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Southwest Educational Development Center awarded \$60,000 grant from News Literacy Project

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 10, 2025 — Six Utah school districts have joined the News Literacy Project's [District Fellowship program](#) through the Southwest Educational Development Center.

The three-year fellowship provides a \$60,000 grant and customized support to implement news literacy education districtwide, ensuring all students learn to think critically and engage responsibly with the news and information.

The participating districts include:

- Beaver County School District
- Garfield County School District
- Iron County School District
- Kane County School District
- Millard County School District
- Washington County School District

These districts and the local charter schools will join the Canyons School District, an alumnus of the fellowship, to form a Utah network where multiple districts collaborate to share best practices, create resources and troubleshoot challenges. These regional hubs will foster sustained professional communities that support news literacy instruction across the state.

A [study by the News Literacy Project](#) reveals that a staggering 94% of teens believe media literacy should be a required part of their education. Yet the study found that most students aren't receiving the instruction they need to navigate an increasingly complicated information landscape. The District Fellowship program exists to close this gap.

"Even though Gen Z and Gen Alpha are digital natives, they're often overwhelmed by the nonstop flood of information online," said Charles Salter, President and CEO of the News Literacy Project. "This year's record participation in the fellowship program shows that district leaders get it: Students are hungry for news literacy, and educators are stepping up to meet that demand."

Now in its fourth year, the fellowship spans 28 districts across 15 states, with the potential to reach more than 1.1 million students. Some of the largest school districts in the U.S. are a part of the program, including Los Angeles and Chicago. Suburban and rural districts of all sizes are also well-represented.

This year marks the launch of state-based networks in Pennsylvania and Utah, where multiple districts will collaborate to share best practices, create resources and troubleshoot challenges. These regional hubs will foster sustained professional communities that support news literacy instruction across entire states — an approach that successfully piloted last year with five districts in California.

"Young people are eager to learn the critical, independent thinking skills they need to navigate the online world with confidence and avoid being misled," said Ebonee Otoo, Senior Vice President of Educator Engagement at the News Literacy Project. "The District Fellowship program empowers districts to answer that urgent call."

Applications for the next fellowship cohort open in October and close in December. Beginning in January, applications for future cohorts will be accepted on a rolling basis.

Districts accepted to this year's fellowship program include:

Chicago Public Schools, IL

Public Schools of Brookline, MA

Helena Public Schools, MT

Clark County School District, NV

Rochester City School District, NY

Avonworth School District, PA

Butler Area School District, PA

Round Rock Independent School District, TX

Southwest Educational Development Center, UT (representing six districts)

Hancock County Schools, WV

[Click here](#) to learn more about the District Fellowship program.

About the News Literacy Project

The News Literacy Project is a nonpartisan education nonprofit that works with teachers, school districts, states and community partners like libraries and after-school clubs to ensure students in all 50 states receive news literacy instruction before they graduate from high school. Learn more at www.newslit.org.

