

# TELLING YOUR STORY TO YOUR COMMUNITY AND THE NEWS MEDIA



The Nebraska Department of Education traditionally focuses on statewide results and refers news media requesting comment on the results of individual districts to district officials who better know and understand their own data.

## Steps To Telling Your Story

1

### Examine your own district and school building results.

- Know what your district and school building results mean
- Prepare to speak about the data in common language
- Look at your data relative to state information

2

### Identify the top strengths of your data

- Prepare to explain those strengths
- Provide specific examples
- Explain instructional strategies that developed those strengths

3

### Identify area(s) most in need of improvement

- Prepare to explain these area(s) of need
- Speak in a direct and straightforward way about the results
- Don't offer excuses or place blame on others
- Identify your plan for improvement

4

### Prepare a written communication that includes key messages and bullet points from steps two and three

- Prepare a clear, precise summary
- Use a format that is easy to understand
- Keep it simple

5

### Plan for internal communication (local school board, all staff, parents, students)

- Identify your avenues of communication — e-mail, newsletters, face-to-face meetings, staff meetings, social media
- Tell your internal audiences first

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### Plan for external communication (business leaders, elected officials, taxpayers, community, news media)

- Identify your avenues of communication — e-mail, newsletters, annual reports, face-to-face, public meetings, radio, television, newspapers, social media
- Keep key community members involved and informed
- Be proactive, not reactive
- Invite community and media into your school(s) to see effective instruction

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### Anticipate questions and answers