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PBS NEWS
STUDENT
REPORTING
LABS

ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT **2024 - 2025 ACADEMIC YEAR**



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Overview

THE BIG PICTURE

PBS News Student Reporting Labs (SRL) is a hands-on journalism training program that connects young people with real-world experiences and educators with resources and community.

MISSION

To be the premier non-collegiate journalism training program in the United States by providing free tools and meaningful learning opportunities for young people and the educators who support them.



VISION

A world in which young people's voices are heard and valued, free expression meets journalistic integrity, and where SRL leads a diverse and creative community of practice in media and journalism education.

CORE VALUES

Listening, journalistic integrity, community, equity, collaboration, representation, curiosity, empathy, critical thinking, intentionality, respect.

10,514

educators in our network (and growing)

2.1 Million

viewers saw 10 student produced stories on the PBS News Hour broadcast

65%

of students complete multiple projects with our team



A Note From The Executive Director

Our third annual community report comes at a pivotal moment for public media. Federal funding for PBS has been eliminated and press freedoms are under threat.

While SRL lost 10% of our annual budget, we continue serving our community through our regular programs, sustained by foundation grants and individual donors who believe in our mission to grow student journalism across the country.

In times of disruption, young people's voices are essential. Anyone who's been in a classroom recently knows that students and their teachers are under immense pressure. That's why SRL is doubling down to support educators who spark a love of journalism, teach students to be empathetic and trustworthy, and facilitate civic participation.

Before I close, a note of deep gratitude for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which took a chance by funding the Student Reporting Labs pilot in 2009 and kept the program going for over a decade.

This work continues because democracy depends on informed and engaged participants, and there is no better investment than empowering the next generation of storytellers to speak out, bear witness, ask hard questions and search for solutions.

To all the SRL students, teachers, supporters, funders and champions: THANK YOU. You keep us going.

Leah Clapman

By The Numbers

SRL stories on PBS News

2.1 million nightly viewers
5 million YouTube subscribers

Student Reporting Labs channels

2,037,345+ social media impressions (+89%)

220,000+ unique users across SRL social media channels

+122.25% TikTok audience this year

468,225 YouTube views

Teacher Engagement



StoryMaker is SRL's resource platform. From rural classrooms to urban schools, educators use StoryMaker's curriculum, yearly prompts and learning community to guide students in local story production.

