

We are Media Literacy Now

Media Literacy Now is leading the grassroots movement to create a public education system that meets the needs of all students to learn 21st century literacy skills for health, well-being, parenting, economic participation, and citizenship.

Since 2013, the mission of MLN, a politically neutral 501c3 nonprofit, has been to drive systemic change to ensure that all young people have an opportunity experience comprehensive media literacy education. We pursue this mission through public awareness campaigns, policymaker education, advocate training and support, research, coalition building, and by influencing regulations and legislation.

Ultimately, the success of our grassroots initiative depends on the actions of a wide range of people – educators, business and civic leaders, parents, youth. Everyone can play a part. Thank you for supporting MLN. Here's what we have achieved.

How we measure success

We measure success by how well we recruit, engage, and support advocates, influence policymakers, and reach the public with the message that media literacy is an essential part of education today.

We are influencing policymakers across the country.

Our cooperative approach builds trust by initiating conversations about what a quality public education that meets students and society's needs should look like, rather than attempting to impose a national curriculum. To date, eight state departments of education have worked with MLN advocates to add media literacy to curricula, six have convened advisory councils to identify barriers, nine are considering the feasibility of such advisory councils, three (Massachusetts, Montana, Virginia) have written new standards, and two (Washington, New Mexico) have funded professional development for a total of \$650,000. Taken together, these actions have a potential effect on 10 million students. Through our advocates' policymaker-education efforts, we have inspired 140 sponsors and co-sponsors of 30 separate pieces of legislation. We have reached dozens of other state policy leaders in legislatures and administrations through hearings, briefings, personal meetings, and direct written correspondence.



We are also reaching policymakers and influencers through our policy report, conference panels, media coverage in specialized journals, citations in research and policy reports, and collaboration with state-level organizations. Our founder has spoken at the National School Board Association conference, among others. MLN has been covered in 12 specialized journals for educators and administrators, local government, and journalists. We have built coalitions in numerous states by working with associations of teachers, school librarians, administrators, school boards, and social workers; with PTAs and civics advocacy organizations; and with other related advocates such as The American Academy of Pediatrics in Arizona, the Miss America organization in Florida, Center for Civic Education in Rhode Island, and Jane Doe Inc. in Massachusetts.

Case Study

Systemic change is long-term work that builds by iteration and requires persistence. As we make progress, we'll see more states take action with change coming faster and more broadly. Here's an example of the process in Massachusetts, where we started. Similar steps are taking place in states across the country.

- ▶ In Massachusetts, by way of a hearing before the Joint Education Committee a decade ago, **we introduced the concept of media literacy to 10 legislators.**
- ▶ Over the next few years, that hearing plus follow-up meetings **led to lawmakers including media literacy language in bills** concerning financial literacy, civics education, health education, sexting, and junk food marketing.
- ▶ Our advocates aligned with groups working on these issues, leading to new financial literacy and civics education policies that included media literacy requirements. We also participated on a task force to revise social studies standards with the result that as of 2018, **media literacy is one of 10 “guiding principles” in the standards for middle and high school social studies.**
- ▶ We continue to collaborate with a group of organizations promoting the Healthy Youth Act concerning health education while pursuing other policy reforms. **Policymaker education in Massachusetts has led to real change over time.**

We are building a grassroots foundation of empowered advocates across the country.

We have supported 28 state-level advocates, plus their teams, with tools, training and technical assistance. The diversity of our chapter leaders helps ensure we reach the broadest possible public. Chapter leaders represent ethnic diversity, rural and urban states and districts, and come from a wide range of professions, including social work, arts, law, business, science, faith communities, parenting, and educators from early elementary through university levels. We have created many tools for these advocates: model bills, a get-started toolkit, explainer video with 175,000 views on YouTube, one-page fact sheet, scope and sequence document, and white papers. We have also created a guide to advocacy in schools, districts, and community organizations.

We are raising public awareness resulting in systemic change across the nation.

We have reached millions through coverage in the mainstream media including The New York Times, PBS NewsHour, and The Associated Press as well as other national and local outlets. Our website is an important resource for teachers and parents looking for a curated list of curriculum and for the general public interested in learning more about media literacy.



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