

HB 116 -- MEDIA LITERACY AND CRITICAL THINKING

SPONSOR: Murphy

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

This bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish a "Media Literacy and Critical Thinking" Pilot Program for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 school years. Between five and seven diverse schools will be selected by DESE to participate in the Pilot Program as specified in the bill.

The Program will address media literacy, develop strategies for student learning in classroom curricula, and demonstrate various literacy strategies used. Pilot Program schools must provide a report to DESE before August 1, 2028, and before January 1, 2029, DESE must compile and submit a summary report to the General Assembly. The Pilot Program terminates June 30, 2028.

This section expires December 31, 2028.

This bill is the same as HB 1513 (2024) and similar to HB 492 (2023).