

Dear Middle School Teachers, Principals, Student Media Advisers, and Librarians:

AEJMC, a national association of journalism and communication educators, professionals, and graduate students, invites you and your school to celebrate News Engagement Day on Tues., Oct. 3, 2023.

Founded in 2014, News Engagement Day encourages: 1) Watching, reading, and listening to news; 2) Educating the public about the process and principles of journalism; 3) Teaching the importance of a free press to our democracy.

On News Engagement Day, Tues., Oct. 3, we hope you will consider one of the ideas below, customized for your class or school. We also encourage you to tweet about your News Engagement Day experience with #NewsEngagementDay.

Journalist Speaker. Invite a journalist from a local newspaper, TV station, radio station or online-only news site to speak to a class or school-wide assembly about reporting the news and why being informed and a free and independent press are important.

“Citizen Journalist” for a Day. In advance of a journalist’s visit, have students research the journalist, including stories reported. During the presentation, take a photograph; after the presentation, have students ask questions and write down the answers for a writing activity. Have students write a short news story that answers the five W’s (Who, What, When, Where, and Why). Add a headline and photo with a caption to round out the experience of being a “citizen journalist” on News Engagement Day.

Interview Parent about News. Have class write a short “Parent News Engagement Questionnaire.” Questions might be about favorite news source and why (newspaper, TV, cable news, news site, etc.); preferred platform for getting news and why (smartphone, TV, radio, computer, social media, news app, podcast, etc.); type of news liked (local, state, national, international, weather, business, politics, sports, arts & entertainment, etc.); how often news is engaged with (daily, a few days a week, rarely or never); when parent first started engaging with news and why. After completing the questionnaire with one or both parents, students can write a summary of the answers followed by their opinion about the news engagement of their parent(s).

Also, consider reaching out to the nearest college or university journalism program and plan a joint Oct. 3 News Engagement Day activity!

For more on NED, please go to www.newsengagement.org or email paula.poindexter@austin.utexas.edu.

