the eighth annual Broad Prize, and I know that all of you would join me in thanking Eli and Edythe Broad for what can be considered unwavering dedication to public education in America. For those of us, like so many of you, who are trying to turn around systems that have been broken for decades, it is just wind in the sails, the type of support that you give us. I know the secretary feels the same way. So another round of applause for Eli Broad.

[Applause.]

Thank you so much.

Let me also congratulate the five Broad Prize finalists: Aldine, Broward, Gwinnett, Long Beach and Socorro. I'm sure all of the district school leaders here agree that there's never a dull day in the urban city schools. Our schools chancellor is testifying on the Hill right now about education reform. The editorial board commented even in this morning's paper about the great work that she's doing. But all of us know the lion's share of the work is in front of us. You cannot turn around a couple of decades of neglect in a couple years. But we're going to go as fast as humanly possible and make sure that the kids are the reason that we make decisions from this point out.

We're fortunate to be able to hear today from a recent graduate of George Washington University, Cindy Legagneur, who received a Broad Prize scholarship back in 2003 during one of the years that her alma mater in the Boston Public Schools was a finalist for The Broad Prize. I have been told that since 2002 The Broad Foundation has awarded more than 825 Broad Prize scholarships nationwide, totaling \$8 million.

You may recall that Cindy joined us at The Broad Prize two years ago, where we learned that she had received the scholarship after pulling her GPA up during high school from a 2.2 to a 3.8. Today she is here to give us an update on her life. I understand she has accomplished some incredible things since high school, a testament to her hard work, the promise of a good education, and what happens when we get behind those with some promise as Cindy and all of our young people have. Please join me in welcoming Cindy to the stage, everyone.

[Applause.]

CINDY LEGAGNEUR: Thank you, Mayor Fenty. Mr. and Mrs. Broad, Secretary Duncan, members of Congress, and distinguished guests. I am honored to be here with you today. I would like to begin by thanking everyone at The Broad Foundation for the opportunity to speak at this wonderful event.

Since I last spoke at The Broad Prize event two years ago, I have been inspired and motivated by many of you. It is an honor to speak to you and update you on my academic and professional activities since receiving The Broad Prize scholarship.

At that event I told you about my background. I was born and raised in Boston, the only member of my

family born in the United States. My parents, who are here today, thank God, immigrated to this country from Haiti in 1984 and worked hard to begin a new life. My mother worked as a nursing assistant and my father as a cab driver. I watched them struggle to give our family a better life than they had. They worked six days a week, often double shifts. But my parents always instilled in me the importance of education and hard work. Although neither of them went to college, they believed in me and supported my education.

I am now one of just five students who graduated from the George Washington University in 2008 with a bachelor's of science in statistics.

[Applause.]

During my senior year in college, I worked as a student research assistant with the Robert Graham Center, which focuses on important policy questions related to family physician services and primary care services. It was my first job within my major and it exposed me to the challenges of research and statistical evaluation programming. After graduating, I took a year off to work as a faculty advisor at the National Youth Leadership State Conferences, where we facilitated leadership development workshops for middle school students across the nation. With this job, I had the opportunity to travel to many major U.S. cities and to solidify my interest in research and evaluation in an educational environment.

I then obtained a position at the University of Massachusetts-Boston as a program assistant to the associate dean of research. I continued gaining experience in researching, drafting proposals, and preparing for major university events.

During this time, I attended a two-day public policy conference at Harvard University. It was there that I met Dr. Tiffany Cooper, the CEO of BELL, Building Educated Leaders for Life. This organization focuses on educating elementary and middle school students in underresourced communities after school and during the summer. Dr. Cooper's work and ambition at a young age inspired me. Although I was working full-time at U.Mass.-Boston, I volunteered as an assistant to BELL's program evaluation manager, gaining more experience in statistical evaluation and surveying.

