

Last Wednesday, April 5, the New York City Department of Education learned that the New York City School System was one of five finalists being considered for the 2006 Broad Prize for Urban Education, an annual \$1 million prize given to urban school districts that have made the greatest increases in student achievement. The Prize is the largest education award in the country given to a single school district. This year's finalists, chosen from among 100 urban school districts, also include Miami, Jersey City, Boston and Bridgeport. New York City was also named a finalist last year.

"I am delighted that the Broad Foundation has once again chosen the New York City public schools as one of its finalists for the Broad Prize for Urban Education," Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein declared. "The Broad prize acknowledges improved student achievement and reduced achievement gaps. New York City's schools have made wonderful progress in the past four years, both raising student achievement and, as our performance on the NAEP scores confirmed, shrinking the gaps among ethnic groups. All of us involved in the public schools of New York--students, parents, teachers, administrators and all staff--should be very proud of this, our second nomination as a Broad finalist."

The Broad (pronounced "brode") Prize for Urban Education honors the nation's urban school districts that improve student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between high- and low-income students. The Prize is the largest education award in the country given to a single school district.

## NYC Schools Are 1 Of 5 Broad Prize Finalists

The winner of the Broad Prize will receive \$500,000 in scholarships for graduating seniors. Each finalist district will receive \$125,000 in scholarships. The winner will be announced in New York City on September 20 at the Museum of Modern Art.

"The strength of our nation depends on the strength of our schools, especially those in large urban districts that serve so many of our children," Eli Broad, founder of the Broad Foundation, said. "The New York City Department of Education is doing what some say is impossible--improving students' performance, regardless of their race, or family income--while at the same time closing persistent achievement gaps. Other urban districts nationwide can learn a great deal from what is working in New York City."

Among the reasons the New York City Department of Education was chosen as a finalist:

- Students at all grade levels have shown a marked increase in math proficiency since 2003.

- Elementary and middle school students perform better than expected in reading and middle school students perform better than

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expected in math than students in other districts in the state with similar levels of poverty.

- The district has narrowed achievement gaps between African-American and Hispanic students with their white counterparts in elementary and high school math and high school reading from 2003 to 2005.

The Broad Prize was started in 2002. The inaugural winner was the Houston Independent School District, followed by two California districts--Long Beach Unified School District in 2003 and Garden Grove Unified School District in 2004--and Norfolk, Virginia Public Schools last year.

Because New York City was a finalist last year, the department will receive \$125,000 in scholarships for seniors who will graduate this spring. The scholarship winners will be announced in June. This is the fifth year Boston Public Schools has been a Broad Prize finalist.

The five finalist districts from the 100 urban school districts nationwide eligible for the Broad Prize were selected based on a rigorous review of data compiled and analyzed by the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA). A review board of 16 prominent educational leaders from across the country evalu-

ated the data and selected the five finalist districts.

Over the next two months, teams of educational researchers and practitioners will conduct site visits at each of the finalist school districts to gather statistical and qualitative information, including interviews with district administrators, focus groups with teachers and principals, and classroom observations. The teams will also talk to parents, community leaders, school board members and union representatives. The performance data and site visit reports will then be presented to a selection jury comprised of 13 prominent individuals nationwide from business, industry, education and public service, to choose the winning school district.

For more information about the Broad Prize and this year's finalists, visit [www.broad-prize.org](http://www.broad-prize.org).

The National Center for Educational Accountability, based in Austin, Texas, is a collaborative effort of the Education Commission of the States, the University of Texas at Austin, and Just for the Kids. NCEA identifies best practices within school districts and schools and shares them with practitioners to promote widespread school improvement. NCEA's Internet address is [www.nc4ea.org](http://www.nc4ea.org).

The Broad Foundation is a Los Angeles-based venture philanthropy established in 1999 by Eli and Edythe Broad. The Foundation's mission is to dramatically improve student achievement in urban public school districts through better governance, management, labor relations and competition. The Broad Foundation's Internet address is [www.broad-foundation.org](http://www.broad-foundation.org).

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