SYNOPSIS
Requires instruction on information literacy in curriculum of students in grades kindergarten through 12.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.
AN ACT concerning public school instruction on information literacy and supplementing chapters 26 and 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. As used in this act, the term “information literacy” 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.

2. A school district shall incorporate instruction on information literacy in an appropriate place in the curriculum of students in each of the grades kindergarten through 12. The instruction shall be based on the curriculum guidelines established by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to section 3 of this act. The instruction shall be included in the curriculum for each grade in a manner adapted to the age and understanding of the students and shall provide a thorough and comprehensive treatment of the subject.

3. a. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the New Jersey State Librarian, shall develop curriculum guidelines for school districts on information literacy. The guidelines shall provide for a sequential course of study for each of the grades kindergarten through 12, and shall include, at a minimum, the following:

   (1) knowledge of the research process and the ways in which 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 through instruction, learning strategies, and practice; and
   
   (5) an understanding of economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and an understanding of how to use information ethically and legally.

   The guidelines shall include model instructional units, define learning objectives, and recommend instructional materials suitable for each grade level.

   b. The guidelines developed pursuant to this section shall be reviewed annually and shall be updated as appropriate to ensure that the curriculum reflects the most current information available on
the identity, analysis, retrieval, evaluation, and navigation of information.

4. a. Following the development of the curriculum guidelines on information literacy pursuant to section 3 of this act, the commissioner, in consultation with the New Jersey State Librarian, shall establish in-service training programs for school administrators and certified school library media specialists on developing information literacy instruction for students. In-service training programs shall also be provided to the teaching staff members who will provide the instruction on information literacy in each grade, and shall allow the opportunity for collaboration among teachers and certified school library media specialists to advance information literacy in the kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum. The commissioner shall also make the in-service programs available to such other instructional and supervisory staff as he deems necessary and appropriate.

b. A school district shall provide time for the in-service training programs during the regular school schedule in order to ensure that teaching staff members are prepared to teach the educational program on information literacy in each grade.

5. The commissioner, in consultation with the New Jersey State Librarian, shall develop and administer a system for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs on information literacy established by school districts pursuant to this act. The commissioner shall make programs that are shown to be effective available as model programs to other school districts throughout the State. The evaluation of instructional programs on information literacy shall be designed to aid school administrators and certified school library media specialists in sustaining and expanding the school library program.

6. A regionally-accredited institution of higher education offering a teacher preparation program for a New Jersey instructional certificate, and the preparation program for any person seeking an instructional certificate through the State’s alternate route program, shall incorporate programming on the subject of information literacy, as that term is defined in section 1 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). The programming shall include, but need not be limited to, the inquiry-based research skills necessary to access, collect, and evaluate information credibly, accurately, and ethically.

7. The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.
8. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the first full school year following the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

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.