



Media Literacy Bills' Campaign Report

NM Media Literacy K-12
2019 Legislative Session

By Pamela Pereyra

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Media literacy is defined by New Mexico Media Literacy Now as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, develop, produce and interpret media, and it encompasses the foundational skills that lead to digital citizenship.

New Mexico was at the forefront of media literacy education in the 1990's and early 2000's. Back in 1995, [NBC](#) reported that it was the first state to require that all students study media literacy. At that time, the Internet was in its infancy and television, radio and magazines were the main sources for media communications. Media literacy education changed along with new communication channels brought about by the Internet. The non-profit New Mexico Media Literacy Project (NMMLP), which later rebranded as Media Literacy Project (MLP) advanced media literacy pedagogy nationwide since 1993 and implemented media literacy training in schools. The adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010 derailed media literacy education in NM schools. The focus on testing and teaching to the test left no room for what was perceived as an add on. In 2015, MLP shut their doors due to lack of funding. A statewide focus on media literacy marked an absence.

Media literacy was back on the public policy agenda by 2017 with House Memorial 49 (HM49) sponsored by Representative Moe Maestas and advocated by New Mexico Media Literacy Now led by media educator and chair Pamela Pereyra. HM49 asked for a study committee to determine best practices in media literacy for NM and for the state public education to offer media literacy instruction. As stated on the [nmlegis website](#), memorials are an “expression of legislative desire that is usually addressed to another governmental body” and in the case of HM49, the memorial requested a hearing to study the issue, for a committee to be formed and action to be taken by the Public Education Department (PED).

The memorial was heard at an interim education committee meeting in October 2017 by the NM Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) and no action was taken by the PED. The value of the memorial was to educate NM legislators, and New Mexicans via the media channels and to create statewide discussions about a need for media literacy education in schools K-12. The LESC hearing had three presenters from the view of the

parents, school safety and security and the scope of media literacy nationwide created a sense of urgency for a bill in 2019, as was stated by two republican legislators after the hearing. Republican Representative Little who had initially not supported the memorial said, “Now I understand the importance of this work, students need this! 2019 is the year to go for a bill and I’ll help.” Media literacy was becoming a priority again. 2018 was a short one-month session and a future bill would not have a chance until 2019.

1.2 Rationale for Media Literacy Education Bills

2019 brought a new governor and cabinet to the legislature. It was also a year with a financial surplus due to oil and gas money. It was the year to reintroduce the topic, create discussion and action towards a statewide media literacy focus. The national climate and a [Stanford Graduate School of Education research](#) were both major reasons why supporters and legislators were behind media literacy in 2019. The political landscape around the country (Russian bots interfering with elections, Cambridge Analytica behavior modification, lack of news literacy) suggested a threat to democracy and a lack of critical thinking brought much urgency and awareness for media literacy in schools. The 2016 Stanford research revealed that while middle school, high school and college students know how to use technology, they were lacking Internet evaluation skills. One of our arguments was that without being able to evaluate what is in front of them in cyberspace, students fall prey to manipulation and cannot conduct proper research for school and therefore are not prepared for work and life.

As laid out in the legislative information kit (see Appendix D), media literacy has many benefits, such as engaging at-risk-learners, increasing critical thinking, as a tool for health and well-being, expanding literacy, addressing privacy, safety and security and in developing digital citizens. Reasons to adopt media literacy education are to create a more evaluative citizenry who ask questions. Because media literacy is non-partisan, legislators felt at ease once they were presented with the key questions of media literacy (see Appendix D). In addition, the chair of NM Media Literacy Now was personable, knowledgeable in the topic and could educate people on the topic while staying non-partisan. With all of the above stated ideas circulating, supporters and legislators got behind the issue.

2. ABOUT THE BILLS

2.1 Content of Bills

[HB400](#) suggests that an advisory committee of education stakeholders work with the public education department to come up with a comprehensive plan for media literacy K-12 in standards, policy, teacher training and conducting a statewide survey to determine current practices across the state.

