

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5626

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to expanding and enhancing media literacy and digital citizenship in K-12 education.

Brief Description: Expanding and enhancing media literacy and digital citizenship in K-12 education.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Liias, Warnick, Hunt, Nobles, Pedersen and Wilson, C.).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/13/23, 3/27/23 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended By Committee)**

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to integrate media literacy skills and content knowledge into relevant state learning standards, as the state learning standards are revised.
- Defines the term media literacy.
- Modifies and expands the Media Literacy and Digital Citizenship Grant Program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; Rude, Ranking Minority Member; McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Callan, Eslick, Harris, McClintock, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, Sandlin, Steele, Stonier and Timmons.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Media Literacy and Digital Citizenship Grants.

In 2021 legislation was enacted that directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to establish a grant program to support media literacy and digital citizenship through school district leadership teams.

The OSPI defines "media literacy" as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using a variety of forms of communication. Statute defines "digital citizenship" to include the norms of appropriate, responsible, and healthy behavior related to current technology use, including digital and media literacy, ethics, etiquette, and security. The term "digital citizenship" also includes the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, develop, produce, and interpret media, as well as internet safety and cyberbullying prevention and response.

For a school district to qualify for a media literacy and digital citizenship grant, the grant proposal must provide that the grantee create a district leadership team that develops a curriculum unit on media literacy or digital citizenship, or both, that may be integrated into social studies, English language arts, or health curricula. In developing the curriculum unit, school districts are encouraged to work with school district teacher-librarians or a school district library information technology program, if applicable. The developed curriculum unit must be made available as an open educational resource. Grant recipients are expected to evaluate the curriculum unit they develop.

Subject to appropriation, up to 10 grants per year must be awarded for establishing media literacy professional learning communities with the purpose of sharing best practices in media literacy. These grant recipients must develop an online presence for their community to model new strategies and to share ideas, challenges, and successful practices. These grant recipients must also attend group meetings convened by the OSPI for the purpose of sharing best practices and strategies in media literacy education. Additional activities permitted for the use of these grants include organizing teachers from across a school district to develop new instructional strategies and to share successful strategies, sharing successful practices across a group of school districts, and facilitating coordination between educational service districts and school districts to provide training.

At least one grant awarded in each award cycle must be for developing and using a curriculum that contains a focus on synthetic media as a major component. "Synthetic media" is defined as an image, an audio recording, or a video recording of an individual's appearance, speech, or conduct that has been intentionally manipulated with the use of digital technology in a manner to create a realistic but false image, audio, or video.

A school district that receives a grant is not prohibited from receiving a grant in subsequent grant cycles. The OSPI may accept gifts, grants, or endowments from public or private

sources for the grant program, which expires July 31, 2031.

State Learning Standard Development, Use, and Revision.

The OSPI is responsible for developing and revising the state learning standards that identify the knowledge and skills all public school students need to know and be able to do based on four basic education learning goals established by the Legislature. There are learning standards available in 14 content areas. The standards for content areas named in goals one and two are required to be taught in public schools, for example English language arts, social studies, and health. The standards for content areas named in goals three and four must only be taught when the subject is offered, for example educational technology.

Prior to developing, revising, or adopting state learning standards, the OSPI must submit any proposed state learning standards to the State Board of Education (SBE) in writing for review at an SBE meeting. The SBE may provide a response to the OSPI's proposal for consideration prior to final adoption. In addition, the SBE may propose new or revised state learning standards to the OSPI and the OSPI must respond to the SBE's proposal in writing.

When the OSPI proposes revisions to the state learning standards, it must also, upon request, provide opportunities for the Legislature to review the proposed revisions before they are adopted.

Educational Technology Learning Standards.

Goal three of the basic education learning goals requires schools to integrate technology literacy and fluency in their curriculum. In 2018 the OSPI adopted the 2016 Technology Standards for Students released by the International Society for Technology in Education as its state learning standards for educational technology. The OSPI states that, among other things, these standards complement statewide efforts to enhance instruction in digital citizenship and media literacy.

Resources on Digital Citizenship, Medial Literacy, and Internet Safety.

The OSPI is required to identify and develop open educational resources to support digital citizenship, media literacy, and internet safety in schools. These resources are maintained on a web-based location that also includes links to recommended successful practices and resources to support digital citizenship, media literacy, and internet safety.

The OSPI is required to identify and develop a library of openly licensed courseware aligned with specified standards and in collaboration or with input from specified third parties, including teacher-librarians. The OSPI must identify an open courseware repository to which openly licensed courseware may be submitted and may be housed, and from which openly licensed courseware may be easily accessed at no cost to school districts.

Summary of Amended Bill:

State Learning Standards and Media Literacy.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction must integrate media literacy into relevant state learning standards, as the state learning standards are revised. "Media literacy" is defined to mean the ability to: (1) access relevant and accurate information using a wide range of forms and sources; (2) critically analyze the comprehensiveness, relevance, credibility, authority, and accuracy of information content; (3) make informed decisions based on accurate information obtained from media and digital sources; (4) recognize the authenticity of artificially generated content derived from information and communication technologies; (5) responsibly operate various forms of technology and digital tools; and (6) reflect on how the use of media and technology may affect private and public life.