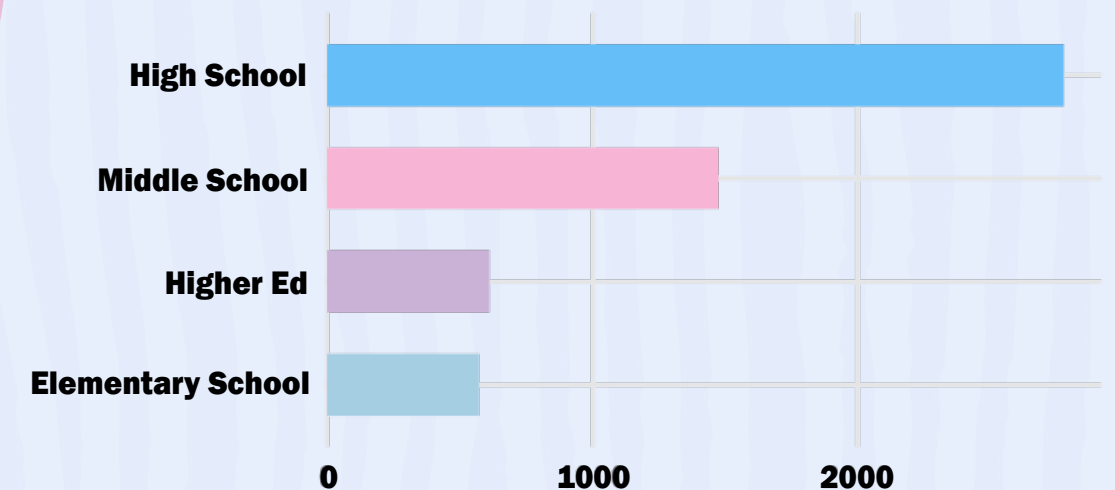
10,514+ registered educators

50 states + 136 countries represented

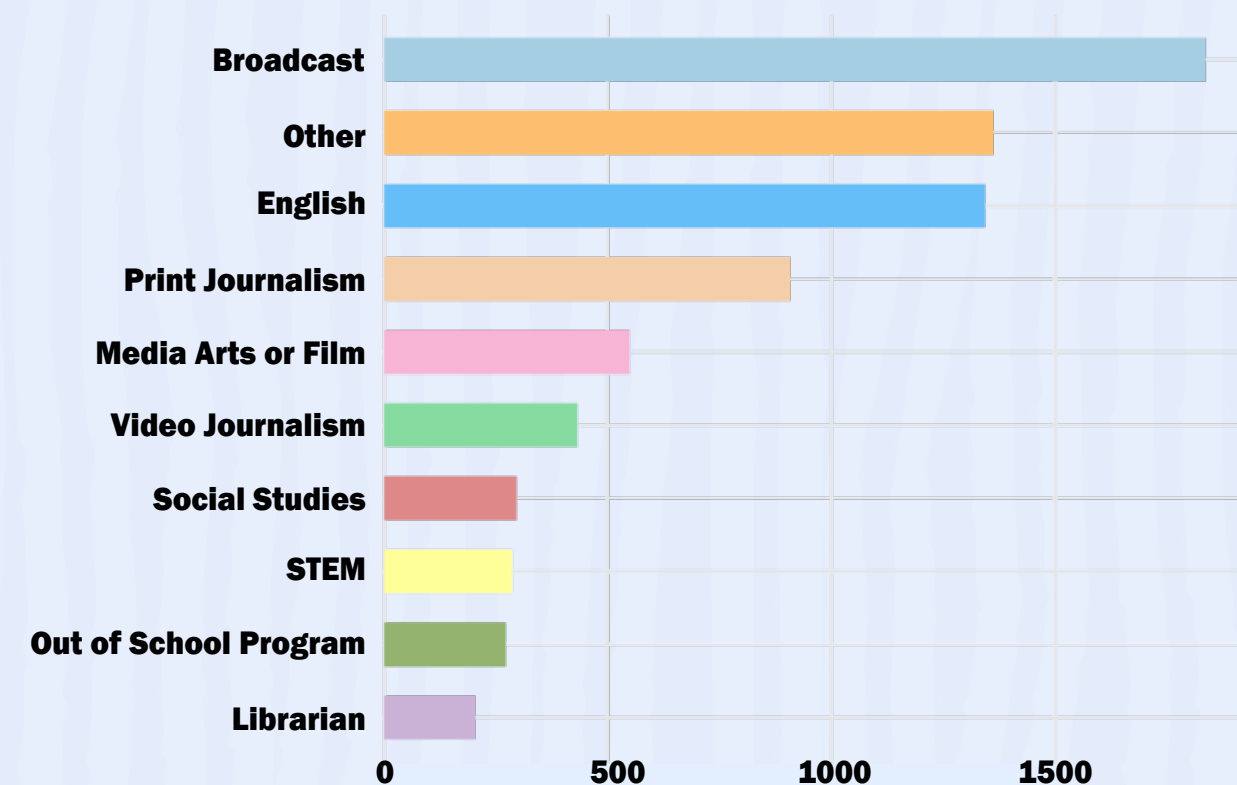
45% of teachers surveyed serve low-income schools



Who Do You Teach?



What Do You Teach?



By The Numbers *(cont.)*

Student Engagement

In the 2024-25 school year, SRL provided tools and resources to over 10,000 educators representing nearly a million students. SRL also worked with students directly via publication and paid production opportunities, resulting in:

