**School-Level Spending Key Messages**

**FOR DISTRICT LEADERS**

*The key messages below are designed to help district leaders communicate the shift to reporting per-pupil expenditures at the school level with board members, district principals, community leaders, educators, parents and media. When discussing this new requirement, district leaders should emphasize that this will help meet the needs of all students in a fair and equitable way.* ***Keep messages high-level and avoid overly-complex phrases or education jargon.***

* [DISTRICT] is committed to providing all students with a high-quality public education and the opportunity to succeed.
* The funding and resources provided to our district and schools, as well as decisions about how those resources are spent, are key factors in the quality of education provided to students.
* During the 2018-2019 academic year, [DISTRICT] took the important step from reporting spending at the district level to reporting spending at the district *and* school levels, and the Nebraska Department of Education will begin publicly reporting that information in spring 2020.
  + This action is supported by a requirement in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that all states report per-pupil expenditures at the school level on state and district report cards.
  + This shift will help our district better meet the unique needs of all students in a fair and equitable way. It’s important to note that equity doesn’t mean equal. In order to meet the unique needs of every student and school, we must go beyond providing the same (or equal) experience and resources.
* ***Option 1*:** While we already report spending at the district level, we have never reported spending at the school level before.
* ***Option 2*:** [DISTRICT] is already using the state’s new reporting system for spending at the school level.
  + Tracking spending at the school level for items like a principal’s salary, a textbook, or a desk may seem easy, but becomes more complicated with costs that are spread across multiple schools or even the whole district, such as buses that transport children to multiple schools, supports for students with disabilities, or English language instructors who work in more than one school building.
  + Understanding how funding is spent at the school level will help drive important conversations about whether resources are spent fairly to support the students who need them most. This is a vital part of working to provide resources that prepare all students to succeed, particularly [***customize based on your district***: our students living in poverty, students who have experienced trauma in or outside of school and our students receiving additional support services, including English Language learners and students with disabilities].
  + This process will be intentionally iterative. Over time, the Nebraska Department of Education will be looking to refine how spending information is captured and communicated.
* With school-level financial data, districts will be able to raise important questions about how equitably resources have been distributed between schools in the past and how resources should continue to be distributed in the future.
* This new information will also enable district leaders to track how well they and their principals are able to leverage resources compared to peer schools and districts, and adopt strategies from similar schools that have raised student achievement.
* Making financial data available at the school level can help community members—including parents, school leaders, and civil rights leaders—better understand spending patterns across the state and individual schools.
  + In addition to focusing on equity between districts, we can now also focus on equity between schools in the same district.
* Data on school-level spending is one piece of a larger conversation. Combined with information about the school and district, this data can help parents, educators, and policymakers better understand spending within a school’s unique context to inform conversations about improvements that will benefit all students.
* School-level spending information will be shared on the [Nebraska Education Profile](https://nep.education.ne.gov/) alongside other important information, such as student demographics and measures of student achievement.