

# From Mission

# to Movement

**Advancing K-12 news literacy  
education nationwide**

2024-2028

**News  
Literacy  
Project**





# Table of Contents

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**Page 3**    What is News Literacy?

**Pages 4-6**    Our Story

**Pages 7-9**    The Big Picture

**Pages 10-11**    Our Strategic Approach to System Change

**Pages 12-13**    How We Work within a State or District

**Pages 14-15**    Pillar 1: Validate Academic Merit

**Pages 16-17**    Pillar 2: Support State Action

**Pages 18-19**    Pillar 3: Create Practitioner Models

# What is news literacy?

Any comprehensive media literacy program must start with news literacy, a foundational aspect of the discipline. Specifically, news literacy:

- Seeks to teach students **how** to think about the news and information they consume, not **what** to think.
- Places an emphasis on developing a **healthy skepticism** about news and information, without becoming cynical.
- Is committed to the **First Amendment** and the conviction that a **free press** is a cornerstone of democracy.
- Demonstrates a **nonpartisan** focus on specific, clear learning standards.
- Is a fundamental component of any comprehensive **civics** program.



I'm convinced the News Literacy Project is one of the most important public service organizations in the nation.

– **PIERRE THOMAS**, ABC News Senior Justice Correspondent, NLP National Journalism Advisory Council

## OUR STORY:

# A Legacy of Growing Impact

The News Literacy Project has long recognized that the lack of a news-literate public can be a threat to a democracy. Our pioneering work has allowed us to develop the expertise and the programs to address this problem on a national scale.



## 2008

**FEBRUARY:** NLP is founded with a \$250,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

**SEPTEMBER:** NLP creates its first website at [www.thenewsliteracyproject.org](http://www.thenewsliteracyproject.org).

**NOVEMBER:** The New York Times becomes NLP's first participating news organization.

## 2010

**SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER:** NLP holds the first of many fall forums featuring such well-respected media personalities as Washington Post publisher Katharine Weymouth, Gwen Ifill of *Washington Week* and *PBS NewsHour*, David Brooks of *The New York Times* and E.J. Dionne of *The Washington Post*.

## 2009

**FEBRUARY:** CNN's Soledad O'Brien is on hand to launch the classroom program at Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School in Brooklyn.

**OCTOBER:** Chicago pilot program begins with event featuring Chicago Tribune's Clarence Page.



## 2011

**APRIL:** The IRS awards NLP independent 501(c)(3) status. NLP had previously operated through fiscal sponsors.

**SEPTEMBER:** NLP expands into the District of Columbia with a kickoff event featuring journalist Gwen Ifill.



## 2012

**MARCH:** NLP begins a digital-unit pilot in Chicago.

**MAY:** NLP announces a partnership with The Washington Post to relaunch the paper's Young Journalists Development Program.

**OCTOBER:** NLP sponsors "Presidential Debates: Performance, Spin and the Press" at Georgetown University with Robert Siegel of NPR, Chuck Todd of NBC, Kathleen Parker of *The Washington Post* and Al Hunt of Bloomberg News.

## 2013

**APRIL:** NLP is featured in The Chronicle of Philanthropy as an example of a nonprofit that survived and thrived despite launching during the 2008 recession.

**NOVEMBER:** NLP sponsors "America's Changing Role in the World and How the Press Covers It" at George Washington University with Gwen Ifill of *Washington Week* and *PBS NewsHour*, Andrea Mitchell of NBC and Thomas Friedman of The New York Times.

## 2014

**OCTOBER:** NLP offers its first series of online professional development workshops for teachers nationwide.

## 2017

**APRIL:** NLP holds its first NewsLitCamp®, a day-long professional development experience hosted in a local newsroom, in partnership with Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Sun-Times.

**SEPTEMBER:** NLP publishes the first issue of The Sift®, a weekly newsletter for educators.

**OCTOBER:** NLP offers a NewsLitCamp for Miami-Dade County educators at the Miami Herald.



## 2020

**JANUARY:** Washington Post reporter Wesley Lowery speaks with students at Wakefield High School in Arlington, Virginia, as part of the Newsroom to Classroom program.

**MARCH:** In response to the COVID-19 epidemic, NLP removes the paywall on Checkology, making the platform free to all educators and parents.

**APRIL:** Recognizing misinformation's growing threat to democracy, NLP expands its mission to make resources available to educate the public.

