**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59‑1‑485 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF CRITICAL THINKING AND MEDIA LITERACY SKILLS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, TO PROVIDE RELATED REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, AND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 5, Chapter 1, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59‑1‑485. (A) The purpose of this section is to require the State Department of Education to develop a plan to implement instruction in media literacy based on recommendations and strategies provided by an advisory committee.

(B) Curricular content for all subjects in K‑12 public schools must integrate critical thinking and media literacy skills.

(C) For purposes of this section, ‘media literacy’ must be considered a broad term that encompasses consumption and production of media and digital products and communication technology of all kinds, and is defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and take action with all forms of communication, and encompasses the foundational skills of digital citizenship and Internet safety including the norms of appropriate, responsible, healthy behavior, and cyberbullying prevention.

(D) The State Superintendent of Education shall appoint a media literacy advisory committee to conduct a study on teaching media literacy in schools. The advisory committee must include experts in media literacy including, but not limited to, academic experts and nonprofit organizations; and other stakeholders, including teachers, librarians, parent organizations, educators, administrators, and students.

(E) The committee shall make a report of its findings, including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action as it considers necessary and appropriate, best practices for instruction that provide guidance about thoughtful, safe, and strategic uses of online and other media resources and education on how to apply critical thinking skills when consuming and producing media in any form. These recommendations and best practices may include, but are not limited to:

(1) revisions to state education standards and the state instructional technology plan;

(2) revisions to policies and procedures on media literacy, including digital citizenship and Internet safety;

(3) school district processes necessary to develop customized school district policies and procedures on electronic resources and Internet safety that can be used within a school district technology plan;

(4) best practices, resources, and models for instruction in media literacy;

(5) best practices, resources, and models for instruction of digital citizenship, including media literacy, that are compliant with the federal universal service E‑rate program administered by the schools and libraries division of the universal service administrative company and federal mandates established in the federal Children’s Internet Protection Act; and

(6) strategies that will support school districts in local implementation of best practices and recommendations developed by the committee, including strategies for delivering professional development to educators and administrators.

(F) The report required by subsection (E) must be delivered to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives before January 1, 2022.

(G) The State Department of Education shall develop a plan to implement instruction in media literacy in grades kindergarten through twelfth in public schools based upon the recommendations provided by the advisory committee.

(H) Beginning July 1, 2022, the department annually shall report to the General Assembly on the department’s plan, including the timeline for implementing instruction in media literacy in grades kindergarten through twelve.

(I)(1) Beginning in the 2022‑2023 School Year, a school district annually shall review its policy and procedures on electronic resources and Internet safety. In reviewing and amending the policy and procedures, a school district shall:

(a) 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;

(b) consider customizing the model policy and procedures on electronic resources and Internet safety developed by the department;

(c) consider existing school district resources; and

(d) consider best practices, resources, and models for instruction in digital citizenship, Internet safety, and media literacy, including methods to involve parents.

(J)(1) Before July 1, 2022, the department shall 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.

(2) Before July 1, 2022, the department shall develop a checklist of items for school districts to consider when updating their policy and procedures under subsection (I).

(K) Before July 1, 2022, the department shall 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.

(L)(1) The department shall 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 2022‑2023 School Year. The web‑based location must incorporate the information gathered by the survey in subsection (K).

(2) The office of the Superintendent of Education shall 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.

(3) Media literacy resources must consist of a balance of sources and perspectives.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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