

HOUSE No. 560

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

David M. Rogers

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to media literacy in schools.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>
<i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>	<i>Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/24/2023</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>	<i>1/25/2023</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 560

By Representative Rogers of Cambridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 560) of David M. Rogers and others relative to media literacy in schools. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act relative to media literacy in schools.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting the
2 following new section:-

3 Section 98. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following
4 meanings:

5 “board”, shall mean the board of elementary and secondary education.

6 “commissioner”, shall mean the commissioner of the department of elementary and
7 secondary education.

8 “council”, shall mean the Media Literacy Advisory Council.

9 "media literacy", shall be considered a term that encompasses consumption and
10 production of media, digital products and communication technology of all kinds, and an
11 understanding of the systems in which media messages are produced and consumed. Media

12 literacy refers to a person’s ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create and take action with all
13 forms of media including news in print, TV, and radio, movies, music, video games, websites,
14 advertisements, and content (images, text and video) posted on social media platforms, AI,
15 algorithms, virtual reality, and surveillance systems, and encompasses the foundational skills of
16 digital citizenship and internet safety including the norms of appropriate, responsible, ethical,
17 healthy behavior, and cyberbullying prevention, and the ability to recognize bias, stereotypes,
18 representation, and the lack of inclusion in media messages.

19 (b) The department of elementary and secondary education (hereinafter referred to as the
20 “department”) shall integrate media literacy skills in all health and core curricular content for
21 grades kindergarten through 12th grade. The board shall direct the commissioner to implement
22 instruction in media literacy based upon the recommendations provided by the Media Literacy
23 Advisory Council established in subsection (c).

24 (c) The department shall establish a Media Literacy Advisory Council to conduct a
25 survey on methods of media literacy education using the Media Literacy Implementation Index
26 created by the Media Education Lab, for the purpose of recommending statutes, regulations,
27 curricula, and frameworks to teach media literacy in schools. The board shall appoint fourteen
28 members to the Media Literacy Advisory Council; provided further, that the Media Literacy
29 Advisory Council shall include, but not be limited to: one expert from a non-profit organization
30 working in media literacy and civics, one expert from a non-profit organization working in
31 media literacy and health education, one academic expert who teaches media literacy within the
32 state university system, two kindergarten to 12th grade teachers and kindergarten to 12th grade
33 librarians, with at least two educators from gateway cities across the commonwealth, two parents
34 of public school students from different geographic regions of the state, two school

35 administrators from different municipalities, one administrator from a city's school district and
36 one administrator from a town's school district, and two public school students, at least one of
37 which represents a lower resource school. The board shall make every effort to include on the
38 council people of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. The board, through a majority vote,
39 shall determine when the Media Literacy Advisory Council expires, provided that the Media
40 Literacy Advisory Council shall be established for no less than two years after the effective date
41 of this act.

42 (d) The Media Literacy Advisory Council shall survey teachers, librarians, faculty,
43 principals, and technology directors across Massachusetts to understand school districts'
44 curriculum regarding digital citizenship and media literacy education. The results of the initial
45 survey shall be made public and recommendations shall be made by the council to the
46 department on ways in which teachers, librarians, faculty, principals, and technology directors
47 can lead, teach, and support digital citizenship and media literacy across all grades and content
48 areas; and provided further, that the initial survey shall ask questions in order to determine
49 baseline integration across all grades. The initial survey's results shall be published on the
50 department's website no later than 90 days after the effective date of this act. Analysis on the
51 initial survey's results and the council's suggested recommendations shall be included in the
52 Media Literacy Advisory Council's final report established in subsection (e) of this section. The
53 board shall hire a paid coordinator whose role it is to supervise and coordinate the efforts of the
54 Council and prepare the final report established in subsection (e) of this section.

55 (e) The Media Literacy Advisory Council shall make a final report of its findings,
56 including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action as it may deem necessary or
57 appropriate. The final report shall include best practices for instruction that provides guidance

58 regarding thoughtful, safe, and strategic uses of online and other media resources and education
59 on methods to apply critical thinking skills when students consume or produce media in any
60 form. The final report's recommendations shall include, but shall not be limited to: (1) revisions
61 to state education curriculum and the state instructional technology plan; (2) school district's
62 processes necessary to develop customized school district policies and procedures on electronic
63 resources and internet safety that can be used within a school district's technology plan; (3)
64 revisions to policies and procedures, best practices, resources, and models for instruction in
65 media literacy; (4) revisions to policies and procedures, best practices, resources, and models for
66 instruction of digital citizenship, including media literacy, that are compliant with the federal
67 universal service e-rate program administered by the schools and libraries division of the
68 universal service administrative company and federal mandates established in the federal
69 children's internet protection act; and (5) programming and framework that provides students
70 with the critical skills to analyze the impacts on individuals and society from our media, and
71 ways to continually improve and incorporate advanced media literacy strategies as new
72 technology and other such issues arise.

