Houston’s YES Prep Public Schools Wins Inaugural $250,000 Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools

Demonstrated most outstanding academic performance among America’s urban charter school systems

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MINNEAPOLIS -- The winner of the inaugural Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools is YES Prep Public Schools, a charter management organization in Houston, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation announced today. YES Prep Public Schools will receive $250,000 for college readiness efforts for low-income students.

YES Prep Public Schools, a system of 10 middle and high schools that serves almost all low-income and minority students, eliminated nearly all income and ethnic achievement gaps. In addition, YES Prep’s students are outperforming their higher income and white peers statewide in most cases—something very few, if any, other large urban school systems nationwide to date have achieved.

The Broad (rhymes with “road”) Prize for Public Charter Schools is a new annual award to honor the urban public charter school system that has demonstrated the most outstanding overall student performance and improvement in the nation in recent years while reducing achievement gaps for poor and minority students.

U.S. Deputy Education Secretary Tony Miller and Broad Foundation Senior Policy Director Lydia Logan announced the award at the 2012 National Charter Schools Conference in Minneapolis before a crowd of more than 3,000 public charter school leaders gathered at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

“It is remarkable to see a system of schools that is not only taking students who are one or more grade levels behind in math and reading, but also making sure that every single graduate is accepted into a four-year college,” said Miller, who opened the envelope and revealed the winner.

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A 14-member review board of prominent education researchers, policy leaders, practitioners and executives from around the country evaluated publicly available student achievement data on 20 large established urban charter school systems and found that YES Prep Public Schools had the best overall student academic performance between 2007 and 2011. The Broad Foundation did not play a role in selecting the winner.

“We are delighted to award the first Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools to YES Prep because they serve as an example for other public schools systems across the country,” said Eli Broad, founder of The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, who congratulated YES Prep via video. “YES Prep and other high-performing public charter models demonstrate that students of all backgrounds can meet high expectations and thrive when teachers get the support they need, and when parents—of all income levels—have access to world-class public schools.”

YES Prep Public Schools’ mission is to increase the number of low-income students who graduate from a four-year college prepared to compete in the global marketplace and give back to their communities. The schools are designed around the belief that low-income students can achieve at the same academic levels as their more affluent peers when given access to similar opportunities and resources. YES Prep requires every senior to gain acceptance to a four-year college in order to earn their high school diploma.

In 2011, YES Prep served more than 5,400 low-income minority students on 10 Houston campuses. Currently 9,000 students are on YES Prep waiting lists. In 2010, YES Prep was named one of the “Best Places to Work” by the Houston Business Journal.

Among the reasons YES Prep Public Schools won the inaugural Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools:

- **YES Prep eliminated nearly every income and ethnic achievement gap that urban schools nationwide face—and closed gaps five times more often than other CMOs.** In 2011, YES Prep’s low-income students performed higher than the state’s non-low-income students in middle and high school math, science and reading. Similarly, YES Prep’s Hispanic students performed higher than their white peers statewide in the same areas. For example, in 2011, 97 percent of YES Prep’s Hispanic students were proficient on the state middle school science assessment, compared with 89 percent of the state’s white students. YES Prep’s African-American students also performed higher than their white peers statewide in nearly all subjects and school levels.

- **YES Prep Hispanic and low-income students outperformed their peers statewide in reaching advanced academic levels more often than other large urban CMOs.** In 2011, the percentage of YES Prep’s low-income students who performed at the highest achievement level (Commended) ranked in the top third in the state for every available comparison (middle and high school reading, math and science). In contrast, low-income students in Broad Prize-eligible CMOs on average ranked in the top third just 32 percent of the time.

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Similarly, in 2011, the percentage of YES Prep’s Hispanic students performing at the Commended level ranked in the top third of comparisons with Hispanic students statewide every time, while eligible CMOs on average did so 44 percent of the time.

- **YES Prep achieved higher Advanced Placement participation and passing rates than other CMOs.** In 2011, 53 percent of Hispanic juniors and seniors in YES Prep Public Schools took at least one AP exam, compared with The Broad Prize-eligible CMO average of 37 percent. Fifty-one percent of Hispanic juniors and seniors in YES Prep Public Schools who took AP tests received passing scores, compared with the eligible CMO average of 33 percent.

- **YES Prep outperformed other large urban CMOs and the national average in SAT participation and scores.** In 2011, 89 percent of Hispanic seniors in YES Prep Public Schools took the SAT compared with The Broad Prize-eligible CMO average of 65 percent. African-American students in YES Prep schools achieved a higher average SAT combined score for reading, writing and mathematics—1556—than any other eligible CMO. The national SAT average for African-American students is 1273.

For more information on YES Prep’s student outcomes, the school system and its educational model, visit: [http://www.broadprize.org/publiccharterschools/2012.html](http://www.broadprize.org/publiccharterschools/2012.html)

As the winner, YES Prep will receive $250,000 to support low-income student college readiness efforts of its choice, such as scholarships, speaker series or campus visits.

In selecting the winner, The Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools review board examined publicly available data since the 2007/2008 school year collected by MPR Associates, an education research and consulting firm. The review board considered student outcomes, scalability, size, poverty and demographics, and selected the charter management organization that, in its judgment, showed the most outstanding overall student performance and improvement while reducing achievement gaps. No formula was used. For more information on the methodology and review board, visit: [http://www.broadprize.org/publiccharterschools/FAQ.html](http://www.broadprize.org/publiccharterschools/FAQ.html).

Charter management organizations eligible for the 2012 award operated a minimum of five schools for at least four years and served sizeable percentages of urban, poor and minority students. Organizations cannot apply for the award nor be nominated. For a list of eligible organizations, visit: [http://www.broadprize.org/publiccharterschools/eligible.html](http://www.broadprize.org/publiccharterschools/eligible.html). The list of organizations eligible for the 2013 award will be released this fall.

The Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools is the sister award to The Broad Prize for Urban Education that is awarded to traditional school districts. The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation launched both awards to help schools and school districts across America learn from innovative public school systems producing the strongest student outcomes. To facilitate the spread of data and best practices, this fall, The Broad Foundation will release:
• Summaries of data analyses on all organizations eligible for the award
• Research-based best practice findings from a site visit to YES Prep
• Framework upon which the site visit findings are based

This, and other information about The Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools, will be available on www.broadprize.org/publiccharterschools.html.

“This award shines the spotlight on the charter school movement’s next great challenge, which is to achieve quality with scale,” said Nina Rees, CEO of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. “Public charter schools nationally have an opportunity to demonstrate what ‘coopetition’ looks like at its best, and many of these charter school organizations are building on their successes to ensure that many more students have access to a quality public school education.”

Founded by self-made 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, visit: www.broadeducation.org.

Note: To request photos of the event, contact elepping@broadfoundation.org.

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