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Aldine, Texas, District Wins Broad Prize

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The **Aldine Independent School District** in Texas won the 2009 **Broad Prize for Urban Education** today for its progress in educating an overwhelmingly poor student population.



The prize was awarded in a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center in Washington by the Los Angeles-based Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, which bestows the award annually to a city school district that has made notable strides in improving achievement, especially in closing gaps between students of different racial and ethnic groups.

This year marked the fourth time that Aldine has been a finalist for the Broad Prize. It lost out last year to the Brownsville, Texas, district on the state's southeastern tip.

The 60,000-student Aldine district, located in northern metropolitan Houston, will receive \$1 million in college-scholarship money for students, and the four districts that were finalists will receive \$250,000 each.

Districts cannot apply or be nominated for the award; 100 urban districts are selected each year by the foundation for eligibility based on their demographics.

The Aldine district won the honor for outperforming its peer Texas districts in overall mathematics and reading scores in 2008. Eighty-four percent of its students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, and 31 percent are identified as English-language learners.

Foundation leaders say the district was able to make progress in closing test-score gaps between low-income and non-low-income students in reading at all school levels, and in elementary and middle school math, between 2005 and 2009.

"Aldine has demonstrated that when an entire community and district work together with a singular focus on educating every child, they can succeed, even against the odds of poverty," Eli Broad said in a prepared statement. "Their success holds valuable lessons for other urban districts trying to do the same."

The other finalists for the Broad Prize were the Socorro Independent School District, also in Texas; the Broward County, Fla., public schools; the Long Beach Unified School District in California; and the Gwinnett County, Ga., public schools.

The Socorro and Gwinnett school systems were first-time finalists this year. Broward was a finalist last year, along with three-time finalist Long Beach, which won the award in 2003. The foundation began the awards program in 2002.