[SB194](#) asked for an appropriation to the PED for a New Mexico based media literacy program in schools.

2.2 Phase 1: Fall 2018 Summary

The foundation was laid in organization, communication and outreach towards a media literacy bill. A coalition of stakeholders from the sectors in learning, writing, health, students, parents, teachers, school administrators, youth media, media educators, technology education, press, law, and children, family advocates, and media education specialists were engaged. Bill sponsor Representative Moe Maestas, a legislator champion with a track record on media literacy legislation was solidified for HB400. A model bill was written with the help of national Media Literacy Now and other state chapters and was amended for NM success resulting in change in model bill language after a few key meetings with education stakeholders. The meetings took place virtually and over the telephone with a former Secretary of Education, leadership from the Legislative Education Study Committee, and other experienced lobbyists from other organizations, such as the National Association of Social Workers. The people consulted were experienced in the legislative process and understood what was going on in New Mexico the climate of the legislative session 2019.

A bulk of the work was spent on researching and putting together a compelling argument for media literacy in the form of a legislative information kit with a cost estimate sheet to detail expenses to be used to speak to various viewpoints in themes and address NM concerns at the 2019 legislative session. The info. kit was used as a stakeholder recruitment and conversation tool.

The campaign organization was set up to host our work in google drive for easy access for collaborators (see Appendix A). Folders and to do lists were set up for teams of people to access files and check off from the lists as they worked on items. And although outreach to volunteers was conducted, we received little support to meet the initial vision for teams of helpers. A few high school students were our champion volunteers. In general, most volunteers were more interested in making a phone calls or sending emails than in organizing. The organizing fell on the state chair of Media Literacy Now and her skills in organization, production, communication, education, media relations, engaging supporters and legislator relations.

Marketing materials (see Appendix C) created besides the info. kit were business cards, which were both used extensively. Traditional press materials (psa's and press releases) were sent to media outlets to recruit volunteers in conjunction with promoting Media Literacy Week as a strategy to launch the campaign. Online marketing through Twitter, Facebook and a basic website was created and updated to engage the masses, mobilize people and educate on the topic.

Conversation with legislators began before the bill was introduced in January. The foundation was solid, and the next phase was ready for launching.

2.3 Phase 2: Spring 2019 Summary

The second phase brought about the introduction of two bills House Bill 400 (HB400) and Senate Bill 194 (SB194), ushering of those bills in and out of committees along with necessary amendments to HB400 to ensure bill passage. The two-month legislative session was January 15th-March 16th, 2019. Both bills received financial support during the session for appropriations and HB400 almost became a law in the form of a temporary provision but got pocket vetoed (explanation under Ushering Bills).

