



For First Time, Two Districts Win 2014 Broad Prize: Gwinnett County Public Schools, Orange County Public Schools Share \$1 Million Award

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NEW YORK—For the first time in its 13-year history, [The Broad Prize for Urban Education](#) has been awarded to two school districts: Gwinnett County Public Schools in Georgia and Orange County Public Schools in Florida, [The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation](#) announced today. As co-winners of the 2014 award, the two districts will split the \$1 million prize and each will receive \$500,000 in college scholarships for their high school seniors.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan joined philanthropists Eli and Edythe Broad and Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, former prime minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, at Time Warner Center to announce the winners before an audience of more than 200 education practitioners from around the country, including representatives of the two winning districts.

“I am thrilled to celebrate the achievements of educators, students and families in two communities, who have accomplished a shared goal,” said Duncan. “There is no single solution to the challenge of ensuring a world-class education for every child. Gwinnett County and Orange County have taken very different paths. Yet the real winners in both places are the same: children. And both districts offer important lessons for the nation: success is possible anywhere, and getting there doesn’t look the same everywhere.”

A nine-member [bipartisan jury](#) of prominent leaders from education and public service—including two former U.S. secretaries of education, a former senator and two former governors—decided to award the 2014 Broad Prize to both districts after determining that honoring two districts with two different strategies might inspire more school leaders around the country to take note of varying ways to raise student achievement.

“We wrestled with performance versus improvement,” said former Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell, a member of the selection jury. “We were impressed with Gwinnett County’s steady, sustainable gains and with Orange County’s urgency and commitment to improve student achievement quickly. In the end, we decided that both finalists deserved to win the 2014 Broad Prize.”

The \$1 million Broad (rhymes with “road”) Prize is an annual award that honors the large urban school districts that demonstrate the strongest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among low-income students and students of color. Seventy-five of the largest urban school districts in America are automatically eligible for the award each year.

This was the first year the review board that selects The Broad Prize finalists opted to advance only two school districts—rather than four or five as in previous years—on to the selection jury for consideration, reflecting their disappointment with the overall progress of urban school systems across America.

Orange County Public Schools is a first-time finalist, and Gwinnett County Public Schools won the 2010 Broad Prize after being a finalist in 2009. This was the first year Gwinnett County was eligible again for the award. Gwinnett’s prize winnings now total \$1.75 million in college scholarships for its students.

“We may have a long way to go in this country to improve urban public education, but the school systems in Gwinnett and Orange counties give us good reason to celebrate what we’ve accomplished so far,” said Bruce Reed, president of The Broad Foundation. “Gwinnett County shows how a district can improve and sustain student performance over many years, while Orange County demonstrates that a sense of urgency and focus can improve student achievement in a hurry. These two winners have kept their eye on the prize, which is to help all students reach their potential.”

The two winning school districts this year share remarkably similar demographics. Gwinnett County Public Schools serves 169,150 students; Orange County has 187,193. Both districts’ student populations are fairly evenly divided across ethnicities and income levels: Gwinnett has 58 percent black or Hispanic students and 55 percent low-income students and Orange has 63 percent black or Hispanic students and 60 percent low-income students.

Both school districts have made strides in student academic performance and college readiness. Gwinnett County high school seniors had the highest SAT participation rate among the 75 Broad Prize-eligible districts. In 2013, 88 percent of all Gwinnett County seniors took the SAT, including 90 percent of black seniors and 70 percent of Hispanic seniors. That compares to an average participation rate of 43 percent for black students and 40 percent for Hispanic students among all eligible districts. In Orange County, between 2011 and 2013, participation rates and average scores on Advanced Placement exams increased for all juniors and seniors overall and notably for Hispanic students. AP participation by Hispanic juniors and seniors increased 7 percentage points over this period, while passing rates increased 3 percentage points.

