



How a district elevated their new homegrown ELA curriculum with classroom-ready instructional content

DISTRICT PROFILE

District

CABELL COUNTY SCHOOLS

Location

WEST VIRGINIA

Student Population

12,000



CABELL COUNTY SCHOOLS
CREATE YOUR STORY

THE CHALLENGE

Finding content to support the state’s new ELA standards

Cabell County Schools had been implementing a traditional ELA model across their middle schools when West Virginia passed legislation requiring Career Literacy instruction in 2015. In response, the district revamped its ELA instructional model by implementing an ELA survey course alongside a Career Literacy course, in which the 41 West Virginia ELA standards are taught within career cluster modules. Career Literacy is a creative, innovative solution to meeting the new middle school career exploration requirement of WV Policy 2510; Cabell decided to turn this requirement into a new ELA class that impressed the critical implications and need of literacy in today’s workforce (as represented in the chosen modes relevant to local industry.



“The challenge wasn’t finding the modules; we chose modules that highlighted career opportunities that are growing in our region or state. The challenge was finding accessible content,” explained Kirstin Sobotka, the Middle School Literacy Academic Specialist at Cabell.



And so without the right resources, Cabell educators weren't able to close that loop in bringing the equity back into the community around them.

THE PLAN

A growing partnership that brought Career Literacy to life

The district needed to bridge the gap between the vision of their curriculum and the realities of classroom instruction so they could meet the district and state learning requirements.

In looking for a partner that checked all the boxes—engaging, current, and accessible instructional resources that also aligned to their Career Literacy framework and were transparent with teacher usage—Cabell district leaders approached Newsela.

“We wanted someone who understood the curricular impacts of the course, that could give us a more balanced approach to literacy. We had this vision and as soon as we communicated it to Newsela, I knew they saw it too and thought, ‘Oh! We’re here! Let’s do this.’” said Sobotka.



Sobotka described planning with Newsela as a true partnership. “We dug into vision and purpose of course through collaborative conversations and brainstorming. I brought some of the really great activities and best practices that our teachers were already using, while Newsela had this terrific instructional framework with curated articles that were accessible to students (topically and academically). The team established the content and took our Career Literacy Curriculum to the next step that we were really needing help with.”

“Working with Newsela as a partner in equity for our district has been transformative.

Kirstin Sobotka

MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY
ACADEMIC SPECIALIST



We want students to feel like they are seen and that what they are learning relates to their unique needs within their community.

Kirstin Sobotka

MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY
ACADEMIC SPECIALIST

THE IMPLEMENTATION

Partner to design and implement a custom ELA resource

Once the Newsela team had taken the time to understand the scope and sequence for Cabell’s Career Literacy curriculum, Newsela sourced and curated content aligned to its career clusters, infusing a project-based learning element into each unit as a culminating activity.

For sixth grade, Newsela provided modules around public safety, then moved into hospitality for seventh grade, and construction for eighth grade. Sobotka reflects, “The partnership and journey with Newsela has helped Cabell actualize the vision of Career Literacy: a hybrid of ELA and simulated workplace.”

To introduce Newsela to educators, Cabell utilized Newsela Professional Learning to model lessons and best practices that supported their curriculum. Moving forward, teachers will receive ongoing coaching from Newsela and Sobotka to ensure they feel confident using the content in their instruction, so it comes to life for different groups of students. Sobotka expressed the district’s renewed passion for content after finding Newsela, a resource that could implement standards in a creative and engaging way.

“Working with Newsela as a partner in equity for our district has been transformative. Newsela provides students with multiple pathways toward the same end goal, with a variety of resources and learning activities to help reach all of the students in the classroom.”



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THE UPDATE

A lasting partnership

Over the years, Newsela has grown alongside Cabell County to better serve the curricular needs of their teachers, by including more authentic activities and introducing new content clusters like Arts & Technology. With this, Cabell County has been able to better engage their students, offering greater opportunity for choice and voice in their classrooms. Additionally, the yearly refresh of content has given Cabell a chance to infuse current industry trends and updated curricular focus areas into daily instruction, while also continuing to infuse hope and curiosity in students about the future with relevant and up-to-date content.



Go to newsela.com to learn how you can integrate these skills alongside core literacy instruction today!

Expect more from your content



ACCESSIBLE TO ALL LEARNERS

Automatic differentiation so content is accessible to every student regardless of reading level or background. Teachers can add scaffolding as needed.



CONSTANTLY UPDATED

Content is fresh, so when important world events take place that impact students' lives, your content stays up-to-date with it.



AUTHENTIC AND RELEVANT

Great content for the classroom that comes from the real-world and is relevant for students of all grade levels.



ALIGNED TO STANDARDS

Engaging and timely materials that are aligned to literacy standards at the same time.