Digital Literacy

School Board Work Session

August 18, 2026

Responding to School Board Direction

On June 11, 2026, the School Board directed FCPS to:



Digital Literacy

Enhance digital literacy instruction across all school levels.



Staff Development

Provide sufficient professional development for staff directly instructing students.



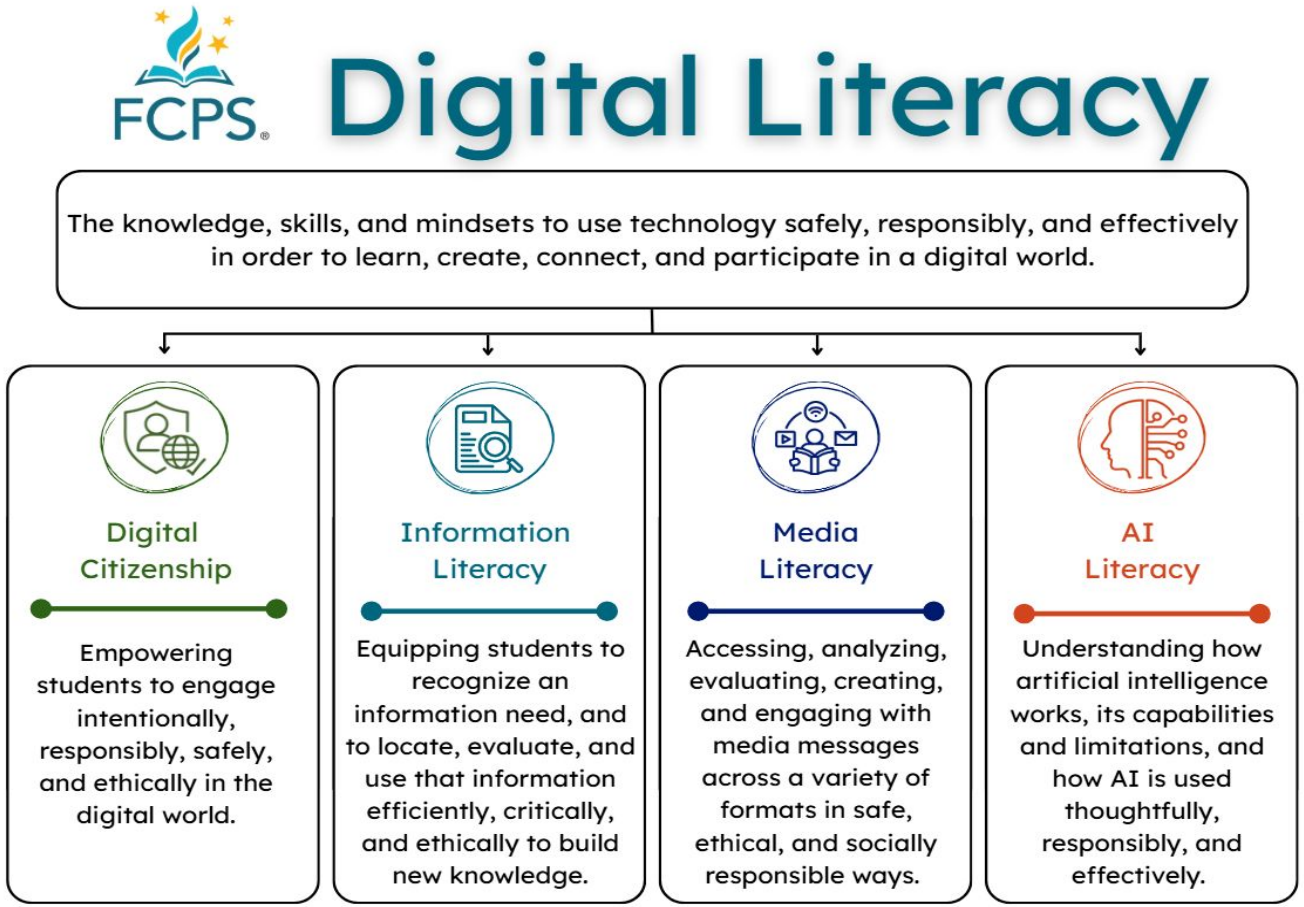
Public Access

Make the instructional and program content fully accessible to the public.