## 2015

**FEBRUARY:** NLP moves into Houston with a pilot classroom program.

## 2016

**MAY:** NLP releases its Checkology® virtual classroom.

**AUGUST:** Facing History and Ourselves and NLP collaborate on "Facing Ferguson: News Literacy in a Digital Age," lessons about the fatal police shooting of an unarmed black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014.

**OCTOBER:** NPR's Peter Sagal is among the prominent journalists on the panel of the "Satire Summit 2016: Beyond Parody?" at The New School in New York City.



## 2018

**FEBRUARY:** NLP celebrates its 10th anniversary.

**MAY:** NLP sells its first Checkology premium licenses and unveils its revamped website, [newslit.org](http://newslit.org).

**AUGUST:** NLP releases an upgraded and expanded version of its Checkology virtual classroom.

## 2019

**FEBRUARY:** NLP receives a \$5 million grant from Knight Foundation.

**MARCH:** NLP is one of three news literacy organizations worldwide to receive support from Apple.



## OUR STORY

continues on the next page.





## OUR STORY continues.

### 2021

**JANUARY:** NLP launches NewsLitNation, the national news literacy educator network.

**SEPTEMBER:** The Google News Initiative funds NLP.

**DECEMBER:** Microsoft becomes a major corporate partner.

### 2022

**MARCH:** Founder and CEO Alan C. Miller announces his transition from the role of CEO. The board of directors names Chuck Salter, then president and COO, as Miller's successor.

**APRIL:** NLP launches a strategic plan to create a movement to make news literacy an integral part of American life.

**SEPTEMBER:** Checkology unveils three new STEM-aligned lessons, "Evaluating Science-Based Claims," "Be Health Informed" and "Making Sense of Data."

**OCTOBER:** NLP launches RumorGuard™, its first-ever platform aimed at serving the broader public news literacy education.



SEPTEMBER 2022



### 2023

**JANUARY:** The NLP Board of Directors votes to allow the organization to participate in direct, state-level policy advocacy in an effort to expand the teaching of news literacy.

**MARCH:** The new Checkology lesson "Harm & Distrust" explores the historical failure of mainstream news organizations to serve all people equally, creating legacies of distrust, particularly among Black Americans.

**SEPTEMBER:** NLP receives the highest honor from the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program, the David M. Rubenstein Prize.

### 2024

**FEBRUARY:** Board votes to return to NLP's K-12 mission and work for systems change in public education.

**APRIL:** Checkology wins a Webby People's Voice Award from the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences.



APRIL 2024

# The Big Picture



## Our Values

### Our Mission

NLP advances the development and teaching of news literacy in K-12 education.

### Our Vision

All students in the United States are skilled in news literacy before they graduate high school, giving them the knowledge and ability to participate in civic society as well-informed, critical thinkers.

#### WHAT WE BELIEVE

- News literacy is an essential life skill.
- Facts matter.
- A free press is a cornerstone of democracy.

#### HOW WE ACHIEVE *WHAT WE BELIEVE*

- Innovation.
- Independence and nonpartisanship.
- Inclusion and diversity.
- Collaboration.

## The Challenge



**The mis- and disinformation crisis threatens the very fabric of our democracy.**

It deepens political polarization and erodes trust in institutions and standards-based news organizations. One of the fundamental mandates of public education is to prepare students to be active, critical-thinking members of our democracy, yet most states do not require the teaching of news literacy. To ignore news literacy is to fail that mandate. Without the skills and tools to evaluate the credibility of information they encounter online, young people will be at a civic and personal disadvantage their entire lives.



## The Solution

This crisis requires a bold response, and our national movement will reimagine K-12 education in the United States, ensuring that all students learn news literacy skills and concepts before high school graduation.

**By removing barriers to news literacy education**, we can give students the tools, knowledge and mindset to think critically about news and seek out credible sources and information. Ultimately, they will be equipped to push back against disinformation, be civically engaged in our democracy and be confident in the ability to make informed decisions.





# Direct Impact Targets

by June 2028



While it will take time and a multifaceted approach to achieve our ambitious vision of all students graduating high school skilled in news literacy, we have established direct impact targets for 2028 as indicators of progress in expanding news literacy education.

By 2028...

1

**3.4 million students\*** have been taught news literacy using NLP resources.



2

Every year, NLP resources are used to teach news literacy in **5,000 districts.**



3

**24,000 educators** engage with NLP resources and programs each year.



\* Since 2016.