120
student stories published on SRL platforms





125
SRL paid gigs filled by 99 students



65%
of participating students complete multiple projects with our team



17
student-produced SRL stories on PBS News broadcast and social platforms

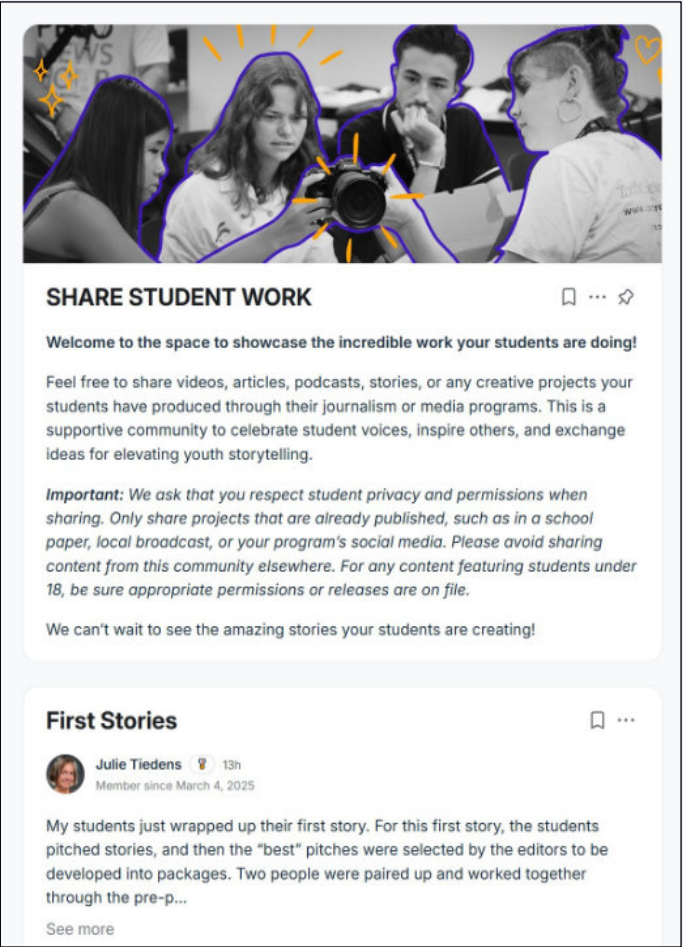
140 students worked in-depth with SRL staff including:	
30 Academy Fellows	14 <i>Run, Hide, Fight</i> documentary producers
9 college climate reporting fellows	31 Student Advisory Team members
	50 student producers over two seasons of our <i>On Our Minds</i> podcast

Teacher Engagement + Leadership



A new, go-to [virtual space](#) for educators to connect with each other and the SRL team, ask questions, troubleshoot challenges, share wins and spark new possibilities together.

Screenshot of SRL Community Commons



SRL invested deeply in amplifying teacher voices and strengthening educator leadership and community this year.