As I stand here this morning, I remember the day that I learned I received a \$10,000 Broad Prize scholarship. This was a pivotal moment in my life. It was not only financial assistance, but it also gave me the encouragement and ambition to continue reaching my full potential, and I owe this to The

Broad Foundation.

This fall I am attending the George Washington University's Graduate Extended School for Survey Design and Data Analysis. Once I complete this program, I plan to enroll as a Ph.D. student for educational research and evaluation.

I recently joined KIPP-D.C., part of KIPP's national network of college preparatory charter schools, as their student data manager. I greatly appreciate working in an environment such as KIPP, where dedicated educators and staff set high expectations for students in underresourced areas.

I would like to once again thank everyone at The Broad Foundation. Your generous support has continually affected my life and I thank you very much for it.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: Cindy, congratulations on your achievement and thank you so much for being with us today. KIPP is a great place for you to be working and they're lucky to have you.

We need to assure that every student has the opportunity to succeed like Cindy has. But when half of our inner city students do not graduate on time, we know we have much work to do, and we need to look for inspiration from all corners. One of the greatest sources of inspiration we had and will continue to have for generations to come is a public servant who never took his eye off the ball with regard to equality, responsibility and opportunity for all. I'm talking about Ted Kennedy.

As you know, The Broad Prize is an enormous undertaking, and we have quite a few partners who play key roles in the prize. Let me tell you how that works. First of all, we have a data partner, MPR. Their job is to get data for 100 different urban school districts. That takes a good part of a year, and they do a great job doing that. Then after that, that data goes to a review board of approximately 15 people, all of whom are involved in education one way or another. They select five finalists. Once those finalists are selected, there's another partner, SchoolWorks, which visits all the districts. They go to classrooms, they meet principals, teachers, superintendents, school board members and people in the community.

Then it goes to a selection jury, which includes three former secretaries of education. I see Jim Hunt is here today; Rod Paige is here today; and several other jurors. They agonize for a good part of a day, reviewing all the data, questioning our staff and those who prepared the data, and reviewing what

occurred in the site visits. So it's quite a job.

So would you all stand, all jurors and members of the review board.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: I am told that they had a tough job this year. Aldine, Broward, Gwinnett, Long Beach and Socorro were all very successful districts. In fact, they're all winners. It's your effort and success that we honor today.

To share some examples of what these districts have accomplished, please welcome to the stage Dr. Karen Levesque, a director of K-12 school improvement with our data partner MPR, a leading firm in data collection and analysis. Karen.

[Applause.]

KAREN LEVESQUE: Thank you, Eli.

This year's Broad Prize finalists demonstrated many impressive student gains relative to their peers. For the sake of time and everyone's blood pressure, I will call out just one example in each district, in alphabetical order. Full data are available on www.broadprize.org.

Starting with Aldine Independent School District outside Houston, a four-time Broad Prize finalist: Among other things, Aldine narrowed its achievement gap between African-American students and the state average for white students in middle school math by 14 percentage points between 2005 and 2008.

Next, Broward County Public Schools in southern Florida, a two-time Broad Prize finalist. Among its gains, Broward increased the proportion of African-American and Hispanic students taking the ACT college entrance exam by an average of 9 percentage points each year on average between 2005 and 2008.

Gwinnett County Public School outside Atlanta, a first-time finalist. Gwinnett achieved increases in SAT participation rates by 9 percentage points for African-American students and 7 percentage points for Hispanic students between 2005 and 2008.

Long Beach Unified School District in California, a five-time finalist and 2003 Broad Prize winner. Long Beach narrowed its achievement gap between Hispanic students and the state average for white students in elementary school math by 9 percentage points between 2005 and 2008.

And last but not least, the Socorro Independent School District in El Paso, Texas, a first-time finalist. Socorro narrowed income achievement gaps between low-income students and the state average for non-low-income students in middle school math by 18 percentage points between 2005 and 2008.