73 (f) The Media Literacy Advisory Council shall consult the department of public health,
74 technology researchers and technology ethicists to create curriculum that addresses the rapidly
75 changing social media culture and, as a part of the final report established in subsection (e), make
76 recommendations to the department regarding ways to teach students about social media and
77 how the platforms and online advertising affect student's short and long-term physical,
78 physiological, emotional and cognitive development and ways the department of education and
79 local school districts can promote the physical, physiological, emotional and cognitive well-
80 being of students.

81 (g) The Media Literacy Advisory Council shall submit the council’s final report to the
82 commissioner of education, the governor, the president of the senate and the speaker of the house
83 by no later than one year after the effective date of this act.

84 (h) Upon receipt of the Media Literacy Advisory Councils’ report, the board shall
85 develop curriculum guidelines for school districts on media literacy across the state. The
86 guidelines shall provide for a sequential course of study for each of the grades kindergarten
87 through 12, and shall include, at a minimum, the following:

88 (1) The evaluation of multiple media platforms to better understand the general
89 landscape and economics of the platforms, as well as issues regarding the trustworthiness of the
90 source of information.

91 (2) The deconstruction of media representations according to the authors, target audience,
92 techniques, agenda setting, stereotypes, and authenticity to distinguish fact from opinion.

93 (3) Conveying a coherent message using multimodal practices to a specific target
94 audience. This may include, but is not limited to, writing blogs, composing songs, designing
95 video games, producing podcasts, making videos, posting to social media, or coding a mobile or
96 software application.

97 (4) Assessment of how media affects the consumption of information and how it triggers
98 emotions and behaviors.

99 (5) The safe, responsible, ethical use of the social media platforms and other internet-
100 connected communications tools.

101 (i) The board may require school districts to submit an internet safety plan for the
102 department to review; provided further, that in creating the policies, the school districts shall
103 involve students, parents or guardians, teachers, teacher-librarians, other school employees,
104 administrators, and community representatives with experience or expertise in digital citizenship,
105 media literacy, and internet safety issues.

106 (j) The board shall provide support for professional development for teachers and other
107 faculty focused on integrating media literacy in all health and core subjects; and shall create
108 guidelines for a comprehensive professional development program with learning outcomes
109 aligned with standards and scope and sequence linked to educator demonstration of
110 understanding of those outcomes. The department of education shall require that at least one
111 mandatory teacher training course be conducted annually in regard to media literacy, provided
112 that the training will focus on embedding media literacy education into the curriculum aligned to
113 existing learning standards; and provided further, that an impact assessment shall be conducted
114 through a long-term evaluation of progress.

115 (k) The department shall create a web-based location with recommended successful
116 media literacy practices and resources and shall work with the kindergarten through 12
117 community and other stakeholders to identify and develop additional Open Educational
118 Resources to support media literacy education in schools.

119 (l) The board may promulgate regulations in furtherance of this act or as the board deems
120 necessary or convenient to promote media literacy across all grades and public schools in the
121 commonwealth.

122 (m) Pursuant to section 1E of chapter 69, the board shall direct the commissioner to
123 update the educational framework for health and core curriculum courses to include provisions
124 relative to media literacy and digital citizenship, consistent with this section, upon the effective
125 date of this act and periodically thereafter.

126 SECTION 2. Chapter 15 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition,
127 is hereby amended by inserting the following new section:

128 Section 67. a) For the purposes of this section, the following term shall have the
129 following meaning:

130 “synthetic media”, shall mean an image, an audio recording, or a video recording of an
131 individual’s appearance, speech, or conduct that has been intentionally manipulated with the use
132 of digital technology in a manner to create a realistic but false image, audio, or video.

133 a) The department of education (hereinafter referred to as the “department”) shall
134 establish a grant program, subject to appropriation, for the purpose of assisting school districts in
135 supporting media literacy and digital citizenship. The grants shall be used to develop a
136 curriculum unit on media literacy and digital citizenship that may be integrated into existing
137 curricula. Activities permitted for the use of these grants include, but are not limited to, (i)
138 organizing teachers from across a school district to develop new instructional strategies and
139 share successful instructional strategies, (ii) sharing successful practices across a group of school
140 districts, (iii) facilitating coordination between educational service districts and school districts to
141 provide training. The department shall develop guidelines governing the grant program and
142 guidelines for implementation of said program. At least one grant awarded in each award cycle

143 shall be for developing and using a curriculum unit that contains a focus on synthetic media as a
144 major component.

145 c) Applicants shall be commonwealth school districts, Horace Mann, and commonwealth
146 charter schools. For a school district to qualify for a grant under this section, the grant proposal
147 must provide that the grantee create a district leadership team whose role it shall be to coordinate
148 the actions of the district around media literacy and digital citizenship.

149 d) The department shall convene group meetings of grant recipients to share best
150 practices and strategies in media literacy education. Grant recipients shall attend said meetings.