

## **Canon 4: Report information accurately and without bias**

The community was thrilled to learn that the local high school had been named one of the top 10 schools in the country by a major news magazine. However, when examining the methodology behind the award, the district superintendent questioned the finding and decided that she needed to know how the rankings were determined. An inquiry to the magazine found that the data had been “checked and double-checked,” but no one at the publication was willing to divulge what data were used to determine the rankings. Additional investigation by district staff revealed that the magazine had used an incorrect enrollment figure, causing the participation percentage on a national test to be tremendously inflated. The superintendent understood that, if she reported this to the magazine, the high school would surely drop from the top tier to the second tier of “best schools.” Still, the error had to be corrected—it was the right thing to do. Despite the decline in national prominence, the superintendent was surprised to learn that her community—including parents, students, alumni, and the local media—were very proud that the school district chose to report the error rather than receive recognition it didn’t deserve. Ensuring accuracy over fame had actually confirmed to community members that they really did have one of the top school systems in the country.