



## the**broad**foundation

### Jersey City School District Named 2006 Finalist for \$1 Million Broad Prize; One of Top Urban Districts Honored for Improving Student Achievement

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**LOS ANGELES** – The Broad Foundation announced today that the Jersey City School District is one of the five finalists 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 other finalists are:

- Boston Public Schools
- Bridgeport Public Schools, Conn.
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools
- New York City Department of Education

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.

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 on Sept. 19 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

“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,” said Eli Broad, founder of The Broad Foundation. “The Jersey City School District 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 Jersey City.”

Among the reasons the Jersey City School District was chosen as a finalist:

- For the last two years, the district has narrowed achievement gaps in elementary and middle school reading and math between low-income students and their higher-income peers and between African-American and Hispanic students and their white counterparts.

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- Compared to other districts in New Jersey that serve students with high poverty levels, Jersey City performed higher than expected in reading and math in elementary, middle and high school.
- Low-income and Hispanic students in Jersey City outperformed their peers across the state in elementary and middle school reading in 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 Public Schools in Virginia last year.

This is the first year that the Jersey City School District is a finalist, the second year for the New York City Department of Education and the fifth year for Boston Public Schools.

This year, 100 urban school districts nationwide were eligible for The Broad Prize. The five finalist districts 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 evaluated 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, please visit [www.broadprize.org](http://www.broadprize.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.broadfoundation.org](http://www.broadfoundation.org).

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### Overview of the District

Rank Among U.S. School Districts (by size):	151
Number of Schools:	40
Number of Students:	35,161
Number of Teachers:	2,702
Annual Budget:	\$555 million

**Superintendent:** Dr. Charles T. Epps, Jr. has served as district superintendent for the past six years. Previously, he served as the district's associate superintendent for Community and Support Services from 1998-2000. Since joining the district as a teacher in 1967, Dr. Epps worked as a teacher, supervisor, principal, and director of funded programs.

**Governance:** Nine-member elected board, serving three-year terms.

**Teacher Unions:** Jersey City Education Association

### Student Characteristics

Percent of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Price School Lunch:	71%
Percent of Students Designated as English Language Learners:	8%
Graduation Rate:	90%

### Student Demographics