Note: This presentation builds on longstanding FCPS digital literacy work and does not presume or preempt School Board policy guidance currently under development. Additionally, it does not establish or expand student access to generative AI tools. Current FCPS Student and Staff AI Guidance can be found on the ETRC Website.

Foundational digital literacy equips students with the skills to evaluate information, make responsible choices, and navigate an increasingly complex world shaped by **social media**, **AI-generated content**, and **constant access to information**.

During SY 2026–27, AI will not be used to deliver digital literacy lessons, and students will not use AI or social media tools as part of these lessons.



Research Supports Explicit, Applied Digital Literacy Instruction

- Digital literacy improves academic outcomes, student readiness, and student participation in learning
- Exposure to technology alone does not build digital literacy
- Students need explicit instruction regarding safety, information evaluation, well-being, and AI literacy
- Skills are strongest when applied through authentic classroom learning

Digital Literacy is Already Embedded Across the FCPS Curriculum

English

Evaluate sources, synthesize information, and cite evidence.

History & Science

Analyze data, evidence, perspectives, and claims.

Health

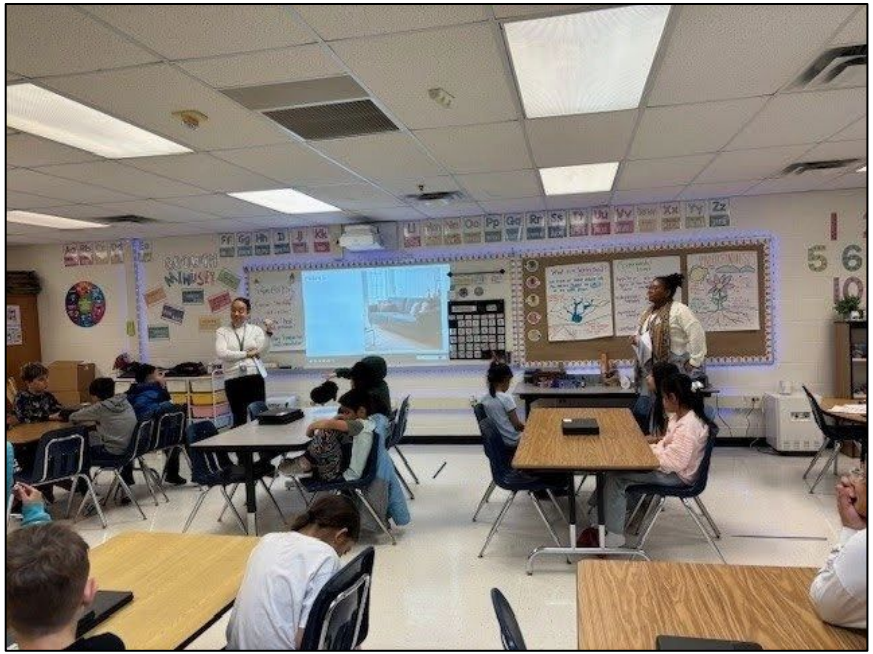
Examine media influence, online behavior, and cyberbullying.

Computer Science

Protect information, create responsibly, and understand digital systems.

FCPS' Digital Literacy Prior to School Year 2026-27

- Digital citizenship lessons have been taught in elementary classrooms and in middle and high school Advisory classes.
- FCPS has used the Common Sense Education Digital Citizenship Curriculum, developed with Project Zero at Harvard University.
- FCPS developed and piloted AI literacy lessons in 30 schools during SY25–26.



How FCPS Is Strengthening Digital Literacy for 2026-27

K–12 Alignment

Alignment of digital citizenship, media and information literacies, and AI literacy in one scope and sequence.