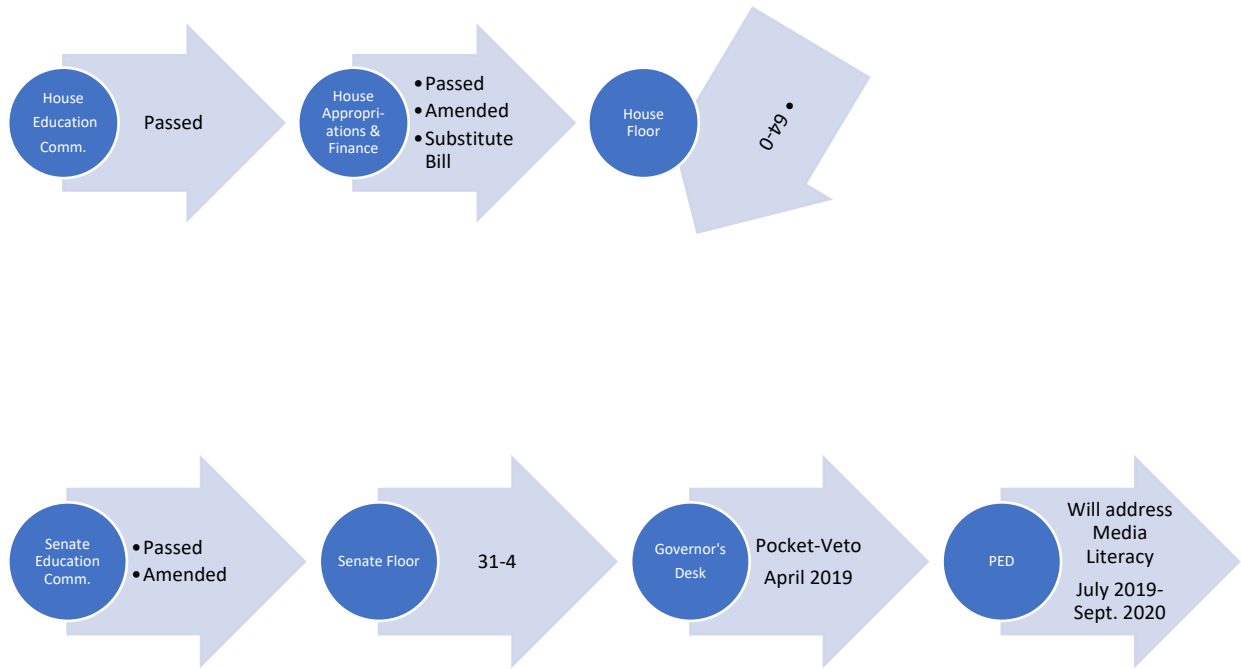
The 2019 legislative session had a budget surplus, so after twelve years, the legislature reinstated House Bill 2 Junior, which was to our advantage as legislators allocated "Junior" money from their personal budget for our bills. \$137,000 was allocated for HB400 for a Media Literacy Advisory Committee for one-year and \$300,000 was allocated for SB194 to the Public Education Department to fund a School Media Literacy Program. The key

to allocation for money for both bills' success was creating and maintaining relationships, being at the right place at the right time and talking to the right people to lead to the next step for bill passage. The summary of the outcome of the bills is discussed in the Ushering Bills section of this paper. Although bills did not become laws, money was still allocated to the PED because it was part of a state budget junior bill, something unique to NM. In a financial surplus year, the junior bill allows legislators to allocate money towards a bill for an appropriation to an entity to carry out certain duties of that said bill. In the case of SB 194, the NM education department would receive money towards a media literacy program and create a grant process for it. We met extensively about the contents of the program and what would make most sense for New Mexico. The bulk of the work in Spring 2019 was in maintaining constant communication with all stakeholders through all of our outlets, including face-to-face meetings, social media, website, Facebook live videos and email updates with calls to action.

2.4 Ushering Bills

House Bill 400: Media Literacy Advisory Committee (Standards, Policy, Guidelines, Survey)

We got 4 bill sponsors for HB400, 2 of whom were educators: Representative Moe Maestas, Representative McQueen, Representative Stapleton, Representative Garratt. This was a good strategy because the main bill sponsor was busy and sometimes not available to present the bill and others presented. Four legislators funded the appropriations for this bill with their "Junior" money. Once the house bill crossed over to the Senate floor, a senator had to present the bill on the senate floor. Luckily, the social workers advised me to talk to Senator Padilla and I did before the start of the session. At the same time our bill sponsor Rep. Maestas also talked to him by chance. He agreed to sponsor on the senate side. Had this not been done ahead of time, it would have been hard to find a bill carrier on the senate side days before the session was to end. Below is a visual of the bill's journey from the first committee to the governor's desk.



HB400 Outcome: Bill got [pocket-vetoed](#) and the appropriations got line item vetoed under the “Junior” appropriations bill [House Bill 548](#) (pg. 19). The [Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s veto statement](#) said the Public Education Department was going to address the issue without a temporary provision or use of state resources.

