



2026 Illinois Report Card

Communicating Your School's Profile

A practical guide for helping your community understand the profile and join the improvement conversation.

Start With the Purpose

Communicating a Profile of Performance is an opportunity to build understanding, trust, and shared responsibility for student success. The goal is not to defend a label or compare schools. The goal is to help people understand what the profile shows, what it does not show, and what the school will learn and do next.

Use plain language. Lead with student experiences and outcomes. Make room for both strengths and areas for improvement. Every school has strengths, and every school has room to improve.

Audience		What they may need from the school
	Educators and staff	A shared understanding of the profile, the patterns worth studying, and how the results connect to current improvement work
	Students and families	A clear explanation of what the results mean for students and how their experiences and perspectives will inform next steps
	School board and district leaders	A concise account of strengths, opportunities, resource needs, and the school's improvement priorities
	Community partners and businesses	An understandable picture of where partnership, services, mentoring, or other support could help
	Media and broader community	Accurate, accessible context about the profile, the school's story, and the actions being taken

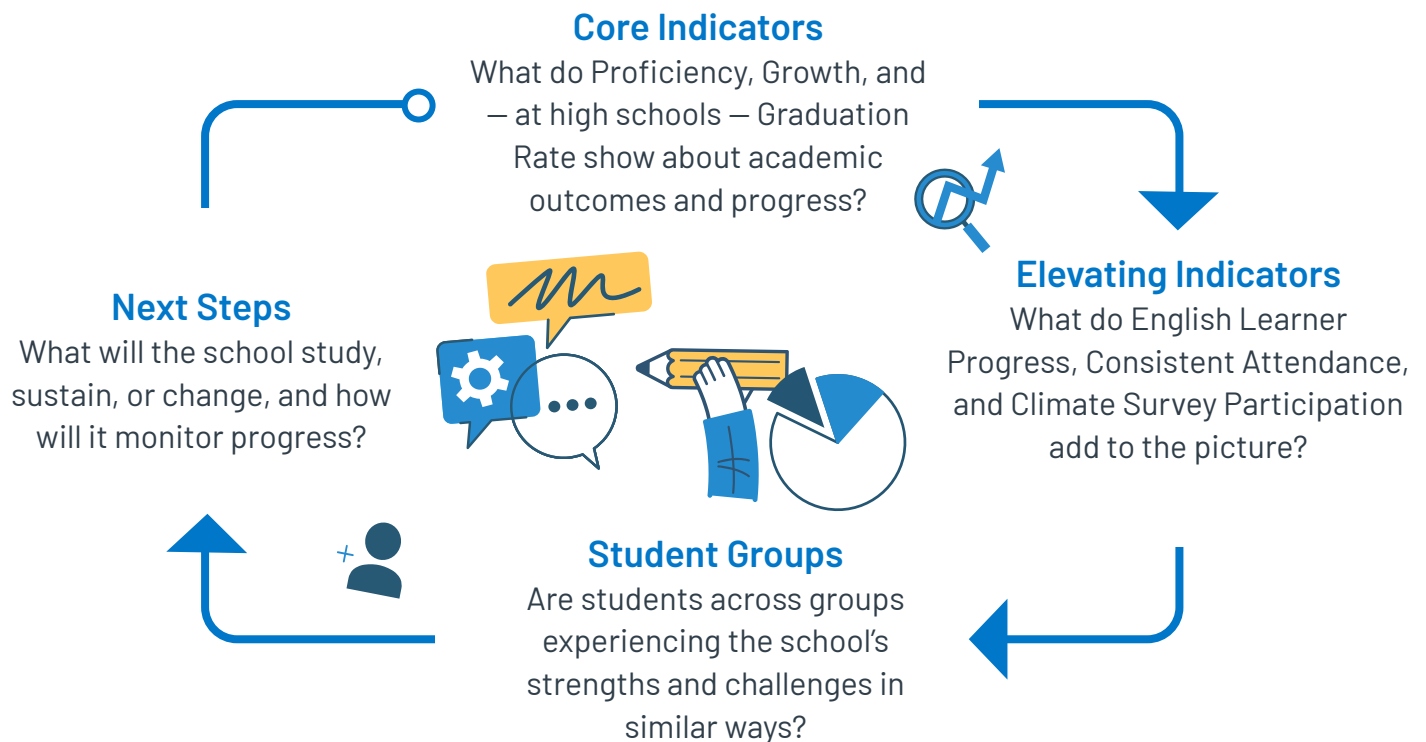
Make the Message Clear

Before choosing a channel, decide what people most need to understand. A useful set of messages answers three questions:

- What does the profile show about student outcomes, progress, engagement, and school experience?
- What strengths should we recognize and sustain?
- What will we investigate or try next, and how can others contribute?

Ask: What questions will this audience have? What do they care about? Do they understand the difference between an individual indicator result, the overall Profile of Performance, and school improvement status?

Build the Message Around the Whole Profile



Communication Principles

- Explain the profile as connected signals, not a single score, ranking, or complete explanation of school quality.
- Use the same performance-level terms for indicators and overall profiles but explain that an Exemplary profile does not require every indicator to be Exemplary. Schools can demonstrate strengths in more than one way.
- Name both what is going well and what the school is still learning. An Exemplary profile does not mean that no improvement is needed.
- Separate the annual Profile of Performance from school improvement status. They are connected, but they answer different questions.
- Avoid statements that identify a result as the ability, effort, or potential of individual students.
- Make materials accessible: Use plain language, translate when appropriate, and provide formats that families can use.

Match the Channel to the Audience

Channel	Good use
Staff meeting or professional learning	Build shared understanding and connect results to improvement priorities.
Family letter, email, text, or translated handout	Share the main message, invite questions, and point to the full profile.
Board presentation or district update	Explain the school's story, priorities, and resource or support needs.
Website, social media, or short video	Make key messages easy to find and share; link to the complete profile and related resources.
Town hall, listening session, or survey	Gather questions, experiences, and ideas that can add meaning to the data.

Before You Share

- Confirm that you are using final results and the current school improvement status.
- Check indicator names, performance levels, student group results, and any comparison data.
- Prepare a short answer to why the overall profile may differ from one or more individual indicators.
- Coordinate internal messages so staff hear accurate information before broader public communication when possible.
- Provide a contact, link, or forum where people can ask questions and offer input.

A Simple Message Structure

1

Lead With Your Headline

What are the top things you want people to remember?

2

Support It With Evidence

Use data from the Illinois Report Card.

3

Provide Context

Why does the result matter? What contributed to it?

4

Explain What's Next

How will your district build on strengths and address opportunities for growth?

Related Resources:

[An Overview of Profiles of Performance](#); [How to Read a Profile of Performance](#); [Why Student Group Performance Matters](#); [Using Profiles for Continuous Improvement](#); [Telling Your Story](#)