So just a few data tidbits. Congratulations to you all.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: Thank you, Karen.

By any and all measures, the student achievement gains in these districts is impressive. But what matters even more during today's challenging times is what the rest of the nation's school districts do with the best practices that they find in these districts and use those best practices to raise student achievement and reduce achievement gaps.

There's no one better to put these gains in context and explain their significance to the nation and our country's top educational leaders than U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. In nominating him for U.S. Secretary of Education, President Obama said: "For Arne Duncan, school reform isn't just a theory in a book; it's the cause of his life." Arne has the track record to prove it. During his tenure as CEO of Chicago Public Schools, he united education reformers, teachers, principals, business leaders and others behind a very aggressive reform agenda. He championed high-performing charter schools, even at times when it was quite controversial in Illinois to do so. He shut down failing schools and replaced entire staffs, even when that was unpopular. He opened dozens of new schools and expanded after-school and summer learning programs. He dramatically improved teacher quality, drawing in three times as many teacher applicants and achieving the biggest increase in national board-certified teachers in this country.

The result: Under his tenure, the number of Chicago high school students taking Advanced Placement courses tripled and elementary test scores leaped from 38 percent proficiency to 67 percent.

As education secretary, Arne Duncan has not only secured an unprecedented \$100 billion in federal stimulus money for education to jump start our nation's schools, but he's also held fast in his requirement that to get this money, these competitive funds, states and districts must adopt operating conditions that will allow them to succeed in this modern day. Secretary Duncan is one of the most sought-after, high profile officials in the Obama administration. He can be found regularly crisscrossing the country, speaking openly about the need to shake things up in America's public schools.

It's hard to believe that he's been in office a little over six months. We're delighted by the urgency and reforms of the Obama administration in improving our nation's public schools. This week's Time magazine described Arne Duncan in just seven simple words: "The Secretary of Education is on fire." From the basketball court to blazing new trails for our nation's schools, we agree.

Please give a warm welcome to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

[Applause.]

SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN: Thank you so much, Eli. I'm thrilled to be here this morning with such an extraordinary group of leaders and advocates for public education, both inside and outside of government. I'd like to start by saluting all the members of the selection jury, but especially one of my predecessors, Secretary Paige. Secretary Paige laid the foundation for education reform and I'm honored to stand on his shoulders and so appreciative for the tremendous support that he's given me.

I also want to recognize one of my heroes, Governor Hunt, who's here, who also served on that jury. He's been a valuable source of advice, ideas, and inspiration. He's a pioneer and a visionary, and maybe more than anyone else in this country he has set the stage for education reform and progress. Thank you so much.

I want to thank two of my favorite people, Edythe and Eli Broad, for their remarkable generosity and commitment. Thanks to them and many other philanthropists and foundations across the country, American education has many more resources and partners putting time, energy and dollars towards this critical need.

Finally, thanks to the remarkable partnership and level of support from Capitol Hill. Because of their leadership, America is making an historic, once-in-a-lifetime investment in public education, more than \$100 billion, through the Recovery Act. This money nearly doubles our annual budget for two years in

a row, helping to avert catastrophic education cuts across America and giving us discretionary dollars to launch a race to the top that is already advancing reforms at the local level.

Above all, I want to recognize education leaders at the local level who are proving both that all children can learn and that success at scale is not just possible, it's happening every single day. Having run a large urban school system for seven years, I understand the challenges facing big city superintendents. I understand the kind of courage and creativity required to drive change at the local level.

I also understand the kind of support from Washington that local superintendents need and, frankly, don't need. They don't need a heavy hand from Washington. They need a partner in Washington. They don't need a prescription for success; they do need a common definition of success. We define success in the only way that counts: student outcomes, the number of students who finish high school and the number of young people completing college.