Senate Bill 194: School Media Literacy Program

We had one bill sponsor Senator Cisneros, vice chair of Senate Finance Committee and legislator for 25 years. Four legislators donated towards the Appropriations. Senate Finance Committee ran out of time to schedule a hearing due to the fact that their state budget got presented the last week of session (common occurrence) and general appropriations bills get heard after they solidify the budget. The two-month session makes it hard for all bills to be heard.



SB 194 Outcome: Bill died. Action postponed indefinitely. Junior Money was allocated via [SB536](#) to the PED and PED decides if it's a media literacy education is a priority or to not take action.

Ushering bills is an art form. It involves asking questions and talking to people (lobbyists, committee secretaries, sponsor secretaries, bill analysts, etc.) if one is a rookie like me. I had to learn whom to talk to as things got tight in the schedule to make sure bills got scheduled. No kidding, once a volunteer had a committee chair's ex-secretary talk to the chair's fiancé to schedule our bill to be heard. The committee chairs and vice chairs are key people to have as allies as well as getting the department of education on board as they call the shots from behind the scenes once things get moving. I had to keep the PED engaged with meeting in hallways, emails, etc. "Nothing is to be taken for granted," was the message I got from lobbyists.

In order to move bills, first the bills need to get scheduled to committees. To make scheduling a priority, people need to make phone calls and send emails in support of the bill to the committee or floor schedulers (for Senate or House). Literally, secretaries will tally on paper a bill number (ex. HB400, SB194) with how many called in support or against. In addition, as time got tight and we were nearing the end of the session, if HB400 would have gotten assigned to two Senate Committees, it would have killed the bill. So, I had to meet with the Senate Majority Floor leader, who is on the Senate Committees' Committee (they schedule bills to committee), and his aide to let them know that our bill was coming their way and to please only schedule to one committee and our reasoning. I met with them again to get it scheduled and heard on the Senate Floor after it passed committee. I also had people calling/emailing their office with the same message. Although HB400 got vetoed,

the work was still important to get it to the governor's desk. Every step is a chance for educating legislators on the topic, establishing relationships and getting legislators to commit to media literacy as a priority.

Each legislator usually has a secretary and/or legislative aides and legislator leadership has a chief of staff to educate and make into an ally. I was on the ground, but I had people making phone calls and sending emails influencing legislators on how to vote and letting them know that the issue is important. Without the team effort, we may not have gotten as far.

2.5 Bill Analysis

I understand now the importance of not only the bill analysts but the process of bill analysis in general. There were two analysis done on each of the bills: a fiscal impact report (FIR) conducted by Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) and a Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) analysis conducted by LESC analysts. These are important and inform the legislators about the bill and how that will impact the state. The public education department is consulted providing input to both analysis and sometimes they sway the reports to not do the work on the bill. So, I was told after the fact by lobbyists that I needed to have submitted paperwork and met with the analysts from those entities the day after the introduction of the bills. When I learned about the FIR and LESC importance, I met with those analysts to ask for amendments, but they never happened. So, when a legislator read those unamended reports, they were swayed, and my job was to unsway them to vote for and not against the bill. I had to fix and speak to the points on those analyses that were incorrect or incongruent with our work and aim. I did that via our legislative information kit, face-to-face meetings, press, etc. to reframe the message. In addition, when bills go to committee, each committee has its own analysis they conduct, so meeting with the committee analysts is also important. For example, for HB400, I should have met with LFC and LESC analysts and then once scheduled to committees, I should have met with 3 committee analysts. Remember, I was a rookie and was learning by doing.

