

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW EDUCATION WEBSITE PROVIDES TOOLS FOR PUBLIC TO EXPLORE, RESEARCH NEBRASKA PUBLIC SCHOOL DATA

The Nebraska Department of Education unveiled today a new website that provides tools for the public to explore and to tailor their research on the state's public schools.

The Data Reporting System or DRS allows individuals to explore public education data at the level of their own interest and their ability to manage data. The DRS is available on the Nebraska Department of Education homepage at www.education.ne.gov or at drs.education.ne.gov.

"The DRS provides access to more data about our public schools and their students and teachers than ever before as well as the tools the public and researchers need to explore that data," said Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed. "Our goal is for the DRS to help individuals have the information they need about their schools so they can have an informed, community-wide conversation about public school education."

The DRS holds the promise of improving the education of all students, Breed said, by increasing parental and community involvement and providing research-based findings that allow educators to identify effective instructional strategies.

While the DRS opens the door to new opportunities, it also creates challenges. "The public and researchers must make certain that they use the data appropriately and interpret it accurately," Breed said, encouraging individuals to talk to Nebraska Department of Education staff as they work with the data.

A training center is available on the DRS to help the public and educators use the research tools. NDE staff has begun providing workshops to educators statewide to help them better understand what the DRS offers and how to use the research tools.

To ensure no individual student can be identified and to comply with federal law that protects confidential student information, the DRS has two sites. One site is for public use and provides access to only state level data to protect confidential student information as required by federal law. A second site is password protected and allows school districts to drill down into only their own data. In Nebraska, data for groups of fewer than 10 students are masked to ensure individual students cannot be identified.

In 2007, Nebraska received a federal State Longitudinal Data System grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which covered the approximate \$1 million cost of developing the DRS. The DRS complements

the existing State of the Schools Report, an electronic report, that will continue to provide the public information about Nebraska schools and student test results.