# Our Strategic Approach to System Change

We will advance and expand news literacy education with an approach that removes long-standing barriers to such teaching. This includes standardizing the field and validating its academic rigor, codifying and supporting state learning standards and developing replicable teaching models.

## Pillar 1

### Validate Academic Merit

Producing efficacy and impact research as well as best-in-class curriculum resources and programs.

## Pillar 2

### Support State Action

Supporting the adoption of state teaching requirements, assisting with state standards integration and encouraging statewide resource promotion.

### Create Practitioner Models

Creating more local practitioner models as proofs of concept for broader adoption.

### Vision



All students in the United States are skilled in news literacy before they graduate high school, giving them the knowledge and ability to participate in civic society as well-informed, critical thinkers.

## Pillar 3

# How We Work within a State or District

↓  
**"TOP-DOWN"**  
↓  
*Encouraging state action & validating academic merit*

↓  
**"MIDDLE-OUT"**  
↓  
*Creating replicable practitioner models & supporting state action*

↑  
**"BOTTOM-UP"**  
↑  
*Validating academic merit & creating individual practitioners*

**Advocacy Coalitions**  
(Policy directives, standards development)

**District Fellowships**  
(Local level model for state replication)

**Research & Design**  
(Resource development, student learning research, pedagogical framework)



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**Systemic change does not stem from a single point of entry.** That's why we are approaching this work from several directions and channels. Our approach leverages stakeholders and resources up, down and across the nation's education framework.

### State-level Partnerships

(Resource promotion, professional learning)



### District Partnerships

(Resource endorsement, professional development)



### Educator Community

(NLP Education, user support, professional development, national conference)



### Social Impact:

By 2028 through our district and state programs, over 2.5 million students will be guaranteed news literacy instruction as a matter of course before they graduate high school, ready to participate in the civic life of their community.



## Pillar 1:

# Validate Academic Merit

“

Being news-literate can contribute to how you're thinking in real-life situations. I have learned so much from my experience with news literacy education through Checkology.

– **NEVEAH RICE**, NLP's 2024  
Gwen Ifill Student of the Year

”

## The Barrier

Future generations will be at a significant civic disadvantage if they are not prepared to discern fact from fiction. This lack of media literacy skills puts the future of our democratic system at risk.

While the need for news literacy instruction is being recognized by some education leaders across the country, the media literacy field in practice lacks definition, which prevents the subject from being elevated to the level of core subjects like math, science and English.

## The Solution

To expand the teaching of news literacy on a national scale, NLP will lead the validation of news literacy as a subject worthy of the attention and investment that other core subjects receive.

To do this, NLP will provide a pedagogical framework, a class-leading curriculum, high-quality practitioner standards and training and research-based evidence that these resources lead to student learning and new habits of mind.



## Objectives

### 1.1

Develop best-in-class, relevant curriculum and accessible, adaptable resources for educators, students and other education community influencers.

### 1.2

Conduct and publish research evaluating the impact of news literacy education and NLP's resources. We will use these findings to  
a) validate news literacy as a learnable skill, and  
b) improve, refine, and expand NLP's content design and practice.

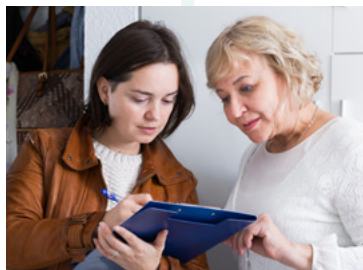
### 1.3

Expand NLP's professional standing through thought leadership and coalition-building.

checkology®



RUMOR GUARD



## Pillar 2:

# Support State Action



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Our democracy will not survive if our citizens are not making accurate, informed decisions. People act on the information they have. If they have poor information, their decisions might be poor.

– **LESLI MORRIS**, educator, Canyons School District, Utah, NLP District Fellowship program participant

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## The Barrier

Education policy, including what curriculum students are taught, is largely set at the state level, either through legislation or administrative action.

