

Date of Hearing: April 20, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
AB 2284 (Gabriel) – As Introduced February 16, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Pupil instruction: digital literacy and media literacy grant program

**SUMMARY:** Establishes a grant program, administered by the California Department of Education (CDE) for the purpose of supporting media literacy and digital literacy through local educational agency (LEA) leadership teams. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the CDE to establish a grant program for the purpose of supporting media literacy and digital literacy through LEA leadership teams.
- 2) Establishes the following purposes of the act:
  - a) To equip pupils, teachers, and families with the skills to safely navigate the online environment;
  - b) Expand training programs and technical assistance for using technology to support pupil learning; and
  - c) To build the capacity of schools and LEAs to support digital navigation services for pupils and their families.
- 3) Establishes the following definitions for the purpose of this act:
  - a) “Local educational agency” means a school district, charter school, or a county office of education (COE);
  - b) “Synthetic media” means an image, an audio recording, or a video recording of an individual’s appearance, speech, or conduct that has been intentionally manipulated with the use of digital technology in a manner to create a realistic but false image, audio, or video.
- 4) Requires the CDE to establish and publish criteria for the grant program, and authorizes it to accept gifts, grants, or endowments from public or private sources for the grant program.
- 5) Authorizes LEAs to receive grants in more than one grant cycle.
- 6) Requires LEAs, to qualify for a grant, to submit a proposal that provides that it will create a LEA leadership team that develops a curriculum unit on media literacy or digital literacy, or both, that may be integrated into one of the following areas:
  - a) Social studies;
  - b) English language arts; and

- c) Health
- 7) Requires that grant proposals include a description of how the LEA will incorporate age-appropriate instruction on at least four of the following topics:
- a) Cyberbullying, including the use of digital media tools, such as the internet, cellular phones, and social media, to deliberately upset or harass others;
  - b) Digital literacy, consisting of the skills and perspectives needed to read and write using a range of digital devices, typically in a networked environment;
  - c) Financial literacy, including, but not limited to, budgeting and managing credit, student loans, consumer debt, and identity theft security;
  - d) Information literacy, including the ability to find, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of sources. States that information literacy includes:
    - i) The ability to search for and effectively find information, but also to critically analyze the validity, credibility, and trustworthiness of information sources; and
    - ii) The ability to effectively use sources according to copyright and fair use and to cite sources appropriately, including according to the Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, and The Chicago Manual of Style citation methods. Information literacy also includes the ability to meaningfully curate sources.
  - e) Internet safety, including staying safe from online risk, such as avoiding risky online talk or encounters with inappropriate and harmful content;
  - f) Media literacy, which is an augmented conception of literacy that can respond to and reflect communication in the digital age. States that media literacy is:
    - i) The ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and communicate using information in all forms; and
    - ii) Composed of competencies in understanding and using fundamental dimensions of communication, including, but not limited to, authorship, message construction, implicit and explicit message purpose, audience, aesthetic and technical elements of production, and message effects.
  - g) News literacy, which is the application of critical thinking skills to the identification and consumption of news and journalistic information. States that news literacy includes skills in analyzing and evaluating the reliability of news information, specifically in discerning fact from opinion, bias, or agenda, and that production skills are essential to becoming news literate.
- 8) Encourages LEAs to evaluate the curriculum unit they develop.
- 9) Encourages LEAs to work with their teacher-librarians or a library information technology program, if applicable.

