

## Providence Public Schools Executive Selected for Prestigious National School Superintendent Training Program

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**LOS ANGELES** – Providence Public Schools Chief Academic Officer Sharon Contreras is among 14 prominent leaders from across the country selected to participate in the 2010 Broad Superintendents Academy, The Broad Center for the Management of School Systems announced today.

The Broad (rhymes with “road”) Superintendents Academy is a 10-month executive management training program run by [The Broad Center](#) to prepare prominent leaders from education, military, business, nonprofit and government sectors to lead urban public school systems. Broad Superintendents Academy graduates have filled 68 superintendent positions and 88 senior school district executive positions [nationwide](#). Last year, 43 percent of all large urban American school districts that conducted external searches for new superintendents filled their positions with graduates of the academy.

“We are delighted that these talented men and women will join more than 100 other leaders across the country who are working tirelessly to create new, effective urban public school systems that dramatically improve results for millions of students,” said Eli Broad, founder of [The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation](#), which funds The Broad Center.

Contreras, who is currently completing her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has led a number of academic reform initiatives in Providence Public Schools, including aligning instruction, assessment and professional development to a teacher-developed rigorous, standards-based curriculum and developing a performance-based graduation policy and system. Teacher leadership has been key to her philosophy of reform, and her hallmark effort in Providence has been the development of a district-wide teacher leader initiative to provide a career-ladder for excellent teachers who want to remain in the classroom. Previously, she served as a teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent in Rockford, Ill.

“Sharon is an incredibly dedicated and talented educator who has made an enormous impact on our community,” said Mayor David N. Cicilline. “She has a laser focus on improving education for all children, and is universally respected for her knowledge, hard work and ability to change hearts and minds to achieve meaningful reforms.”

Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Deborah A. Gist and Providence Superintendent Thomas M. Brady are also graduates of The Broad Superintendents Academy. Graduates who have served as superintendents for three or more testing cycles across the country are [outperforming comparison groups](#) on state reading and math exams, achievement gap closures and graduation rates.

“Sharon Contreras is a dedicated school leader whose tireless work for school reform is helping to improve the lives of thousands of students in Providence schools,” said Gist. “I am so pleased that The Broad Foundation has recognized her and honored her achievements. As a Broad Fellow myself, I know that the experience can be life-changing. I wish Sharon good fortune on this exciting endeavor!”

Following a rigorous review and selection process, only 2 percent of this year’s applicants nationwide were accepted into the program.

“This is a tremendous accomplishment by an extraordinary educational leader,” said Brady. “Sharon’s deep commitment to students and teachers, outstanding command of teaching and learning, and exceptional executive skills make her fully deserving of this national recognition. This extremely competitive selection reflects her superior qualifications and work, which make her such an incredible asset to our district. As a Broad alumnus, I couldn’t personally be more delighted.”

Participants in The Broad Superintendents Academy keep their current jobs and attend extended-weekend training sessions covering [CEO-level skills](#) in education, finance, management, operations and organizational systems. This year’s sessions will be held in Aldine, Texas, Denver, Garden Grove, Calif., Long Beach, Calif., New York City, and Washington, D.C. The Broad Center covers tuition, travel and all program expenses. At the conclusion of the program, The Broad Center will help place participants in urban school districts as superintendents and senior executives.

“A quality education is both profoundly empowering and necessary to maintain a democratic society,” said Contreras. “All children must receive adequate opportunities to learn as well as appropriate support to develop socially, emotionally and physically.”

A full list of 2010 Broad Superintendents Academy participants is below. Full biographies can be found at <http://www.broadacademy.org/fellows/2010.html>, and photos are available upon request.

The 2010 class is the ninth to be trained by The Broad Superintendents Academy. Nearly 73 percent of the graduates of the first six classes have been hired around the country as superintendents or as school district executives or have been promoted into those positions. Seventy percent of them are still working in the same, similar, or higher positions.

The Broad Superintendents Academy has trained more working superintendents in large urban school districts than any other national training program. Graduates of the program currently work as superintendents in 38 cities across 25 states. For a list of cities, please visit <http://www.broadacademy.org/fellows/map.html>.

The Broad Center for the Management of School Systems is funded by The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, a national venture philanthropy established by entrepreneur and philanthropist Eli Broad to advance entrepreneurship for the public good in education, science and the arts. The Broad Foundation’s education work is focused on dramatically improving urban K-12 public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition. Eli Broad is a renowned business leader who founded two Fortune 500 companies, SunAmerica Inc. and KB Home. For more information, please visit [www.broadcenter.org](http://www.broadcenter.org) or [www.broadfoundation.org](http://www.broadfoundation.org).