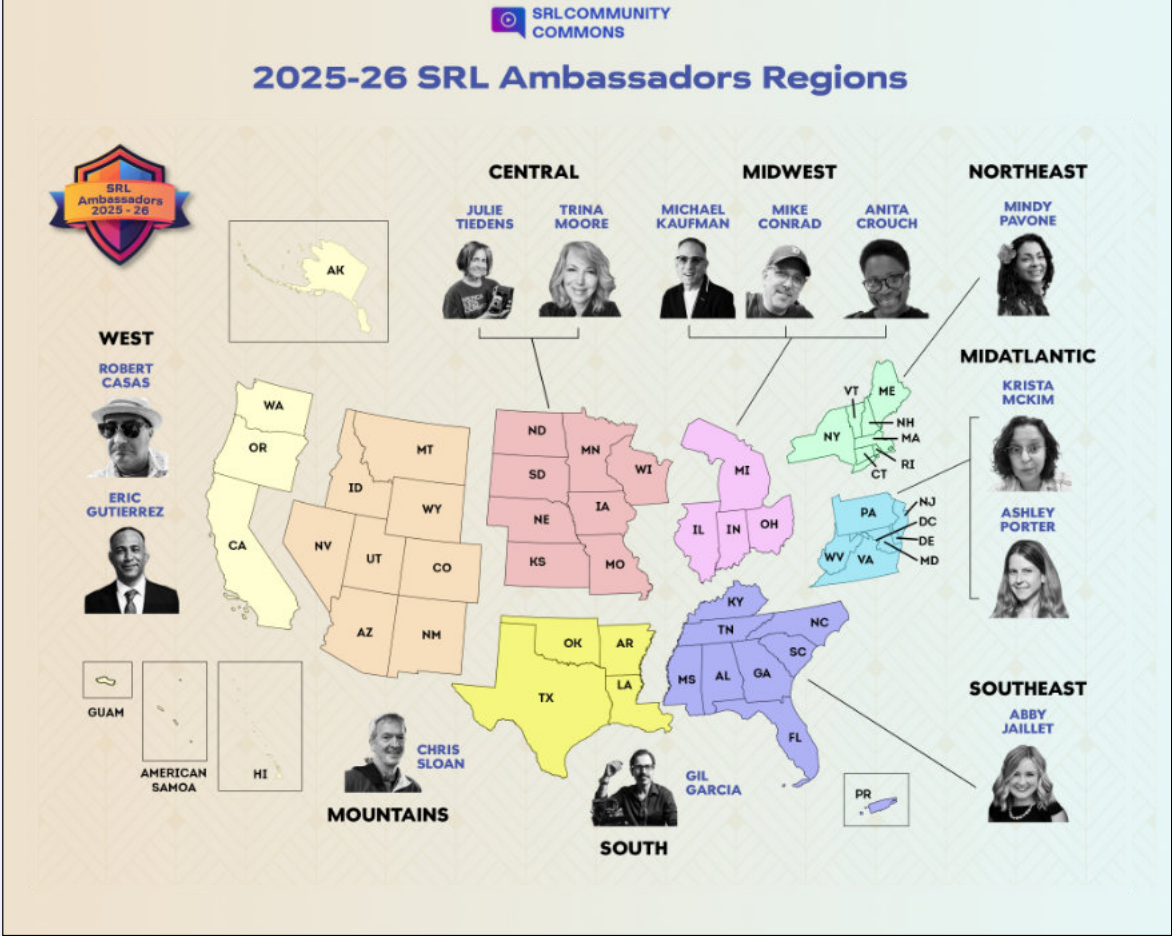
“After years of learning from the best, I'm humbled to not just develop my own students, but also to pour all the skills Student Reporting Labs and PBS Wisconsin have taught me back into the educators and classrooms that continue to inspire students to elevate their own work!”
— **Julie Tiedens, SRL Ambassador, Black River Falls High School, Wisconsin**



“The community of journalism educators is vital, because at least in my school and many of the schools in my district, there's only one journalism educator in the school. So when you're alone on an island and you don't have any other people teaching your subject matter, it's necessary to have a network of people who teach what you teach around the country.”
— **Joe Papadopoulos, Howard W. Blake School, Tampa, Florida**

SRL Ambassador Program

Longtime SRL educators are taking on leadership roles, mentoring peers, building regional communities and championing student voice.



SRL Educator Collective

An advisory group of educators served as thought partners for the development of new community initiatives. They weighed in on pilot versions of our new online community, ambassador program and curriculum initiatives, providing feedback to ensure SRL continues to meet changing needs of classrooms and communities.

Primary Content Projects



SRL's Edward R. Murrow award-winning teen mental health podcast

[Season 5](#) of the *On Our Minds* podcast featured teens in conversation with their inspirations, including family members, community leaders, authors and more. 21 students contributed to eight episodes, including interviews with authors and public figures like [Bryan Stevenson](#) (*Just Mercy*), [Viet Thanh Nguyen](#) (*The Sympathizer*), [Dr. Joy Harden Bradford](#) (*Sisterhood Heals*), and [Nic Stone](#) (*Dear Martin*). Segments from this season were featured nationally on [NPR's 1A](#), [All Things Considered](#) and [Weekend Edition](#). Adaptations were featured in [Teen Vogue](#) and [Chalkbeat](#).



Left: Students interviewed librarian influencer Michael Threats at SXSW EDU



Right: Hosts of *On Our Minds* Season 5 Eason Dong and Evelyn Chao recording at their high school



"I feel like every meeting, every script I read, is a little lesson on the history of our country. We're lucky to have student journalists across the country reporting for the podcast, and they truly bring a little bit of themselves and their community to the table with every soundbite."