- 10) Requires that the curriculum units be made available as an open educational resource.
- 11) Authorizes grants to be awarded for establishing media literacy professional learning communities with the purpose of sharing best practices in the subject of media literacy.
- 12) Requires grant recipients to develop an online presence for their community to model new strategies and to share ideas, challenges, and successful practices.
- 13) Requires grant recipients to attend the group meetings created by the CDE.
- 14) Requires the CDE to convene group meetings for the purpose of sharing best practices and strategies in media literacy education.
- 15) Permits the use of grant funds for additional activities, including:
  - a) Organizing teachers from across a local educational agency to develop new instructional strategies and to share successful strategies.
  - b) Sharing successful practices across a group of LEAs.
  - c) Facilitating coordination among LEAs to provide training.
- 16) Requires that at least one grant awarded in each award cycle be for developing and using a curriculum that contains a focus on synthetic media as a major component.
- 17) Requires, subject to an appropriation, the CDE to convene at least one conference on the subject of media literacy and digital literacy.
- 18) Encourages the conferences to highlight the work performed by the recipients of the grant program, as well as best practices in media literacy and digital literacy.
- 19) Makes implementation of the grant program contingent on an appropriation being made for its purposes.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Defines the following terms:
  - a) “Digital citizenship” means a diverse set of skills related to current technology and social media, including the norms of appropriate, responsible, and healthy behavior; and
  - b) “Media literacy” means the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and use media and encompasses the foundational skills that lead to digital citizenship.
- 2) Requires the CDE, by July 1, 2019, to make available to school districts on its website a list of resources and instructional materials on media literacy, including media literacy professional development programs for teachers.

- 3) Requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt standards, rules and regulations for school library services.
- 4) Establishes the California State Library, under the direction of the State Librarian, and lists among the responsibilities of the office to purchase and maintain materials and equipment as necessary to carry out California State Library programs and services consistent with well-established library standards.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:**

***Need for the bill.*** The author states, “More than any other point in California’s history, children today have access to a vast amount of readily available information made possible through digital media. This has created many new opportunities, but it has also created new risks. Increased digital media use by children has elevated issues like cyberbullying, negative body image, cheating, depression and anxiety, and the spread of misinformation. Digital and media literacy education is an important tool in combating these issues by teaching children how to interact safely and constructively with the internet and other digital media. Assembly Bill 2284 will support educators and local education agencies in developing and implementing digital and media literacy curricula so that they can better equip children with the tools needed to navigate the internet.”

***Who develops curriculum for California public schools?*** This bill would provide grants to LEAs to create leadership teams to develop curriculum units on media literacy or digital literacy.

California’s public school curriculum is based on content standards in various subjects, including English-Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, History-Social Science, Physical Education, English Language Development, Career Technical Education, Health Education, World Languages, and Visual and Performing Arts. These standards are developed by the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) through a public process, and are adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE).

These standards form the basis of California’s curriculum frameworks. The frameworks guide the implementation of these standards, and are used to establish criteria for the evaluation of instructional materials for state adoption for grades kindergarten through grade eight. They also guide district selection of instructional materials for grades nine through twelve.

In addition to developing standards in the above subject areas, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has been directed by law to develop model curricula on different topics, such as those on the life of Cesar Chavez, human rights and genocide, and ethnic studies, for voluntary use by educators.

***What is media literacy?*** According to the National Association for Media Literacy Education, media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.

The Center for Media Literacy offers another definition: “Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound. It is the skillful application of literacy skills to media and technology messages.”

***What does media literacy education look like?*** The CDE lists the following examples of media literacy activities in different grade spans on its website:

- Elementary students use a library catalog to locate a book on recycling, which informs their task of photographing examples of recycling in their neighborhoods to share on their class wiki. In this example, students are accessing information through the library catalog, using it to inform their task. They are then using media to share information through photography on their class wiki—this involves production, communication, and following norms of online behavior with digital citizenship.
- Middle schoolers use a spreadsheet to organize data they collect about pets’ exercise habits, which they will analyze for a science fair project. In this example, students are using technology to use information effectively. They are then analyzing that information to arrive at conclusions for a project—that project will involve further skills in communication of that information to a particular audience.
- High schoolers locate articles in a database about data privacy, which is the basis for the students’ video production that gives recommendations for teens to protect personal information. In this example, students are accessing information through the database, and then analyzing that information to produce a video, involving communication skills. The topic is data privacy, which includes elements of digital citizenship.