Clear Expectations

Establishment of common grade-level expectations across all schools.

AI Literacy

AI literacy concepts are addressed without students using AI tools.

Consistent Support

Provision of consistent lessons, resources, and continuous staff support.

FCPS Digital Literacy Commitments

As we implement the FCPS Digital Literacy Curriculum, we commit to:

- Keeping people at the center of teaching, learning, and decision-making.
- Leveraging technology tools ethically and responsibly.
- Intentionally evaluating emerging technologies before use with students.
- Balancing technology-enhanced learning with meaningful, non-digital experiences that support relationships, inquiry, creativity, and well-being.



2026–27 Student Digital Literacy Requirements

- Students will participate in **four** required grade-level digital literacy lessons.
- Lessons will be released on a quarterly basis.
- Lessons are fully scripted to support consistent delivery by classroom teachers, SBTS, librarians, and other instructional staff.



Elementary

Foundational lessons at each grade level K-6, with flexible, school-level delivery.



Secondary

Lessons embedded in ELA, with additional reinforcement through Advisory.



Accountability

School principals will confirm that the required lessons were taught.

What Students Will Learn

During 2026–27, students will learn to:

- **Protect** their privacy, safety, attention, and well-being.
- **Find**, **evaluate**, **synthesize**, and **cite** information.
- **Analyze** the credibility and purpose of digital content.
- **Create**, **communicate**, and **participate** responsibly.
- **Make informed decisions** about AI and other emerging technologies while understanding the risks associated with misuse.

Digital Literacy for Instructional Staff

Professional Learning Will Prepare Staff to Effectively Support Digital Literacy

Staff will learn to:

- Reinforce purposeful, developmentally appropriate technology use
- Establish a shared understanding of digital literacy
- Teach the required lessons
- Connect digital literacy to existing curriculum and instructional practices

Staff will be provided with implementation guidance and ongoing support

Next Steps & Board Discussion

- Publish all digital literacy lessons and AI guidance documents on the FCPS website and make them available to parents through Schoology
- Confirm implementation of required lessons
- Gather staff, student, and family feedback
- Develop and pilot measures of student understanding
- Expand required learning as the scope and sequence expands

Supporting Research: Studies and Reports

Arkan, Z., & Bal, M. (2025). “The relationship between school-age students’ literacy skills and digital well-being: A systematic review.” *BMC Psychology, 13*.

Bergson-Shilcock, A., et al. (2023). *Closing the Digital Skill Divide*. National Skills Coalition.

Breakstone, J., McGrew, S., & Smith, M. (2024). “Measuring what matters: Students’ online source evaluations.” *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*.

Caroline, A., Coun, M. J. H., Gunawan, A., & Stoffers, J. (2025). “A systematic literature review on digital literacy, employability, and innovative work behavior.” *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*.

Chen, F. (2025). “The relationship between digital literacy and college students’ academic achievement.” *Frontiers in Psychology, 16*.

Gottschalk, F., & Weise, C. (2023). *Digital Equity and Inclusion in Education*. OECD Education Working Papers.

Wineburg, S., Breakstone, J., McGrew, S., Smith, M. D., & Ortega, T. (2022). “Lateral reading on the open Internet.” *Journal of Educational Psychology, 114*(5), 893–909.

Supporting Research: Frameworks and Standards

American Association of School Librarians. *National School Library Standards*.

Common Sense Education. *Digital Citizenship Curriculum*.

European Commission. (2022). *DigComp 2.2: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens*.

International Society for Technology in Education. *ISTE Standards for Students*.

OECD. *OECD Learning Compass 2030*.

U.S. Department of Education. (2024). *A Call to Action for Closing the Digital Access, Design, and Use Divides: 2024 National Educational Technology Plan*.

UNESCO. (2018). *A Global Framework of Reference on Digital Literacy Skills*.

UNESCO. *Media and Information Literacy Curriculum*.