But the districts’ achievements also differ in certain ways—Gwinnett boasts high academic performance, leaving it less room for improvement, while Orange has improved significantly in only a few years:

- A greater percentage of low-income students are reaching advanced academic levels in Gwinnett County than in other districts in Georgia. In 2013, Gwinnett ranked among the top 20 percent of districts statewide for the percentage of low-income students at all education levels (elementary, middle and high school) performing at the highest achievement level in reading, math and science. For example, 33 percent of Gwinnett’s low-income middle school students reached the advanced academic level on the state math assessment compared with 19 percent of low-income middle school students in the rest of the state.
- A greater percentage of black students are reaching advanced academic levels in Gwinnett County than in other districts in Georgia. In 2013, Gwinnett County ranked among the top 10 percent of districts statewide for the percentage of black students at all education levels who performed at the highest achievement level on state-mandated tests in reading, math and science. For example, 40 percent of Gwinnett County’s black elementary school students reached the advanced academic level on the state science assessment, compared with 20 percent of black elementary school students in the rest of the state.
- Orange County raised achievement among low-income middle school students. In recent years, Orange County was more successful than at least 80 percent of Florida districts at raising the percentage of low-income middle school students who performed at the highest achievement levels on state tests in reading and math. For example, between 2011 and 2013, the percentage of

low-income students performing at the highest achievement level rose 6 percentage points in middle school reading compared to only 1 percent for students in the rest of Florida.

- Orange County narrowed income and ethnic achievement gaps. The achievement gap between Hispanic students in Orange County and white students in the rest of Florida narrowed in elementary, middle and high school reading and science and in elementary and high school math. The gap between Orange County's low-income students and higher-income students elsewhere in Florida narrowed in elementary, middle and high school reading and math, and in elementary and middle school science.

For a full electronic press kit, including additional student outcomes and policies and practices of the two winners, please visit www.broadprize.org. Video of the winning school districts featuring b-roll and interviews with their superintendents is available at <http://youtu.be/B4Gs1tXKx4k>.

The nine-member selection jury that chose this year's winner included:

- Henry Cisneros, former U.S. secretary of housing and urban development
- Christopher Dodd, former U.S. senator from Connecticut
- Donald Graham, chairman and CEO, Graham Holdings Company (formerly The Washington Post Company)
- James B. Hunt, Jr., former governor of North Carolina
- Michael Lomax, president and CEO, the United Negro College Fund
- Edward Rendell, former governor of Pennsylvania
- Richard Riley, former U.S. secretary of education
- Donna Shalala, former U.S. secretary of health and human services
- Margaret Spellings, former U.S. secretary of education

The selection jury evaluated quantitative data on the finalists that consisted of publicly available student performance data compiled and analyzed by RTI International, one of the world's leading research institutes. In addition, the jury evaluated the finalist districts' policies and practices, compiled following site visits conducted by a team of education practitioners led by RMC Research Corporation, an education consulting company. The site visits included classroom observations and interviews with administrators, teachers, principals, parents, community leaders, school board members and union representatives.

The 2014 finalists were selected this past spring by a review board of 13 prominent education researchers, policy leaders, practitioners and executives from leading universities, education associations, think-tanks and non-profit organizations that evaluated publicly available student performance data.

As winners of the 2014 Broad Prize, Gwinnett County Public Schools and Orange County Public schools will each receive \$500,000 in college scholarships for their high school seniors who graduate in 2015. Broad Prize scholarships are awarded to students who demonstrate significant financial need and who have improved their grades during high school. Scholarship recipients who enroll in four-year colleges will receive up to \$20,000 paid out over four years (\$5,000 per year). Broad Prize scholars who enroll in two-year colleges will receive up to \$5,000 scholarships paid out over two years (\$2,500 per year). For more information on the scholarship program, please visit http://broadprize.org/scholarship_program/overview.html.

Founded by entrepreneur Eli Broad and his wife Edythe, both graduates of Detroit Public Schools, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation is a philanthropy that seeks to ensure that every student in an urban public school has the opportunity to succeed. Bringing together top education experts and practitioners, the foundation funds system-wide programs and policies that strengthen public schools by creating environments that allow good teachers to do great work and enable students of all backgrounds to learn and thrive. For more information, please visit www.broadeducation.org.

[more](#)

Note: An archived webcast of the event will be accessible today after 4 p.m. ET at www.broadprize.org. Photos of the event will be available on www.broadprize.org/mediacenter/photos/2014.html after 4 p.m. ET today.

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