

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3464

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 8, 2021

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 3464.

This bill requires school districts to incorporate instruction on information literacy into the curriculum in each of the grades kindergarten through 12. “Information literacy,” as used in the bill, means a set of skills that enables an individual to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Information literacy includes digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy.

The bill directs the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the New Jersey State Librarian, to develop curriculum guidelines on information literacy to be used by school districts. The guidelines will provide for a sequential course of study for each of the grades kindergarten through 12 and must include, at a minimum, the following: (1) knowledge of the research process and how information is created and produced; (2) skills in using information resources and critical thinking about those resources; (3) the abilities to evaluate information critically and competently, to recognize relevant primary and secondary information, and to distinguish among facts, points of view, and opinions; (4) access to information and information tools; and (5) an understanding of economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and how to use information ethically and legally. The guidelines also will include model instructional units, define learning objectives, and recommend suitable instructional materials. The guidelines will be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.

In addition, the bill requires the commissioner, in consultation with the State Librarian, to establish in-service training programs on information literacy instruction for school administrators, certified school library media specialists, and the teaching staff members who will provide the instruction on information literacy in each grade. The in-service training programs will provide the opportunity for collaboration among teachers and school library media specialists to advance information literacy in the kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum.

Under the bill, the commissioner, in consultation with the State Librarian, will develop a system for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs on information literacy established by school districts pursuant to the bill's provisions. The commissioner will make programs that are shown to be effective available as model programs to other school districts throughout the State.

Finally, the bill requires that teacher preparation programs and alternate route programs for a New Jersey instructional certificate incorporate programming on the subject of information literacy.