

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5449

As Passed House:
April 6, 2017

Title: An act relating to digital citizenship, media literacy, and internet safety in schools.

Brief Description: Concerning digital citizenship, media literacy, and internet safety in schools.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Liias, Zeiger, Billig, Hunt and Frockt).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/16/17, 3/28/17 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/6/17, 76-21.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires the development of a model policy and procedures on electronic resources and Internet safety to better support digital citizenship, media literacy, and Internet safety in schools.
- Requires a survey of teacher-librarians, principals, and technology directors to understand how they are currently integrating digital citizenship and media literacy education in their curriculum.
- Requires the creation of a web-based location with links to recommended successful practices and resources to support digital citizenship, media literacy, and Internet safety.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Harris, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Johnson, Kilduff, Lovick, Ortiz-Self, Senn, Slatter, Springer, Steele and Stokesbary.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Caldier, Hargrove and Volz.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative McCaslin.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Digital Citizenship Definition. State statute defines the term digital citizenship as including the norms of appropriate, responsible, and healthy behavior related to current technology use, including digital and media literacy, ethics, etiquette, and security. The term also includes the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, develop, produce, and interpret media, as well as Internet safety and cyberbullying prevention and response.

Recommendations from Advisory Committee. In 2016 the Legislature directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to convene and consult an advisory committee to develop best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, Internet safety, and media literacy, and report to the Legislature by December 1, 2016. The OSPI made the following recommendations:

- convene a working group to update the state kindergarten through grade 12 (K–12) learning standards for educational technology that align with the advisory group's definitions of digital citizenship and media literacy, national standards, and learning standards in all subjects;
- consider possible revisions to school district policies to better support digital citizenship, media literacy, or Internet safety in schools;
- create a web-based location to recommend successful practices and resources and work with the K-12 community and other stakeholders to identify and develop additional open educational resources to support digital citizenship, media literacy, and Internet safety in schools;
- provide support for professional development for teachers, focused on integrating digital citizenship and media literacy in all core standards, starting with English language arts and social studies; and
- examine improvements in school districts' library information and technology programs as defined in state law to determine ways in which teacher-librarians can lead, teach, and support digital citizenship and media literacy across all grades and content areas.

District Policy and Procedures. Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, school districts are required to review their policy and procedures on electronic resources and Internet safety annually. In reviewing and amending the policy and procedures, school districts must:

- involve a representation of students, parents or guardians, teachers, teacher-librarians, other school employees, administrators, and community representatives with experience or expertise in digital citizenship, media literacy, and Internet safety issues;

- consider customizing the model policy and procedures on electronic resources and Internet safety developed by the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA);
- consider existing school district resources; and
- consider best practices, resources, and models for instruction in digital citizenship, Internet safety, and media literacy, including methods to involve parents.

Summary of Bill:

Model Policy and Procedures. By December 1, 2017, the WSSDA must review and revise its model policy and procedures on electronic resources and Internet safety to better support digital citizenship, media literacy, and Internet safety in schools. The model policy and procedures must contain provisions requiring that media literacy resources consist of a balance of sources and perspectives. In addition, the WSSDA must develop a checklist of items for school districts to consider when updating their policy and procedures.

Survey. By December 1, 2018, the OSPI must survey teacher-librarians, principals, and technology directors to understand how they are currently integrating digital citizenship and media literacy education into their curriculum. The purpose of the survey is to determine ways in which teacher-librarians, principals, and technology directors can lead, teach, and support digital citizenship and media literacy across all grades and content areas.

Successful Practices and Resources. The OSPI must create a web-based location with links to recommended successful practices and resources to support digital citizenship, media literacy, and Internet safety for use in the 2017-18 school year. The web-based location must incorporate the information gathered by the digital citizenship and media literacy survey. The OSPI must continue to identify and develop additional open educational resources to support digital citizenship, media literacy, and Internet safety in schools for the web-based location. The media literacy resources must consist of a balance of sources and perspectives.

Definition. The definition of digital citizenship is moved to the definition section of the Education Technology Chapter of the education code.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Last year the Legislature impaneled experts to discuss how to promote digital citizenship in schools, how to make students better consumers of online information, and how to give students the skills to navigate the online space. That group made a series of recommendations. This bill implements the low or no cost recommendations, so that the state can continue to make progress. The bill focuses on finding the best practices and

making them available to all districts. Communities should remain engaged with stakeholders and parents, teachers, and librarians to develop policies at the local level.

"Digital citizenship" is an umbrella term for the collection of skills and behaviors that help individuals to think critically about the media they consume and create. It is critical for citizens to review all sources of media in order to make informed and thoughtful decisions. This bill would make a start to supporting consistent resources for school districts.

Three years ago digital citizenship was not even a term that librarians used. Washington is a national leader on this topic. This is the most comprehensive media literacy and digital citizenship bill ever written. One group is proposing it as a model for adoption in other states. Students want education on media literacy and want intervention for cyberbullying.

Some districts have building plans to implement digital citizenship and media literacy through teacher-librarians, but more than just staff are needed. Some teacher-librarians teach media literacy and digital citizenship to hundreds of children. However, some districts do not have technology teachers or librarians and are still able to provide literacy instruction to students. Teachers-librarians allow programs in digital citizenship to be implemented in schools without putting a burden on classroom teachers. The bill does not require that a certified librarian teach students, but it does ask districts to share information about what instruction is being provided to students on these topics. This bill additionally provides the guidance, best practices, and accountability. The bill also helps districts with the resources they need to develop plans.

On average teens spend 6.5 hours per day using screens for entertainment. A recent large study looked at how students interpret information they find online and found that young people's ability to reason about information they find on the Internet is bleak. There has been significant growth in instructional devices used by students, but efforts to address digital citizenship and media literacy have lagged behind. Screens are everywhere and have taken over mentoring our children by telling them what to wear and what to think. Most parents would not allow this interference from a person, but they do allow it from an appliance. The state cannot afford not to educate children in media literacy. There has been a 54 percent increase in media use over the past 10 years. Media literacy is equal in importance to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Teachers do not have to do extra work if they incorporate media literacy into current courses.

School directors support the changes made in the bill. The Superintendent of Public Instruction supports the bill.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Liias, prime sponsor; Carolyn Logue, Washington Library Association; Marianne Costello, Edmonds School District; Suzanne Carney, John Campbell Primary; Marilyn Cohen, Northwest Center for Media Literacy; Linda Kennedy, Action for Media Education and LKMedia; Claire Beach, Media Literacy Now and Media Education; Shelby Reynolds, Northshore School District; Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors Association; and Dennis Small, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.