The president has set an ambitious goal of increasing the percentage of young people with a two-year or a four-year college degree from about 40 percent for the current generation of 25 to 34-year-olds to about 60 percent by the end of the next decade, 2020. A generation ago we were first in the world in college completion, but we have stagnated and today we're in the middle of the pack while other countries have dramatically boosted their graduation rates.

The president understands that the only path to long-term economic security is to have an educated workforce, able to compete across the globe for the jobs of the future. Simply put, we have to educate our way to a better economy.

Today just seven out of 10 public school students in America finish high school. More than 1.2 million children drop out each year. This isn't simply a personal failure; this is a national failure. As the president said so passionately, when you drop out of school you're not just quitting on yourself, you're quitting on your country. The president took that message straight to students last week when he challenged them to take personal responsibility for their education. The best teachers, the most devoted parents, and the most modern, well-equipped schools in the world will not help a child who tunes out teachers, blows off homework or cuts class.

The fact is that even those who do finish high school today and go on to college are all too often struggling. Recent test results suggest that only one in four high school graduates can actually do

college-level work across four subject areas: English, reading, math and science.

The president's challenge to students echoes the challenge we have issued to every other educational stakeholder. We have asked parents to take greater responsibility. We have asked political leaders, superintendents, school boards, principals and teachers to end the adult dysfunction around management issues that gets in the way of student learning and student success. We have asked the unions to have a more open mind and work in partnership on every issue, from tenure and compensation to evaluation and training. We have reached out to colleges of education, the charter school community and the research community and pushed them hard on ways to hold themselves accountable. We have appealed to everyone who will listen to join a national movement to transform public education for the new century by honestly and forthrightly acknowledging both our failures and our successes.

The fact is we have shrunk the minority-white achievement gap, but nowhere near enough. Worse yet, we've made little gain among high school students. Seventeen-year-olds today score no higher in reading and math than 17-year-olds from the early 1970s. And today we have at least 5,000 schools that are chronically underperforming and they need dramatic top to bottom reform and they need it now.

So as we gather today to recognize extraordinary educators, this administration begins its work on a clearly defined benchmark. Just 70 percent of our students finish high school and only 40 percent of them earn any kind of postsecondary degree. Both numbers must rise.

Yet, despite these real and serious challenges we face, I am extraordinarily optimistic. Why am I so hopeful? I am hopeful because of the people here today, people who defy the odds and do great things. They are true American heroes, and for that they should be rewarded.

The Broad Prize recognizes bold and committed urban school districts that are improving faster than their peers around the country, that are making gains among all subgroups and closing achievement gaps. They have put in place policies to transform islands of success into systems of success, taking to scale good programs, setting high expectations for the students, and holding everybody, everyone, accountable. They have put in practice the core principles of reform promoted by The Broad Foundation: competition, choice and the power of incentives to improve schools and student achievement. They are exactly the kind of gutsy, uncompromising leaders we need to remake public education in America, and I am honored to be among them here today.

Their work serves as a model to districts across America that are working to meet the challenges of preparing our children for educational success.

Let's please give them all a huge round of applause.

[Applause.]

SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN: Now could we please get on with the program, and I would ask all five finalists to please join me here on stage.

Four of them will receive \$250,000 in college scholarship money and the winner will receive \$1 million. I will read the first four in random order. As they say in Hollywood, the envelopes, please. I've always wanted to say that.

[Laughter.]

SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN: The first Broad Prize finalist district receiving \$250,000 in college scholarships, is Socorro Independent School District.

Please give them a round of applause.

[Applause.]

SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN: The next Broad Prize finalist district receiving \$250,000 in college scholarships is Broward County Public Schools. Broward.

[Applause.]

SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN: Also receiving \$250,000 in college scholarships is Broad Prize finalist Gwinnett County Public Schools.

[Applause.]

SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN: The next Broad Prize finalist district receiving \$250,000 in college

scholarships is the Long Beach Unified School District. Long Beach.

[Applause.]

SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN: This is a really smart audience. I think you've figured it out. The winner of the million dollar Broad Prize award is the Aldine Independent School District. Congratulations.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: I'm delighted to have the winning superintendent speak to us about the great job Aldine has done.

[Applause.]

WANDA BAMBERG: Thank you very much. I deliberately did not prepare remarks because I did not want to jinx it. But there are lots of things to think about in this wonderful moment. First of all, I must say I'm so grateful. On behalf of the students at Aldine, thank you very much for this honor of allowing them to have the opportunity for \$1 million in scholarships. It is outstanding.

[Applause.]

I also truly have to recognize Eli and Edythe Broad for their vision. You have often heard "To whom much is given, much is expected." I think the entire Broad Foundation exemplifies that concept of providing opportunities for people and building capacity and then giving opportunities to serve. I think we saw that today in our young Broad Prize scholarship winner, Cindy, as she shared what she's done with her opportunity and then now her opportunity to serve.

In Aldine, we are 84 percent economically disadvantaged and we have watched our college students and college participation numbers in the last couple of years decline. So having scholarship money is truly the only way a lot of our students will get the opportunity to continue their education.

On Saturday we participated in an event called Reach Out to Dropouts as part of our ongoing recovery efforts. We went out into the community, our board members went out, our representatives went out, community members went out, teachers went out, and we were looking into homes and apartments for students who did not return to school this year. I thought about that experience because it is truly a

powerful one. When you see the conditions where our students live and understand that they truly do live in poverty in some cases, then a scholarship opportunity doesn't just represent four years of school. It represents a future and a complete change of life for that individual student and in many cases the family of that student.

So thank you for the opportunity to change these lives and this scholarship money. On behalf of the board members who are tremendous leaders in Aldine, thank you so much. We are most appreciative of this opportunity.

Last year when I came at the luncheon, I said, "It doesn't matter; we'll come back as many times as we need to to get the \$1 million." Well, I lied, because this feels very good. Thank you so much.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: To help congratulate all five honored school districts, we're pleased to be joined by several members of Congress. Although there's much to congratulate all five districts today, we ask the members to speak for just several minutes.

The first person, of course, is the Speaker of the House of Representatives, our friend Nancy Pelosi. For the last 22 years, Nancy Pelosi has represented San Francisco, which I might add was a finalist in 2005 for The Broad Prize. She's also the reason we're here at the U.S. Capitol. So please give a warm welcome to Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

[Applause.]

SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI: Do you think it's still morning? Good morning, everyone.

What is impressive to me at this gathering once again for The Broad Prize is that the first year, Eli and Edge, you'll recall we were in the then-Speaker's private dining room, which held about 35 or 40 people. And every year we've needed a bigger room. I don't know where we go from here. We built a whole new building to make this accommodation.

In any event, I want to, on behalf of the Congress, congratulate the finalists and the winner, of course. Wanda, thanks for your candor. It is great to be the winner. I know my colleague Gene Green, who represents Houston in the Congress, is here. I don't know exactly where he is. Gene, congratulations

to you and the Aldine Independent School District and to Wanda Bamberg for her excellence.

Excellence is what The Broad Prize has always been about. In fact, it's what Eli and Edye Broad are all about in everything that they do. Whether it's the arts or education or growing America's economy, they know how to set us down the path of excellence. So I want to congratulate Eli and Edye for once again recognizing the excellence in education. Thank you, Eli, and thank you for allowing me to have a word here to say to Secretary Duncan how very, very proud we are of him and his leadership.

Yesterday he and George Miller and others of us stood in front of the Capitol to announce that legislation will come to the floor today on education. Every day, every minute, he's hard at work, and a greater leader.

So in any event, this idea that Edye and Eli had to recognize excellence is one that we all take great pride on. I again congratulate this year's winners for showing the country what can be achieved when the administrators, teachers, parents and the community come together and put our students first. I want to recognize again all of this year's Broad Prize finalists for paving the way of education reform and securing a better future for many students.