— Poojasai Kona, SRL Student Reporter for *On Our Minds: Election 2024*



a special election season of the *On Our Minds* podcast

Pitched by teens on SRL's Student Advisory Team, this [seven-episode](#) season was co-created with 26 students from 15 states and Puerto Rico. This season explores topics like who can vote, how to deal with misinformation and how the electoral college works, plus conversations with political reporters and some of the youngest candidates running for office. Select pieces this season were collaborations with Teen Vogue's 2024 Election Correspondents. This season won the "best podcast" award at the 57th Annual Public Media Awards.

***On Our Minds* listenership increased 132% from last school year.**

Primary Content Projects (cont.)



A three-part series of climate solutions stories from SRL's first college climate reporting fellowship

[This series](#) covers efforts to bring Los Angeles' Latine community into climate literacy conversations, sustainable fashion initiatives at Howard University and a wildlife photographer who developed motion-activated camera traps for environmental protection.



Production still of story from Oakland, CA



Still image from the story at Michigan State University

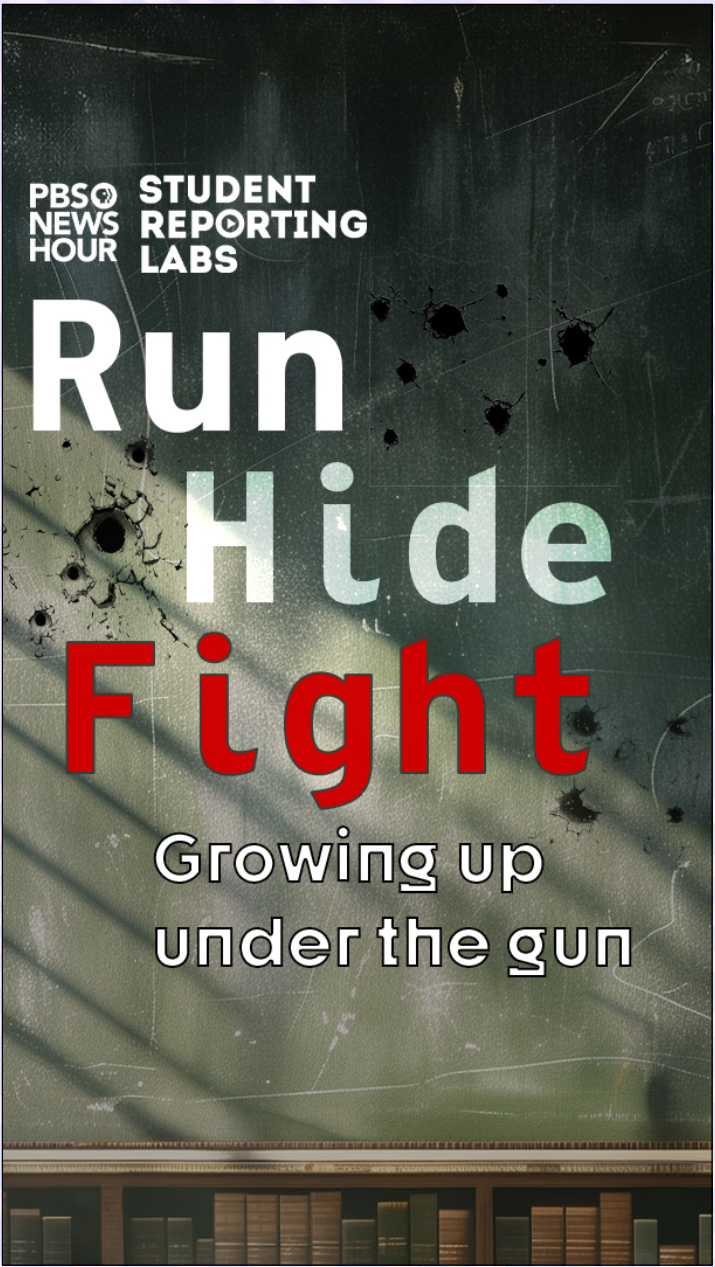


Ethan Rodriguez interviewing a trauma nurse for Run, Hide, Fight

A collaborative documentary about how gun violence affects young Americans

Run, Hide, Fight: Growing Up Under the Gun is a 30-minute [documentary](#) produced with students in 5 major cities (Philadelphia (PA), Oakland (CA), East Lansing (MI), Nashville (TN), and Washington D.C.) Each segment passes the mic to students, exploring what it's like to grow up in the shadow of gun violence.

