

HB 1249 -- MEDIA LITERACY AND CRITICAL THINKING ACT

SPONSOR: Brown (87)

This bill establishes the "Media Literacy and Critical Thinking Act".

This bill defines "media literacy" to include concepts such as, but not limited to: an individual's ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and participate with all forms of media, including news in print and social media content, and recognize bias and stereotypes in media, as well as Internet safety.

The bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to establish a "Media Literacy and Critical Thinking" pilot program for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years and a like named fund to be appropriated \$210,000 by the General Assembly for the development and use of the pilot program.

Between five and seven diverse schools shall be selected by DESE to participate in the Pilot Program as specified in the bill. The Program shall address media literacy, develop strategies for student learning in classroom curricula, and demonstrate various literacy strategies used.

Pilot program schools shall provide a report to DESE before August 1, 2026 and before January 1, 2027 DESE shall compile and submit a summary report to the General Assembly.

The Pilot Program shall terminate June 30, 2026.

This bill is similar to HB 492 (2023).