Three additional examples of media literacy lessons from publicly available curricula are shown below:

- Through the Media Smarts curriculum (in use in Canada) students in Kindergarten to third grade can learn how to identify advertising through a lesson titled “Can you spot the ad?” with the objective of teaching students about the concept of branded content, and differences between branded and non-branded images and videos in online and offline contexts.
- Through the Cyber Civics curriculum for middle school students, students learn the difference between “consuming” and “producing” media, how to read and create visual media and become less susceptible to visual manipulations, receive safety training related to the consequences of “sexting,” and learn how misinformation can spread via the Internet and social media and even find its way into the news.
- Through the Facing History and Ourselves media literacy unit titled “Facing Ferguson: News Literacy in a Digital Age,” high school students investigate the choices and challenges facing journalists as they report on a story, explore the impact of social media on the traditional news cycle and understand the role it can play in influencing public opinion and the press, develop critical thinking and news literacy skills to help students find reliable information to make decisions, take action, and responsibly share news through social media, and consider their role as citizens in a democracy and their responsibilities as civic participants and citizen watchdogs.

***Information literacy in California Model School Library standards.*** The California Model School Library Standards for California Schools, adopted by the SBE in 2011, 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.

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 English Language Arts students 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.”

***Media literacy resources listed on CDE website.*** Pursuant to SB 830 (Dodd), Chapter 448, Statutes of 2018, the CDE has listed on its website resources and instructional materials on media literacy, including media literacy professional development programs for teachers. This list includes ten curriculum resources, eleven resources for professional development, and five resources for media production.

***Arguments in support.*** Common Sense Media writes, “AB 2284 is a strong example of how our government can provide resources to support educators in preparing students to safely and beneficially navigate in the online world. Access to the internet does not come with a ‘safe operation manual.’ Nonetheless, kids and teens are using the immense power of the internet and mobile technologies to explore, connect, create, and learn in ways never before imagined. With the immense benefits and access the internet provides comes countless ethical dilemmas and challenging issues, such as cyberbullying, hate speech, privacy violations, digital distraction, financial exploitation, problematic content, and more, which are surfacing both in schools and at home. As a result, educators and parents are struggling with how to make sense of this new world and how to empower kids to use technology responsibly to learn, create, and participate. In order to help address this, Common Sense and others have developed free-online curriculum for educators interested in incorporating coursework that serves as a ‘driver’s guide for the internet.’ This bill provides schools and districts with much needed resources to facilitate adoption of these free offerings.”

***Recommended Committee amendments.*** *Staff recommends the bill be amended to* replace its current contents with a requirement that, subject to an appropriation of one-time funds for this purpose, the SPI to allocate funding for the purchase of standards aligned instructional materials and for professional development in media literacy, as specified.

***Related legislation.*** AB 2064 (Irwin) of the 2021-22 Session establishes the Media Literacy through Critical Thinking Program at the California State Library, to support media literacy and navigation of issues of public health and representation among students and their families.

SB 830 (Dodd), Chapter 448, Statutes of 2018, requires the CDE to make available to school districts on its website a list of resources and instructional materials on media literacy, including media literacy professional development programs for teachers.

SB 135 (Dodd) of the 2017-18 Session would have required the IQC to develop, and the SBE to adopt, reject, or modify, a model curriculum in media literacy. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SB 155 (Gomez) of the 2017-18 Session would have required the IQC to develop a model curriculum in media literacy, and would have required the CDE to develop an online professional development module to support the model curriculum. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SB 203 (Jackson) of the 2017-18 Session would have required the CDE to identify best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, Internet safety, and media literacy, and would have required, beginning in the 2019–20 school year, school districts to annually review their policies on those topics. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 947 (Jackson) of the 2017-18 Session would have required the SPI, in consultation with an advisory committee, to identify best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy. This bill was vetoed by the Governor, who stated:

The subject matter of this bill is more properly the responsibility of local school districts. Moreover, the topics covered here are already contained in our state's English Language and Social Science Frameworks or in the K-12 Model Library Standards.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

Common Sense Media (sponsor)  
California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance  
Media Alliance  
Technet-technology Network

### **Opposition**

None on file

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