

## **Gwinnett County Public Schools Named One of America's Top Urban Districts; Named Finalist for \$2 Million Broad Prize**

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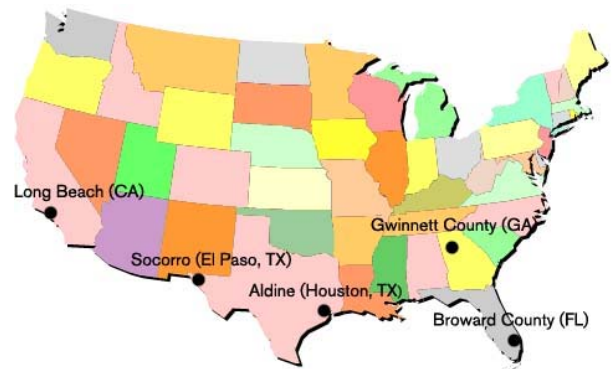
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LOS ANGELES – Gwinnett County Public Schools is one of five urban school districts nationwide selected as a finalist for the 2009 Broad Prize for Urban Education, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation announced today.

The Broad (rhymes with “road”) Prize for Urban Education is an annual \$2 million award that honors the urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between low- and non-low-income students.

This is the first year that Gwinnett County Public Schools has been a finalist for the award, making the district the second in Georgia to receive the honor since Atlanta Public Schools in 2002. Other finalists this year include:

- Aldine Independent School District, Houston
- Broward County Public Schools, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
- Long Beach Unified School District, Calif.
- Socorro Independent School District, El Paso, Texas



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.

“While all urban school systems across this country face enormous challenges, Gwinnett shows us what a successful public school district can accomplish,” said Eli Broad, founder of The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. “All involved, from Gwinnett’s teachers to administrators to the district’s leadership, can be proud that their hard work to raise student achievement has paid off for students and indeed, the entire community.”

Previous Broad Prize winners include the Brownsville Independent School District in Texas (2008); 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).; the Long Beach Unified School District in California (2003); and Houston Independent School District (2002).

Every year, 100 of America's largest urban school districts are eligible for The Broad Prize. This year's five 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. The review board evaluated publicly available academic performance data compiled and analyzed by MPR Associates, Inc., a leading national education research consulting firm, and selected the five districts.

Among the reasons Gwinnett was chosen as a 2009 Broad Prize finalist:

- The district *outperformed other districts in Georgia* that serve students with similar income levels in reading and math at all school levels (elementary, middle and high school), according to The Broad Prize methodology.
- Between 2005 and 2008, *participation rates rose for African-American and Hispanic students taking the SAT, ACT, and Advanced Placement exams*, as did average ACT scores for Hispanic students.
- In recent years, Gwinnett has *narrowed achievement gaps between both African-American and Hispanic students and white students* in reading and math in elementary and middle school. For example, between 2006 and 2008, the gap between Gwinnett's Hispanic students and their white peers narrowed by 9 percentage points in elementary school reading.

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 using a research-based rubric for district quality 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 choose the winning school district after reviewing both the performance data and the qualitative site visit reports.

For more information about The Broad Prize, this year's finalists and the review board, 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 urban K-12 public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition. The Broad Foundation's Internet address is [www.broadfoundation.org](http://www.broadfoundation.org) and foundation updates are available on Twitter.

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