

Date of Hearing: March 12, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Al Muratsuchi, Chair  
AB 279 (Patel) – As Introduced January 21, 2025

**SUBJECT:** School libraries: model library standards

**SUMMARY:** Requires, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), by July 1, 2028, and every eight years thereafter, to consider convening a group of experts in the fields of literacy technology and media to recommend revisions to the standards for school library services, to the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC). Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the SPI, on or before July 1, 2028, and every eight years thereafter, in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE), to consider convening a group of experts in the fields of literacy technology and media to recommend revisions to the standards for school library services to the IQC.
- 2) Requires the SPI, in consultation with the SBE, to ensure that the group of experts includes, but is not necessarily limited to, all of the following:
  - a) Teachers who work regularly with trending technologies, media literacy, artificial intelligence, and social media in grades 1 to 12, inclusive;
  - b) Credentialed teacher librarians;
  - c) Schoolsite principals;
  - d) School district or county office of education (COE) administrators;
  - e) University professors; and
  - f) Representatives of private sector business or industry with a background in technology, media, and social media.
- 3) Requires the SPI, in consultation with the SBE, to ensure that one-half of the members of the group of experts are credentialed teacher librarians.
- 4) Requires the IQC to consider developing and recommending revisions to the standards for school library services, based on the recommendations, to the SBE.
- 5) Makes these requirements subject to an appropriation for its purposes.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires the governing board of each school district to provide school library services for the pupils and teachers of the district by establishing and maintaining school libraries or by contractual arrangements with another public agency. (Education Code (EC) Section 18100).

- 2) Requires the SBE to adopt standards, rules, and regulations for school library services. (EC 18101)
- 3) Requires that, when the English language arts/English language development (ELA/ELD) curriculum framework is next revised after January 1, 2024, the IQC consider incorporating the Model Library Standards, and consider incorporating media literacy content at each grade level. (EC 33548)
- 4) Requires that when ELA/ELD instructional materials are next adopted by the SBE after January 1, 2025, the IQC consider including the Model Library Standards, developed pursuant to Section 18101, including media literacy content, in its criteria for evaluating instructional materials.
- 5) Requires that when mathematics, science, and history-social science instructional materials are next adopted by the SBE after January 1, 2025, the IQC consider including media literacy content in its criteria for evaluating instructional materials.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:**

***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Libraries are a fundamental part of our schools and communities at large. They are learning centers and are crucial to student literacy. In our current times, there is not just a need for reading and writing literacy but also media literacy. As we know, technology has transformed media in the last decade. This new landscape requires new resources for students to better interact and learn. However, our library standards have not been updated in 15 years. By updating these standards, we will better engage in the technological world we live in and prepare our students for the media they consume.”

***Why update the Model School Library Standards?*** The Model School Library Standards were adopted by the SBE on September 16, 2010 and have not been updated since.

According to the California School Library Association, in the years since the Model School Library Standards were adopted the following online media trends changed how we access and evaluate information for personal and academic use:

- Social media
- Algorithms and personalized recommendations
- Mis/disinformation
- Artificial intelligence

The California School Library Association also notes that revised standards could reflect other recent developments in education, including a focus on literacy across the curriculum, whole child policies, and national standards for information literacy.

***The Committee may wish to consider that*** this is one area of the curriculum which changes far more rapidly than the state’s curriculum process can accommodate, and that this may be an appropriate topic for consideration in the process proposed by the Governor, described below, of reviewing the state’s curriculum development and revision processes.

***Update would not be in time for adoption of math or ELA/ELD materials for grades K-8.***

Current law requires that when ELA/ELD instructional materials are next adopted by the SBE after January 1, 2025, the IQC consider including the Model Library Standards, including media literacy content, in its criteria for evaluating instructional materials. It also requires that media literacy be considered for inclusion in the evaluation criteria for other subjects, including mathematics.

The SBE is currently conducting an instructional materials adoption in mathematics, and is planning to conduct an instructional materials adoption in ELA/ELD.

Because this bill would require the IQC to consider revising the Model School Library Standards in 2028, revised standards will not be included in the instructional materials adoption for these subjects.

***Governor’s Budget proposals on ELA/ELD instructional materials adoption and review of state’s curriculum development.*** The proposed trailer bill to the Governor’s proposed budget for 2025-26 includes funding for a COE and a partner organization to develop guidance to support the follow-up adoption and subsequent implementation of ELA/ELD instructional materials. This would include guidance on incorporating the Model Library Standards, including media literacy content, in its criteria for evaluating instructional materials.

The Governor’s Budget also proposes an appropriation of \$1 million to a COE to contract with a research or non-profit organization to study the processes by which other states develop curriculum guidance and make recommendations about how to improve and streamline California’s processes. It requires the selected organization, by January 1, 2027, to explore the following topics related to the development of curriculum guidance in other states, including:

- The process and cycle for developing curriculum frameworks and other instructional guidance and for selecting aligned instructional resources;
- How curriculum guidance and instructional resources are evaluated for the extent to which they support the teaching and learning of state content standards; and
- What additional guidance, tools, professional development or other resources, including digital resources and platforms, are provided to educators to support the teaching and learning of state content standards.