Eli and Edye Broad are people of vision and are agents of action. They know well that the three most important issues facing our country—and I always say this in the Congress—are our children, our children, our children, and their education is central to their success. Their contributions to education and the arts have set the standard for responsible, compassionate civic activism. They reflect that belief that those blessed with the most serve all of us.

When all is said and done, Eli Broad refuses to simply talk about problems. He works to solve them. When he said that public education is the key civil rights issue of the 21st century, he does not shy away from the challenge. He used the know-how that made him a Fortune 500 CEO and invested in best practices and models of success and academic progress. Eli's commitment is reflected each year in The Broad Prize. This award showcases, as you know, models of achievement in our public school districts and gives others around the country an incentive and example, and serves as a reminder to those entering the work force that a college degree is a ticket to higher wages, more job security and a brighter future. In fact, that's the legislation, as Mr. Secretary and the chairman know that we have on the floor of the House today, to do just that.

So on behalf of the Congress of the United States, may I say that this is a great day for public schools,

and when it's a great day for education it's a great day for democracy. It is time to celebrate success and inspire superintendents and school leaders across the nation to continue working day in and day out to educate our next generation. That is the future of our country.

So on behalf of the Congress, I want to salute you, Eli and Edye, for what you are doing for America's children.

Congratulations to the winners. Thank you to Eli and Edye Broad.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: I'm now most pleased to introduce the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, Representative George Miller of California. George.

[Applause.]

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE MILLER: Thank you, Eli, so much for including me. Again, thank you for your generosity, for your leadership, and for your pioneering spirit in getting this nation to understand the level of educational reform and achievement and excellence that we're capable of.

It's so exciting to see the districts who have competed here, the finalists for The Broad Prize. To Aldine, it's just wonderful. Gene Green's been punching me on the side here saying, "You guys are good, but we won." We have a different sense of competition in the Congress than maybe the general public.

But it really is exciting, because these schools take a serious look at their resources, their talent, their community in that school and their larger community, and think how they can bring that to bear to change outcomes. It's a formula that's starting to look like it can be replicated.

The exciting part of this prize too is the scholarship, because to get this scholarship you had to make a personal decision that you were going to try to improve your situation. You may not have made it all the way to the top, but you made a dramatic improvement in your educational attainment, in your competency, in your personal behavior, and there you are, and you're getting rewarded for that. It's so exciting to have that decision rewarded.

So it's such an honor to be here and such an honor to be with Secretary Duncan. I've been in Congress 35 years. I feel like I've been in training for 34 of those years, waiting for this moment to have this secretary, this president, Eli Broad, and everybody together in this room for the opportunity that we now have in front of us.

Legislation, special sessions, delegations coming to Congress—we haven't seen this much action on education in this short a period of time. But it's about people who were out there in front, demonstrating that these children all had that potential, that these children all were capable of it, and that when we align the system to the interests of the children we can have this kind of success across our nation.

Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your courage. I know these changes don't come lightly locally. But thank you for your courage. Secretary Duncan, thank you for your courage. Eli, thank you for your leadership and your generosity.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: I'm now pleased to introduce Representative John Kline of Minnesota. He's the new ranking member of the House Education and Labor Committee. Congressman.

(Applause.)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN KLINE: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Good to see you.

Well, thank you very much. It is really an honor to be here today with such distinguished company: the speaker of the House, the chairman of the committee, the Broads—thank you—the winners, very distinguished company.

It's an honor to be here to pay tribute to the winner of this year's Broad Prize, Aldine. Mr. Green, congratulations. I know you're taking personal responsibility for this, but I think it belongs to others in the room, exactly.

Each of the school districts represented in this room have lived up to the challenge presented by the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act. You are doing a remarkable job of ensuring that literally no child is left behind.

