

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Bipartisan Legislation Establishing First in the Nation K-12 Information Literacy Education

01/4/2023

*Legislation will Direct the New Jersey Department of Education to Develop New Jersey Learning Standards in Information and Media Literacy*

**TRENTON** – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (S588) establishing the requirement of K-12 instruction on information literacy under the implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. The signing of this bipartisan legislation reaffirms the Governor’s commitment to leading the nation in public education while preparing students for lifelong learning by equipping them with the skills they need to accurately assess information.

The bill requires the New Jersey Department of Education to develop New Jersey Student Learning Standards in “information literacy,” which is defined as a set of skills that enables an individual to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the needed information. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy.

“Our democracy remains under sustained attack through the proliferation of disinformation that is eroding the role of truth in our political and civic discourse,” said **Governor Murphy**. “It is our responsibility to ensure our nation’s future leaders are equipped with the tools necessary to identify fact from fiction. I am proud to sign legislation that is critical to the success of New Jersey’s students and essential to the preservation of our democracy.”

Primary sponsors of the bill include Senators Michael Testa and Shirley Turner, and Assemblymembers Daniel Benson, Pamela Lampitt, and Mila Jasey.

The bill requires the Commissioner of the Department of Education to convene a committee, including certified school library media specialists and teaching staff members, to assist in developing the information literacy standards. The standards will be reviewed by experts as they are developed. This will provide an opportunity for collaboration among teachers and school library media specialists to advance information literacy in the K-12 learning standards. The proposed information literacy standards will also be subject to public input prior to their adoption by the State Board of Education.

“Information literacy is more important now than ever before, especially with the growing prevalence of social media and online news,” said **Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. “Students for generations will be well-served by this legislation, which sets into statute the requirement for schools to provide instruction on information literacy.”

Each school district will incorporate instruction on information literacy in an appropriate place in the curriculum of students in grades kindergarten through 12 as part of the district’s implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. The guidelines will include, at a minimum, the following:

1. the research process and how information is created and produced;
2. critical thinking and using information resources;
3. research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources;
4. the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions;
5. accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources;
6. the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information; and
7. the ethical production of information.

“Teaching children about information literacy will help them to weigh the flood of news, opinion, and social media they are exposed to both online and off,” said **Senator Michael Testa**. “This law isn’t about teaching kids that any specific idea is true or false, rather it’s about helping them learn how to research, evaluate, and understand the information they are presented for themselves.”

“This signing feels especially timely as we approach the two year anniversary of the January 6th attack on the US Capitol. It is incredibly important that our children are taught how to discern reliable sources and recognize false information,” said **Senator Shirley Turner**. “This legislation will equip the next generation with the tools they need to spot deceptive sites and become savvy consumers of media.”

“Living in the digital era gives us access to endless information, but not all is equal. That is why it’s so important to prepare students in New Jersey with a robust information literacy education,” said **Assemblymembers Dan Benson, Pamela Lampitt, and Mila Jasey in a joint statement**. “The Learning Standards will provide New Jersey students with the foundational skills necessary to effectively engage with and evaluate information found online. Having the ability to look at a piece of information and assess its validity is important for everyone. Whether you are writing a research paper or learning about current events, being able to use critical thinking skills to determine the credibility of information is crucial.”

“A primary role of our public schools is to prepare students to be informed, engaged participants in our American democracy,” said **NJEA President Sean M. Spiller**. “At a time when misinformation and disinformation are eroding the foundations of that democracy, it is imperative that students have the tools they need to determine what information they can trust. This law will help ensure that New Jersey students are equipped to separate fact from fiction as they prepare for their role as citizens and future leaders.”

“We thank Governor Murphy and the Legislature for their support of information literacy education,” said **Jessica Trujillo, President of the New Jersey Library Association**. “School librarians are integral in ensuring that our New Jersey students have the knowledge and tools to assess information, determine accurate sources, and think critically. This literacy bill will ensure that students are well prepared to navigate a world where misinformation and disinformation are prevalent.”

“The New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) applauds Governor Murphy and the Legislature for bringing to light the need for Information Literacy in education,” said Ewa Dziedzic-Elliott, NJASL President. “Adding Information Literacy to the current NJ Student Learning Standards gives strength to the need for the instruction and implementation of Information Literacy. As stated in the Bill #S588: 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, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy.’ Passing the bill, and incorporating it into New Jersey law, affirms the role school librarians play in our schools and validates their strong presence in the fabric of the New Jersey education system. New Jersey students will be the beneficiaries of this important standard ensuring their equitable access to how to navigate and evaluate the masses of information they face every day.”

The legislation signed today also builds on the Governor’s overarching commitment to addressing the threat of disinformation. In April 2022, the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness launched a disinformation portal (<https://www.njohsp.gov/disinformation>) to assist the public in identifying and vetting any truth-obscuring, manufactured information.

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## Statewide

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