Media Literacy and Digital Citizenship Grants.

The Media Literacy and Digital Citizenship Grant Program is modified and expanded. Educational service districts are allowed to participate in the program to the same extent as school districts. It is added that, if a school district or educational service district plans to partner with a nonprofit for the purpose of assisting in the administration of a grant it is applying for, the intent to partner with a nonprofit must be included in the grant proposal.

The purposes for which grant awards may be used are modified, for example: grant awards may be used to develop curriculum units on media literacy, synthetic media, or digital citizenship, or a combination of these topics, that may be integrated into one or more subject areas. In addition, some descriptions of existing purposes for which grant awards may be used are simplified.

The purposes for which grant awards may be used are also expanded. For example, grant awards may be used to:

1. provide professional development on issues of media literacy, including the state learning standards related to media literacy, which may include training for district leaders, administrative staff, instructional staff, or any combination thereof, and which may be coordinated between educational service districts and school districts;
2. develop strategies to utilize existing funding in integrating media literacy into various subject areas;
3. support successful implementation of state learning standards related to media literacy, digital citizenship, or both; and
4. acquire resources on media literacy instruction and integration.

Awarding grants remains subject to appropriation.

Any curriculum units, best practices and strategies, trainings, and other resources developed using the grants must be submitted to the OSPI.

The expiration date of the grant programs is extended to July 31, 2033.

Resources on Digital Citizenship, Media Literacy, and Internet Safety.

Open educational resources, and other resources, to support digital citizenship, media literacy, and internet safety may be housed in the open courseware depository.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must consider adding the curriculum units, best practices and strategies, trainings, and other resources developed using the media literacy and digital citizenship grants to the web-based location, the open courseware depository, or both.

Other Provisions.

Statutory language that directed the OSPI, in 2016, to develop best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy is removed from law.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

As compared to the substitute bill, the amended bill:

1. strikes provisions in the underlying bill that direct, subject to appropriation, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to establish a program to expand the capability of school districts to integrate media literacy and digital citizenship into given subject areas through teacher support;
2. directs the OSPI to integrate media literacy skills and content knowledge into relevant state learning standards, as the state learning standards are revised;
3. defines the term media literacy;
4. integrates provisions establishing a new media literacy and digital citizenship grant program into an existing Media Literacy and Digital Citizenship Grant Program by:
(a) extending eligibility for the existing grants to educational service districts; (b) expanding the activities for which grants may be awarded to, among other things, include professional development on the topics of media literacy and digital citizenship, integrating these topics into other subject areas, and acquiring resources on media literacy instruction and integration; and (c) simplifying existing limits on the use of the existing grants;
5. adds that curriculum units, best practices and strategies, trainings, and other resources developed using the media literacy and digital citizenship grants must be submitted to the OSPI and that the OSPI must consider adding these resources to the web-based location containing similar materials;
6. allows open educational resources, and other resources, to support digital citizenship, media literacy, and internet safety to be housed in the open courseware depository;
and
7. makes other nonsubstantive changes such as adding subsection references and removing obsolete provisions directing the OSPI to develop best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available. New fiscal note requested on March 27, 2023.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Washington was the first state to adopt a vision of media literacy and digital citizenship and its leadership in this area is being recognized around the world. This bill is a collaboration between the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and a coalition of experts in media literacy and digital citizenship.

There are many new technologies that live under the umbrella of media literacy, so this topic is an essential skill for students. This world is saturated by media because the digital age makes it easy for anyone to create media. Media literacy is the instruction manual for using new technologies. Media literacy and digital citizenship are critical skills to teach young people. It actively engages all students. It helps to create critical thinkers and people who can create their own content. Media literacy education helps student to think more critically but does not tell students what to think. It increases students' creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. The deconstructing of media and active questioning of who the author of the media is and what their message is can be taught across the curriculum in all grades.

New state learning standards are being drafted for media literacy and teachers want to be involved in that process. It can be valuable to embed media literacy and digital citizenship in all subjects and across grade levels. This bill is consistent with the work on the open educational resource platform. This bill empowers students to interact more successfully in their society.

The bill supports the teaching of media literacy by creating a cadre of teachers who will scale up media literacy instruction, which will be important as media literacy becomes a core standard. This bill does not add curricula but provides support so that the revised state learning standards embed media literacy skills in other subjects. This bill takes a broad grant program established a couple of years ago and focuses on ways to integrate these subjects into each classroom in the state.

Libraries help to integrate media literacy into all levels of instruction. Teacher-librarians should be mentioned in the bill as they are uniquely positioned to help teachers. Teacher-librarians are at the heart of this work, but not all schools have teacher-librarians. Classroom teachers are also important, especially where there are no teacher-librarians.

There is high demand from teachers for medial literacy training. Teachers have been well trained in teaching reading and writing print, but it is important for students to learn to understand and create all types of media. Teachers need resources to help students learn to create media responsibly. This bill will empower education professionals to be resilient and ready for future technologies.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Marko Liias, prime sponsor; Linda Kennedy, Action for Media Education and LK Media; Mary Berger and Cora Mackoff, Action for Media Education; Shelby Reynolds, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Jen Ligot, Washington State Council for the Social Studies; Mikhail Cherniske, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Lesley Bourne, Washington Library Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.