3. RELATIONSHIPS, OUTREACH, MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

3.1 Relationships & Communication Case Studies

Scenario #1: I was invited to a Taos event where upcoming legislation was to be discussed with the Taos community and I could give a 2-minute presentation on HB400. There, I met Senator Cisneros whom offered to float a bill for a media literacy program as he saw there was a real need. SB194 was born. Why was this important? HB 400 took out teacher PD from the bill language and SB194 asked for a program for teachers, which was essentially teacher PD. Having two bills ensured success of both bills and separated the work of a committee (HB400) from a program for schools (SB194). Meeting with Senator Cisneros was because of being active and public to garner support. We got lucky to be at the right place at the right time.

Scenario #2: It just so happens that a lobbyist friend who sold me lambs in years past walked down to the senate floor with me to introduce me to certain senators and help strategize. We happen to run into the Lieutenant Governor and the opportunity was open for an introduction. The Lt. Gov. remembered our conversation during his campaign trail and said I could schedule a meeting with him in the afternoon. It was a coincidence that the NM Secretary of Education and her Deputy Secretary (whom I met with before he was appointed a month prior) were there at the same time and I was introduced to them and held an impromptu meeting with them. I handed my white paper and literature for the bills. I had been emailing the NM Public Education Department (PED) and sending information but had received no response prior to the meeting.

Scenario #3: I was waiting at the legislative council for HB400 to get amended as a substitute bill for House Appropriations and Finance Committee. I was physically in the waiting room while they amended and proofed the bill on the fly (2 hrs.) so that I could take it back down to the committee and they could discuss and ideally pass. They were stripping the appropriations (\$137K) from the original bill for passage out of committee. The appropriations were going to live as a line item in House Bill 2 Junior. While I waited, I chatted with a nice gentleman and he said he supported our efforts and saw the importance of our bill. A few days later, I saw him at a legislator's office as I learned he was the lead analyst for the committee of that legislator. He chatted with me and suggested I talk to the analyst at the Senate Education Committee (SEC), where my bill was to go next. I had

no idea analysts for committees were so important and influential. The analyst for SEC amended the bill for ideal passage of SEC. Our bill was heard on the last committee meeting day for the session and the last five minutes. Had we not amended the HB400 bill, it would not have passed committee. I mentioned to the analyst that the PED supported us and so the analyst talked to PED and they were in agreement. Maybe if I had not met with the new PED deputy a month prior or if I had not met with the same deputy with the education secretary a few weeks before, we would not have had the help of the analyst. It's hard to say.

3.2 Outreach, Marketing, Media, and Communication

People were mobilized (see Appendix C) with social media posts, live videos from the capitol on Pamela Pereyra's personal page and emailing a listserv of supporters and volunteers, such as high schoolers, college students, personal email contacts, and people who had signed up to volunteer at different events. The calls to action made it easy for people to take action with all necessary information in the post, email, etc. We reported back on success as we moved from one committee to the next.

The traditional media campaign consisted of a middle school media literacy educator's opinion piece in 3 newspapers (ABQ Journal, Las Cruces Sun News, Santa Fe New Mexican) and a Pamela Pereyra letter to the editor in 2 papers (Santa Fe New Mexican, Taos News) three weeks later. The middle school teacher had a previous newspaper experience and was associated with Teach Plus and wrote a compelling op-ed from a classroom perspective. The other op-ed gave the overall reasons of the importance with examples.

Two radio stations provided interviews and one ran a psa. A press release, letter to editor and public service announcements (PSA) for all media outlets were sent out but the press release never ran. The letter to the editor (op-ed) was what newspapers liked the best. We would have had better coverage had there been time to follow-up with the press, but time was tight.

3.3 Legislator Communication

As legislators got busier during the second month and I was no longer providing the legislative info. packet consisting of 8 pages, I only included our 1-pager (which was page 7 of info. packet) and a copy of the Santa Fe New Mexican op-ed with a letter to the legislator urging support and why. With that, I included my business card and key questions of media literacy card. If I could do it differently, I would change the 1-pager to be less wordy and more visually appealing.