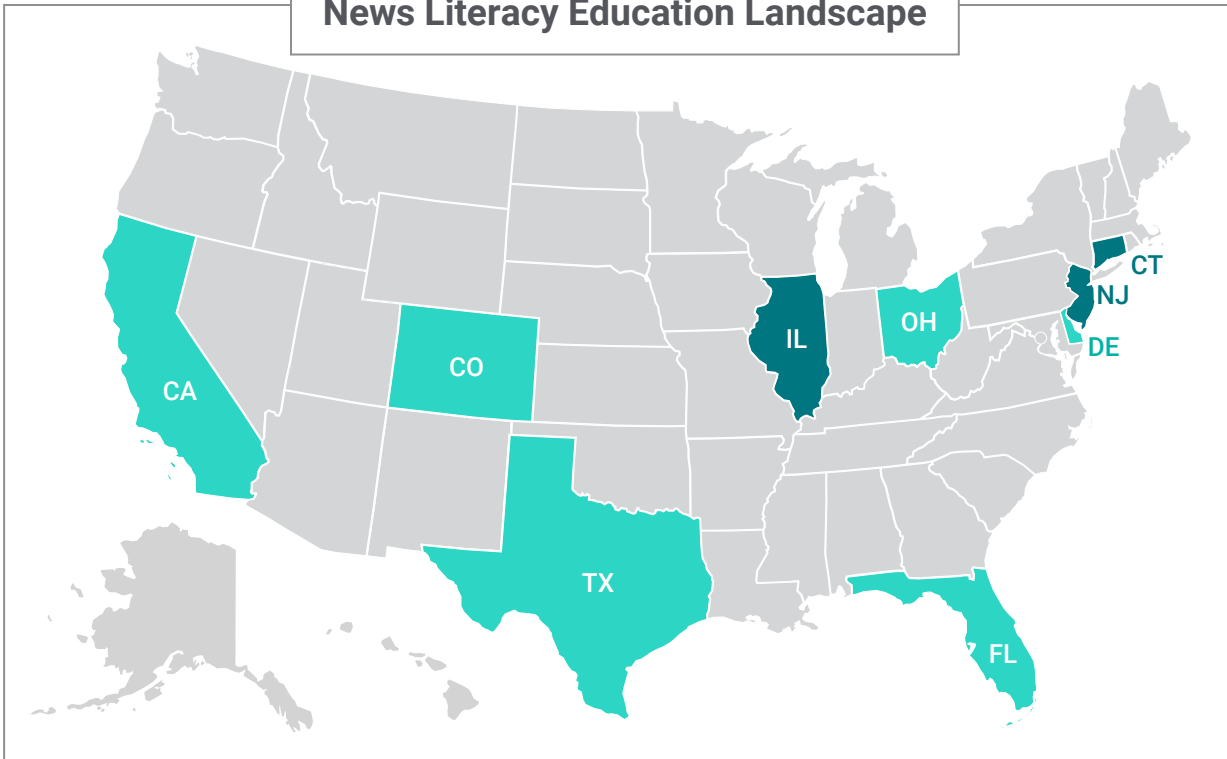
Currently, only nine states have passed legislation regarding news literacy, and only three of those require the explicit teaching of this critical life skill. Given everything we expect from our schools, they can only prioritize what the state requires. Until news literacy instruction is required, it will simply remain a “nice to have,” and millions of students each year will be denied this critical life skill.

## The Solution

**NLP will work for more states to pass news literacy teaching requirements through local coalition building and nonpartisan advocacy.**

In the meantime, in states with a requirement, NLP will work with departments of education to help navigate the new statute, expand professional development and raise general awareness of NLP’s resources. In states without a news literacy requirement, NLP will coordinate general awareness and resource promotion campaigns to encourage the teaching of news literacy.

## News Literacy Education Landscape



Existing news literacy  
**standards** requirement

Existing news literacy  
**teaching** requirement

As of July 1, 2024.

## Objectives

### 2.1

Expand the use of NLP resources through state-level partnerships, endorsements, promotions and marketing.

### 2.2

Support the development of state standards and learning frameworks in partnership with the DOEs and other state-level organizations in states where media literacy legislation or administrative action has already passed.

### 2.3

Accelerate the adoption of media literacy legislation or administrative action in more states.

## Pillar 3:

# Create Practitioner Models

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What success would look like is to see news literacy as a common practice, just part of the conversation. If we want to prepare kids for tomorrow, you've got to be thinking about tomorrow.

– **JAMIE PATTERSON**, educator, Las Cruces Public Schools, New Mexico, NLP District Fellowship program participant  
(PICTURED AT LOWER LEFT ABOVE)

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## The Barrier

As news literacy education is not widely required nationwide, there are a lack of successful practitioner models for those interested in integrating news literacy education into their official curriculum.

