

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

# HOUSE BILL NO. 492

102ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE MURPHY.

1397H.011

DANA RADEMAN MILLER, Chief Clerk

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

**4. Under the media literacy and critical thinking pilot program, the department of elementary and secondary education shall select five to seven diverse school districts**

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in bold-face type in the above bill is proposed language.

17 to participate in the pilot program and from which to study data related to the outcomes  
18 of the pilot program in such school districts.

19 **5. A pilot program site shall:**

20 **(1) Address each component of media literacy;**

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

23 **(3) Identify high-quality resources for such pilot program; and**

24 **(4) Demonstrate and report how such site addresses the following in the**  
25 **classroom:**

26 **(a) News content literacy, which is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and**  
27 **distinguish verified information from opinion and propaganda and the opportunity to**  
28 **practice verification;**

29 **(b) Visual literacy, which is the ability to find, interpret, and evaluate images and**  
30 **visual media such as photographs, videos, illustrations, drawings, maps, diagrams, and**  
31 **advertisements;**

32 **(c) Digital fluency, which is the ability to understand and follow the norms of**  
33 **safe and responsible technology use and how media influences attitudes and behaviors;**  
34 **and**

35 **(d) Digital literacy, which is the ability to be technically fluent and able to make**  
36 **informed decisions about content encountered online, recognize how networked**  
37 **technology affects behavior and perception, and create and effectively communicate**  
38 **with digital media tools.**

39 **6. The guidelines developed as a result of the study of the information gained**  
40 **from the pilot program shall provide students with the following information:**

41 **(1) The purpose and acceptable use of various social media platforms;**

42 **(2) Social media behavior that ensures cyber safety, cybersecurity, and cyber**  
43 **ethics;**

44 **(3) The potential negative consequences of failing to use various social media**  
45 **platforms responsibly, such as cyberbullying;**

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

48 **(5) Digital ethics, etiquette, respectful discourse with individuals who have**  
49 **differing opinions, safety, security, digital footprints, and the identification of rhetoric**  
50 **that incites violence;**

51 **(6) Cyberbullying prevention and response;**

52 **(7) The significance of algorithms;**

53 **(8) Ways to identify online misinformation;**

54 (9) A general knowledge of the economic structure of the digital landscape; and  
55 (10) The importance of the right to freedom of speech contained in the Bill of  
56 Rights of the Constitution of the United States including, but not limited to:

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

59 (b) The applicability of protections for freedom of speech for online interaction  
60 in school settings that the department of elementary and secondary education shall  
61 provide to school districts.

62 7. The guidelines developed as a result of the study of the information gained  
63 from the pilot program shall provide school districts with samples of learning activities,  
64 resources, and training that promote critical thinking and the skills necessary to  
65 evaluate all forms of media.

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

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

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

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

75 (3) Any professional development used or required;

76 (4) Recommendations about which facilities, instructional materials, and  
77 technologies are needed to implement a media literacy and critical thinking program  
78 statewide;

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

81 (6) A draft of proposed clear, inclusive media literacy and critical thinking state  
82 standards for preschool to grade twelve, compiled by drawing from key media literacy  
83 skills and competencies in existing state standards and from the pilot program results.

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

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

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