

CLASSIFICATION

TELLING YOUR STORY



TO YOUR COMMUNITY
AND THE NEWS MEDIA

The Nebraska School Public Relations Association and the Nebraska Department of Education initially created this guide, which has been adapted.

NOTE: 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/school building classifications mean
- Prepare to speak about AQuESTT and the classification(s) in common language
- Look at your classification relative to state information, as appropriate
- Examine outcomes for all student groups

2 Identify the top strengths of your district/schools

- 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 blame students or 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 that is not wordy
- 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

6 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

7 Anticipate questions and answers