Since its broadcast debut on PBS' World Channel and 34 local stations in October 2024, it has screened at SXSW EDU Film, the Oakland International Film Festival and the Awareness Film Festival. The [William Talbott Hillman Foundation](#) provided support for this project and additional funds for school and community screenings in the 2025-26 school year.



Behind the scenes still from Los Angeles, California



Second Episode from from Washington DC



Production crew of story from Wellfleet, MA

New Curriculum



Global Education Toolkit

Made possible by the [Longview Foundation](#), this collection of adapted [storytelling resources](#) exploring global issues with local relevance, strengthening cultural awareness, curiosity and storytelling skills.



Building a NewsHour

[Six-part collection](#) of 36 hands-on activities designed for Mizzen Education to equip elementary students with the tools to report stories in their communities.



AI Unlocked

With Poynter's MediaWise Teen Fact Checking Network, this [five-part series](#) defines generative AI and covers ethical considerations, best practices for using AI as an information source, how to evaluate existing AI tools and develop the tools of the future.



Elementary Express

Series of [lessons](#) for elementary school students covering the basics of storytelling and journalism, designed to facilitate classroom engagement and discussion to build critical thinking, media literacy and civic connections.



Educator's Playbook for Civic Media

[This collaboration](#) with the Listening Post Collective adapts their newsroom civic media playbook for the classroom. Hands-on listening and research activities help students and teachers identify where and how information is currently exchanged and imagine new ways to ensure their communities can access critical information.

Hands-On Training



SRL's flagship student training event

[High school journalists](#) from across the country attended the all-expenses paid week of hands-on journalism training in Arlington, VA. In small groups, they reported, filmed and edited video stories about local changemakers, received in-depth coaching and skills training in video journalism, and wrapped the week with a public screening of their [seven final video reports](#). Three stories broadcast nationally on the PBS News Hour.



SRL's school-year student training event

[Student journalists](#) gathered in Los Angeles in January 2025 for training in collaboration with PBS SoCal. During the [five-day event](#), students learned production and reporting skills, then worked in teams to produce news reports on a series of art exhibitions that explored the intersection between art and science.

Below: Photos from the SRL Summer and Winter Academies



SRL's yearly educator training event

47 educators from across the country gathered for the annual [Teacher Workshop](#). The three-day professional development training was held in July at [WETA](#) headquarters in Arlington, VA, and included a live recording of a special [Teacher Reporting Labs](#) episode.



SRL's first college reporting fellowship

Nine college students from across the country received [in-person training](#) culminating in production trips to film and produce stories about young people working towards climate change solutions.



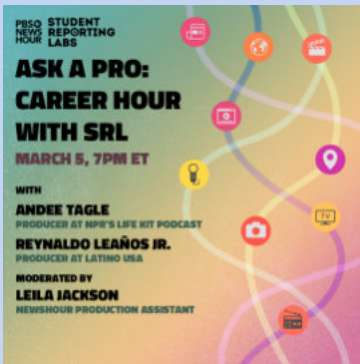
Above: Photos from the SRL Teacher Workshop

Growing + Supporting SRL's Community



A panel of teens who guide SRL's editorial coverage

[31 students](#) worked closely with SRL staff to guide SRL's editorial strategy, including co-developing prompts for the 2025-26 school year.



Alumni Engagement Events

New content and events for SRL alumni included an in-person event in DC and the [Ask A Pro](#) series of Instagram Q&A conversations where Jessica Burbank and Kassy Cho answered career questions submitted by SRL alums.



Top: **Student training at Best Buy Teen Tech Center in Charlotte, NC**



Teacher training at WQED in Pittsburgh, PA



Audio Production training in Kansas City, MO

Partner Training Events

workshops that broaden the SRL community

SRL led training events with partners including in-person student workshops with the Kauffman Foundation's Student Voices program and Best Buy Teen Tech Centers in North Carolina and Missouri. SRL provided four accredited professional development sessions for Pittsburgh's educators hosted at WQED, and training for CalMatters' teacher fellowship, Kent State Center for Scholastic Journalism's Influencer U, and the Liberty Museum's First Amendment Exhibit in Philadelphia. SRL also hosted a virtual audio storytelling workshop for *Chalkbeat* student fellows and staff, and storytelling sessions for Made By Us's Youth 250 Bureau.