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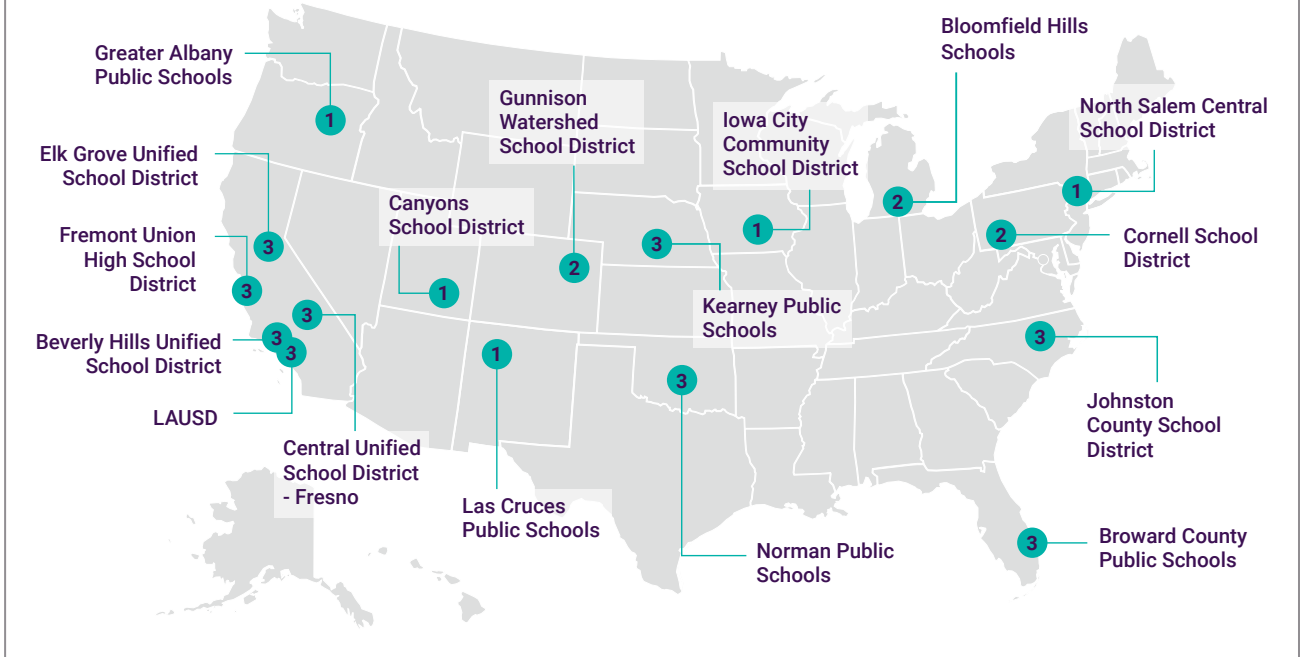
## The Solution

To expand the teaching of news literacy on a national scale, NLP will create both district-level practitioner models (through the District Fellowship program and other district partnerships) and individual practitioner models (through professional development, community building and outreach).

In states where news literacy education is required, these practitioner models will lead the way in demonstrating to other educators and districts how to implement the requirement. In states without a news literacy education requirement, these models will serve as “proofs-of-concept” to encourage them to prioritize and ultimately require news literacy.



## District Fellowships



**1 Cohort 1**  
(2022-2024)

**2 Cohort 2**  
(2023-2025)

**3 Cohort 3**  
(2024-2026)

*As of July 1, 2024.*

## Objectives

### 3.1

Expand NLP's content user base through district partnerships and direct marketing.

### 3.2

Build systemic practitioner models to encourage state adoption through fellowships and district model partnerships.

### 3.3

Support individual practitioners through direct user support, professional development offerings and community-building opportunities.

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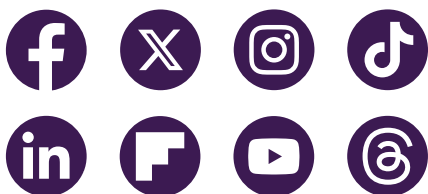
**Join the  
movement  
to create a future  
founded on facts.**



[newslit.org](https://newslit.org)

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**Follow us at @NewsLitProject**



**The News Literacy Project** is a 501(c)(3) educational organization. All our programs are nonpartisan and independent. The support we receive from donors and foundations does not determine or influence the content we develop and provide in our Checkology virtual classroom or other resources.

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