***Model School Library Standards.*** The current Model School Library Standards were designed to help students “prepare for success in the hypercompetitive global economy that is powered by information and knowledge.” They were intended to help students to learn and work with twenty-first century skills and apply responsible research practices, be respectful to others when using digital devices, and continue to grow as lifelong learners. The standards also describe recommended baseline staffing, access, and resources for school library services needed by students to meet academic standards.

The standards are organized around four concepts followed by overarching standards that continue across all grade levels, which are meant to be taught collaboratively by the classroom teacher and the teacher librarian in the context of the curriculum. The four concepts are:

- 1) Students access information: The student will access information by applying knowledge

- of the organization of libraries, print materials, digital media, and other sources.
- 2) Students evaluate information: The student will evaluate and analyze information to determine what is appropriate to address the scope of inquiry.
  - 3) Students use information: The student will organize, synthesize, create, and communicate information.
  - 4) Students integrate information literacy skills into all areas of Learning: The student Will independently pursue information to become a lifelong learner.

***Information literacy in California Model School Library standards.*** The California Model School Library Standards incorporate “information literacy” skills, in which students “learn to access, evaluate, use, and integrate information and ideas found in print, media, and digital resources, enabling them to function in a knowledge-based economy and technologically oriented society.” “Information” is defined broadly to include words (whether printed or spoken), visual images (including photographs and artwork), and music.

As noted above, the standards are organized into four concepts (accessing, evaluating, using, and integrating information) which contain standards spanning all of the grades. In the area of evaluating information, students are expected to be able to determine the relevance of information; assess the comprehensiveness, currency, credibility, authority, and accuracy of resources; and consider the need for additional information.

The state’s content standards for ELA also include at least one reference to media literacy. In grades 9 -12 students are expected to learn to “Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.”

***Recommended Committee amendments. Staff recommends that the bill be amended to:***

- Require that the SPI consider recommending revised school library standards to the SBE, and clarify that the role of the expert group is to assist in developing those recommended standards.
- Require that the SPI submit the revised standards to the SBE, instead of requiring the IQC to consider recommending revised standards to the SBE.
- Require that there be opportunities for public input on the revision of the standards, through at least two public hearings.
- Require that the SBE act on the recommended standards, within a specified time period, and through a process consistent with the last revision of content standards in world languages and visual and performing arts.
- Other technical and conforming changes.

***Arguments in support.*** The California School Library Association (CSLA) writes, “CSLA supports the bill for several reasons. First, the current School Library Standards were approved in 2010 by the State Board of Education, which makes them 15 years old. Because these standards deal with media literacy, which now includes various elements of technology, cyber and digital safety, they are long overdue for review and update.

Second, the California Department of Education has been integrating the library standards into all of the other content frameworks as they are being updated. As a result, the state should not allow critical literacy and technology information to get this out of date. Updating the library standards now will make the task easier by clarifying what the standards for the current information landscape are rather than classroom teachers and teacher librarians having to translate outdated standards.

Finally, having quality school libraries is a critical equity issue. So many of our California communities are considered “book deserts.” This is especially true in elementary schools where free reading materials are likely 20 to 30 years old and are likely not culturally relevant for students. The state’s School Library Standards address these issues directly and provide guidance to school district leaders, administrators, classroom teachers and teacher librarians.”

***Related legislation.*** AB 2876 (Berman), Chapter 927, Statutes of 2024, requires the IQC to consider including the Model Library Standards, including media literacy content, in its criteria for evaluating instructional materials when the SBE next adopts ELA/ELD instructional materials, and consider incorporating artificial intelligence literacy content into the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks when those frameworks are next revised.

AB 873 (Berman), Chapter 815, Statutes of 2023, requires that, when the ELA/ELD curriculum framework is next revised, the IQC consider incorporating the Model Library Standards, and consider media literacy standards at each grade level; and requires the IQC to consider incorporating media literacy content into the mathematics, science, and history social science curriculum frameworks when those frameworks are next revised.

AB 852 (Burke and Weber) of the 2019-20 Session would have established a process for the regular revision of academic content standards prior to the revision of curriculum frameworks. This bill was vetoed by the Governor, who stated:

This bill creates a new process to routinely evaluate and revise academic content standards. AB 852 shifts the responsibility from the State Board of Education to the State Superintendent of Public to review and recommend updates to academic content standards.

I do not support shifting this responsibility away from the State Board of Education or further complicating the current process.

AB 2862 (O’Donnell), Chapter 647, Statutes of 2016 authorizes the SPI to recommend to the SBE revisions to the content standards in visual and performing arts (VAPA), and authorizes the SBE to adopt, reject, or modify the revised standards by January 1, 2019.

AB 2290 (Santiago) Chapter 643, Statutes of 2016 authorizes the SPI to recommend to the SBE modifications to the content standards in world languages, and authorizes the SBE to adopt, reject, or modify the modified standards by July 30, 2018.

AB 740 (Weber) of the 2015-16 Session would have required the SPI, by January 1, 2017, to recommend to the SBE a schedule for the regular update of academic content standards and

would have granted the SBE the authority to convene academic content standards advisory committees to update the standards. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

California School Library Association  
TechNet

**Opposition**

None on file

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