I echo the previous speaker's praise for the hard work and dedication that has made your success possible. You've demonstrated precisely the pursuit of greatness that we need to instill in our students and your students have the benefit of learning from a strong and tangible example.

Each school district that is being recognized today has transcended unique challenges by exercising innovation. We have applied ingenuity in overcoming adversity, and it is working. If states are indeed the laboratories for democracy, local school districts are proving grounds for new approaches to education. The teachers and administrators who work closely with students day in and day out are uniquely qualified to assess their specific needs and devise a strategy that will meet those needs in the most effective way. We are committed to continue to provide you the flexibility to do just that.

In the Committee on Education and Labor, where, as was pointed out, I am indeed privileged to serve as the ranking member, we face challenges of how to improve academic achievement, particularly among students with disabilities, low-income students, and English language learners. We are constantly considering how to ensure the highest quality teachers are in our classrooms and we are pleased to be able to learn from your success. You are not only making a difference in the lives of the students you teach every day, you are influencing the influencers, showing us what works and what works even better. We commend you for your success and look forward to continuing to learn from your example.

Thank you again for letting me join you today.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: The winning district, Aldine, is represented by U.S. Representative Gene Green. Representative Green, would you come up here and say a few words to us?

[Applause.]

REPRESENTATIVE GENE GREEN: What a great day. I have to admit, unlike Wanda, my staff never lets me go somewhere and I'm not prepared. I actually have a speech if Aldine wins and if Aldine doesn't.

As a long-time resident of the Aldine area (and but for the redistricting in '03, I would still be a resident), winning this very prestigious Broad Prize for Urban Education is such a great honor.

My wife, who is here today, actually taught high school algebra in Aldine for 26 years. That's where our children went to school. So that's why this is even more special than just one of our school districts winning. The board members who are here, a lot of them are personal friends—in fact, former neighbors.

We know a superintendent and his staff can't get the job done without the support of the school board. That's what's so important in Aldine. When George Miller and I worked on the Education Committee in the '90s, I would go to these annual conferences and oftentimes, when my wife was still teaching, she would go with me. I really wanted my wife to be there, because she was a high school teacher, literally on the firing line.

I wanted her to hear these academics from all over the country talk about Aldine school district, because, as we know, whether you're a principal, or assistant principal, or teacher, or even board member, you're in the middle of the battle every day. You sometimes don't hear the good things that you're doing.

Of course, this is the fourth time Aldine's been selected to be a finalist. It's no surprise, given their focus on five commitments:

They believe each student can learn at or above grade level and will have equal opportunity to do so.

They believe a school district can achieve higher levels of performance through clearly defined goals that set high expectations for student achievement.

They believe in the value of parents as the first and best teachers, and that the community must actively participate in the development of all of the children.

They believe in the value of each employee, in his or her personal and professional growth and in empowering them with the accountability to make decisions aligned to the vision of the school district.

And they believe all the environment should be supportive, safe, and secure.

As we know, sometimes that's tough in a very urban school district. But winning this award, they've proven their commitment to their five goals.

I want to congratulate my friend of many years, Superintendent Wanda Bamberg, her administration, and of course the school board members who are here today, who work every second Tuesday of the month and many times during the month. And of course, the teachers, the students and the parents. The Aldine Independent School District is one of the best in the country. Some of us have known it, but it's great for The Broad Prize and the Secretary of Education to be here. I have no doubt Aldine-ISD will continue to be a leader in education for years to come. It's my privilege to represent them in Congress, but also to be part of the community.

So congratulations, Aldine-ISD. Mr. Broad, thank you so much for your dedication for many years. And I've been to these many times, but it's really special today.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: Congratulations again, Aldine and all of the finalist districts. Let's give them a big hand again.

[Applause.]

ELI BROAD: Now let's all join one another for a reception in the Congressional Atrium just outside the auditorium. I want to thank you all for coming. We look forward to seeing you next year, when the prize will be held at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Have a great afternoon.

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