I had my elevator speech down and always let legislators know that media literacy was non-partisan and that it was about teaching students to ask questions and evaluate their interactions. If I had time, I spoke about media creations (using a math info-graph as an example) to elevate subject content. With some legislators, I spoke about the value of media literacy when doing a school research project. With others, I spoke about links to democracy but only with only with the ones that could take that kind of information. I had certain legislators profiled from the 2017 work, input from other advocates and lobbyists and from their voting record. Keeping a profile of the legislative leadership, such as majority/minority whips, committee chairs etc. was important, which I learned through my previous legislative work with tobacco and substance abuse prevention. Also, through reactions with certain legislators, I learned early on not to mention mental health or fake news as those ideas were just too political.

I found that meeting with a legislator at their office was invaluable. Sometimes, I was pressed for time and during the first month, I was able to have luck pulling legislators off the floor to chat for a few minutes. Usually 2-days prior to committee I pulled people off the floor and urged them to support when it went to their committee next (insert elevator speech here). In addition, I stalked legislators and waited outside whatever committee they were coming out of to have a chat as they walked to their next destination. The packet and elevator speech were a must.

4. CONCLUSION AND NEXT PHASES

4.1 Reflections and Conclusion

Working on bills is about relationships, listening and knowing how to move and who to talk to. It is a dynamic process that takes time and dedication to see it through with constant communication in engaging supporters from all stars and stripes. Without the support of the public education department and the money that came with a surplus this year, the bills would not have made it as far as they did. In addition, without someone passionate, dedicated, organized and knowledgeable to lead the initiative, the bills would not have moved. In NM, sponsors are too busy to keep up with all the bills during legislative sessions because they are just too short (1 and 2-month sessions). It was crucial to have someone tracking the bills and engaging people in conversation to help the bills move through and to energize legislators to fund the initiatives. It was important to have someone with people skills who can talk to anybody and make allies of sergeant of arms (door security), secretaries, advocates, lobbyists, whom were also stakeholders in the process. It took a network of people to move bills forward. And none of it would have happened without the leadership of someone driving the initiative with energy, determination, tenacity, time, relationship building and understanding of how to be organized and produce initiatives with care.

We were told that it takes five years to pass a bill. It was a monumental effort to almost pass a bill in two years because of time, allies, vision, leadership and money. I learned that the right people need to be prepped with talking points to discuss the topic with legislators, so the message is the same or similar.

The most important lesson I learned was to keep communication constant and make allies with both republicans and democrats. Legislators are issue driven and don't necessarily vote on issues along the party lines. It is not good to stereotype legislators. Legislators are people and they want to be appreciated for their time and effort. They also want to be educated on issues. The job of the advocate or the lobbyist is to educate.

4.2 Next Phases for Implementation

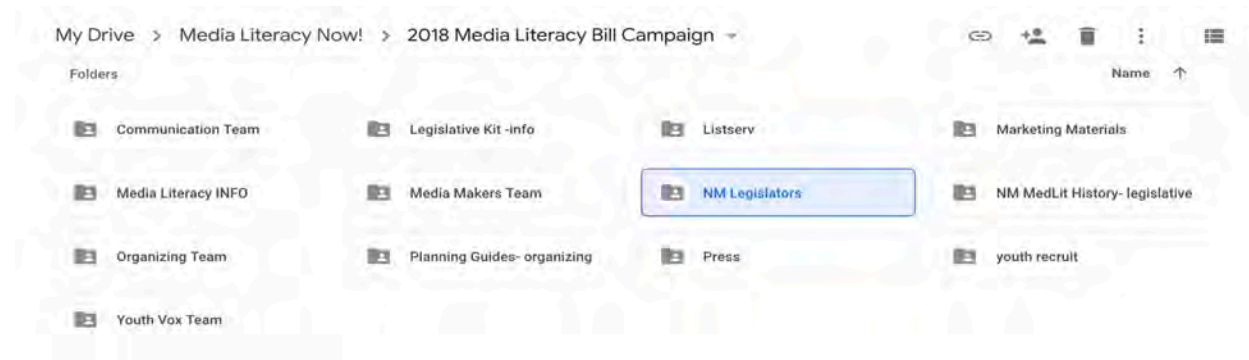
The Public Education Department will determine the best possible way to move forward with the money that was allocated to the PED for media literacy across the state. Both NM Media Literacy Now and Pamela

