

SENATE BILL NO. 678

102ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR TRENT.

2650S.01H

KRISTINA MARTIN, Secretary

AN ACT

To amend chapter 161, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to a pilot program for media literacy and critical thinking.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 161, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 161.355, to read as follows:

161.355. 1. This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Media Literacy and Critical Thinking Act".

2. As used in this section, "media literacy" means the following:

(1) An individual's ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and participate with all forms of media, such as:

(a) News in print; and

(b) Social media content, such as images, text, video, and other media content;

(2) An individual's ability to recognize bias and stereotypes in media messages;

(3) The foundational skills of digital citizenship and internet safety; and

(4) In the classroom, media literacy includes integrating the process of critical analysis of media messages into the daily classroom curricula.

3. The department of elementary and secondary education shall establish the "Media Literacy and Critical

19 Thinking" pilot program. Such pilot program shall be
20 implemented and administered during the 2024-25 and 2025-26
21 school years.

22 4. Under the media literacy and critical thinking
23 pilot program, the department of elementary and secondary
24 education shall select five to seven diverse school
25 districts to participate in the pilot program and from which
26 to study data related to the outcomes of the pilot program
27 in such school districts.

28 5. A pilot program site shall:

29 (1) Address each component of media literacy;

30 (2) Develop successful strategies for student learning
31 within the daily classroom curricula in all grades or for a
32 selected preschool to grade twelve level;

33 (3) Identify high-quality resources for such pilot
34 program; and

35 (4) Demonstrate and report how such site addresses the
36 following in the classroom:

37 (a) News content literacy, which is the ability to
38 access, analyze, evaluate, and distinguish verified
39 information from opinion and propaganda and the opportunity
40 to practice verification;

41 (b) Visual literacy, which is the ability to find,
42 interpret, and evaluate images and visual media such as
43 photographs, videos, illustrations, drawings, maps,
44 diagrams, and advertisements;

45 (c) Digital fluency, which is the ability to
46 understand and follow the norms of safe and responsible
47 technology use and how media influences attitudes and
48 behaviors; and

49 (d) Digital literacy, which is the ability to be
50 technically fluent and able to make informed decisions about

51 content encountered online, recognize how networked
52 technology affects behavior and perception, and create and
53 effectively communicate with digital media tools.

54 6. The guidelines developed as a result of the study
55 of the information gained from the pilot program shall
56 provide students with the following information:

57 (1) The purpose and acceptable use of various social
58 media platforms;

59 (2) Social media behavior that ensures cyber safety,
60 cybersecurity, and cyber ethics;

61 (3) The potential negative consequences of failing to
62 use various social media platforms responsibly, such as
63 cyberbullying;

64 (4) The ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create,
65 and act on all forms of digital and written communications;

66 (5) Digital ethics, etiquette, respectful discourse
67 with individuals who have differing opinions, safety,
68 security, digital footprints, and the identification of
69 rhetoric that incites violence;

70 (6) Cyberbullying prevention and response;

71 (7) The significance of algorithms;

72 (8) Ways to identify online misinformation;

73 (9) A general knowledge of the economic structure of
74 the digital landscape; and

75 (10) The importance of the right to freedom of speech
76 contained in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the
77 United States, including, but not limited to:

78 (a) The central role that the right to freedom of
79 speech has in the history of the United States; and

80 (b) The applicability of protections for freedom of
81 speech for online interaction in school settings that the

82 department of elementary and secondary education shall
83 provide to school districts.

84 7. The guidelines developed as a result of the study
85 of the information gained from the pilot program shall
86 provide school districts with samples of learning
87 activities, resources, and training that promote critical
88 thinking and the skills necessary to evaluate all forms of
89 media.

90 8. Before August 1, 2026, each pilot program site
91 shall submit a report to the department of elementary and
92 secondary education describing the implementation of and the
93 information gained from the pilot program.

94 9. Before January 1, 2027, the department of
95 elementary and secondary education shall compile the reports
96 submitted from the pilot program sites and submit a summary
97 report to the general assembly containing at least the
98 following information:

99 (1) Qualitative and quantitative insights on how the
100 pilot program sites addressed media literacy;

101 (2) A compendium of high-quality strategies and
102 resources used by educators;

103 (3) Any professional development used or required;

104 (4) Recommendations about which facilities,
105 instructional materials, and technologies are needed to
106 implement a media literacy and critical thinking program
107 statewide;

108 (5) Exploration of additional policy, administrative
109 mechanisms, and legislative recommendations for implementing
110 best practices and standards statewide; and

111 (6) A draft of proposed clear, inclusive media
112 literacy and critical thinking state standards for preschool
113 to grade twelve, compiled by drawing from key media literacy

114 skills and competencies in existing state standards and from
115 the pilot program results.

116 10. Standards developed under this section shall be
117 included for consideration by the department of elementary
118 and secondary education during the state standards review
119 immediately following the termination of the pilot program.

120 11. The media literacy and critical thinking pilot
121 program shall terminate on June 30, 2026.

122 12. This section shall expire on December 31, 2026.

✓