At national conferences, SRL trained journalists seeking to better include young people in their stories and enhance their local coverage, including the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, Education Writers Association, Public Media Journalists Association, and National Educational Telecommunications Association.

On Stage

This year, SRL connected 38 student reporters with production and speaking opportunities at several large-scale events and conferences. Students interviewed *Modern Love*'s Anna Martin at [Bloomberg City Lab CDMX](#), filmed conversations with authors Bryan Stevenson at [NCTE](#), Jenny Han at the [Teen Vogue Summit](#), and Nic Stone, Raegan Revord and Mychal Threats at [SXSW EDU](#).

SRL students were on stage at national conferences: EWA, PMJA, JEA, and NCTE. Students gained public speaking experience in a professional environment, and adult attendees heard and learned directly from young people about the issues that matter to them and their peers — perspectives often missing in panel conversations about media, education, and civics.

SXSW EDU.
FILM
↓

the film Ethan Rodriguez, who is
a student producer.



"I get antsy even doing school presentations, so paneling with SRL was such a huge leap for me, but I wouldn't have it any other way because it challenged my fear of public speaking. That fear has always been part of my life and being able to conquer it in that moment was so rewarding."

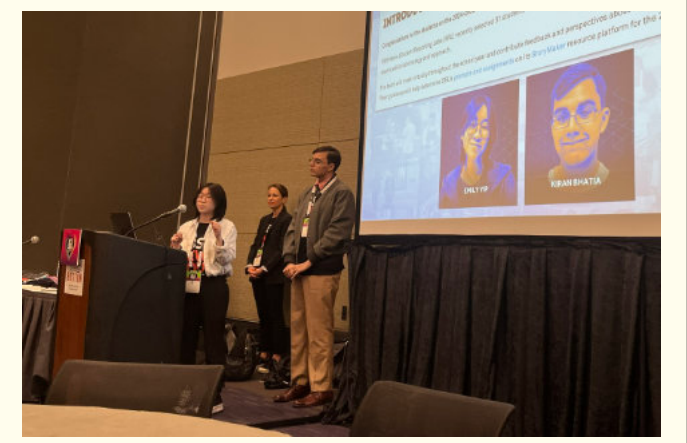
— Emily Yip, Junior at Holbrook Middle-High School in Holbrook, MA



Students interview Modern Love's Anna Martin at Bloomberg City Lab CDMX



Emily Yip speaks on stage at the National Conference for Teachers of English 2024



Strength in Partnerships

WE DON'T DO IT ALONE!

SRL's success is [rooted in collaborations](#) with nonprofit news and public media, education, and media literacy organizations.

This year, we worked with collaborators to develop events, expand distribution and access to student stories, and provide professional development, including: [NPR](#), [Made By Us](#), [Report for America](#), [Documenters](#), the [Listening Post Collective](#), [America Amplified](#), [SXSW EDU](#), [Teen Vogue](#), [Chalkbeat](#), [Columbia University's SIPA program](#), [Harvard's LabXchange](#), [NAMLE](#), [NFCB](#), the [Public Media Youth Media Collective](#), [KQED](#), [Montana PBS](#), [WQED](#), [Mirror Indy](#) and many more local news orgs across the country.

We've also expanded our Journalism Industry Advisory Board: 36 individuals from the journalism community weighing in with feedback and advice so we can continue to build the most relevant resources and opportunities for young journalists as we grow.

Are your goals and values aligned? [Let's talk!](#)

JOIN OUR NETWORK

- Subscribe to our [monthly newsletter](#)
- Sustain our work with a [donation](#)
- Reach out with your [collaboration or co-publication idea](#)
- Learn about upcoming prompts and opportunities on [StoryMaker](#)
- Follow us on social media   

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

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National Institutes of Health-SEPA

Google News Initiative

Frieda Berlinksi Foundation

Scripps Howard Fund

The Grable Foundation

Longview Foundation

Lumina Foundation

Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation

Best Buy Foundation



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