



# Unlock *student* Potential

Support Highly Effective School Library Programs in New Jersey

## Information Literacy Education: Equity of Opportunity for NJ Students

### Definition:

Information literacy (which includes digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy) education gives all students the inquiry based research skills to access, collect, and evaluate information credibly, accurately, and ethically.

### Issue:

In an increasingly complex information age, students have access to an abundance of information - at their fingertips, twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. However, we must ask ourselves, how much of this information is valid enough to be utilized for critical tasks, including academic research, health related questions, or financial decisions? According to a report from the American Association of School Librarians, students are five and a half times more likely to use Google and nearly four and a half times more likely to use Wikipedia for research than databases of peer reviewed journal articles available through school, public and academic libraries. Without proper information literacy education, students are considerably less likely to be able to effectively access valid research, consider the source of the information, seek diverse perspectives and be able to analyze potential biases.

### Opportunity:

We have the opportunity to develop an Information Literacy curriculum that teaches all students how to use an inquiry based research process to proactively seek information, analyze information for credibility, and use information ethically. Through this curriculum students will not only have access to technology, but be proficient in using these technologies. We can help students effectively and efficiently access information, as well as organize and communicate their research to others. Finally, with information literacy skills, we are preparing students to make informed decisions and become engaged citizens for the rest of their lives.

Support for Information Literacy and New Jersey school library programs can provide equity of opportunity for New Jersey students in all school districts. The ability to retrieve and analyze information in an increasingly complex information age is vital for higher education and beyond, and must be taught as a basic skill to all students.

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