Pereyra's entity, Media Savvy Citizens, are ready to advise and implement media literacy in partnership with NM education stakeholders. NM Media Literacy Now is an advocacy organization and does not implement media literacy in schools. The chair of NM Media Literacy Now has been a media literacy educator since 1999 and in a position to apply for grants or contracts made available by the PED. New Mexico is a state with diverse populations that make it hard for any national entity to provide media literacy education with equity. It will be a good idea for the PED to consider addressing media literacy in a culturally, geographically and technologically diverse manner to meet the needs of our unique populations.

APPENDICES

Appendix A.

Cloud Campaign Organization - [2019 Media Literacy Bill Campaign](#)



Appendix B.

Supporters of Media Literacy

- Children: **NM Voices for Children**
- Families: **Strong Families-A Forward Together Program**
- K-12 Teachers: **AFT** (American Federation of Teachers)
- School Admin: **NEA NM** (Assoc. of Educators)
- Parents: **NM PTA**
- Technology: **NMSTE** (NM Society for Tech in Ed.)
- **School Tech Solutions**
- Learning: **Learning Alliance NM**
- Literacy: **National Writing Project**
- Youth Media: **Generation Justice**
- Media Education: **Media Heads, Little Globe**
- Media: **NM Press Association**

- Health: **National Association of Social Workers**
- Political Office: **NM Secretary of State**
- After School: **NM Out of School Time**
- Library: **New Mexico Library Association, American Association of School Librarians**
- Law: **NM Center for Law and Poverty**
- Students: Students from NM high schools and the University of New Mexico
- **National Association for Media Literacy Educators**

Appendix C.

Internet Marketing & Press

- Website- www.medialiteracynm.org
- Twitter- [@medialitnm](https://twitter.com/medialitnm)
- Facebook- [@medialiteracynm](https://facebook.com/medialiteracynm)
- [Press Materials 2018-2019](#)
- [Facebook Live Videos](#)

Examples of digital mobilizing communications:



A screenshot of a Facebook post from "New Mexico Media Literacy Now" dated February 12. The text says: "Media Literacy matters. SCHEDULED HEARING tomorrow Bam!! PLEASE CALL chair, vice chair, and representatives on this list. 'I'm calling in support of HB400' or send mass email to all listed if you are interested in our children getting critical thinking skills, internet safety, online credibility, etc. in schools." Below the text is a screenshot of a spreadsheet listing "House Education Committee Members" with columns for Name, District No., Email, and Phone. The spreadsheet lists several members with their respective contact information.

A screenshot of a Twitter post from "NM Media Literacy @medialitnm" dated Mar 14. The text says: "Woohoo! #HB400 passed #SenateEducationCommittee unanimously the last 5 minutes during the last committee! Today, we are on the schedule for the floor. Thank YOU for your support in contacting your Senators. #nmleg #nmpol". Below the text is a screenshot of a poster with a red flower background that reads: "HB400 goes to Senate Floor for vote Thursday 3/14/19 https://www.nmlegis.gov webcast 11:00 am". The poster also features the "Media Literacy Now" logo.

Appendix D.

Legislative Materials

- [White Paper](#) to accompany SB194.
- [Letter to Legislator](#)
- [Business Cards](#)
- [Key Media Literacy Questions](#) cards
- [1-Pager](#) on media literacy problem, solution and SB194/HB400 summary
- [Letter to the Editor](#) stating the case for media literacy
- [Legislative Information Kit](#)
- [Talking Points](#) for House and Senate Floor