

Date of Hearing: March 22, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 787 (Gabriel) – As Introduced February 13, 2023

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: digital citizenship and media literacy: survey

SUMMARY: Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE) and an advisory committee, to identify best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy and to report recommendations to the Legislature, and to conduct a survey on the ways in which digital citizenship and media literacy education is being integrated into the curriculum. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Defines “digital citizenship” and “media literacy” as broad terms that encompass consumption and production of media and digital products. Defines these terms specifically as follows:
 - 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. Major areas include safety concerns such as cyberbullying prevention, protecting private information online, understanding digital footprints, civil online discourse, and online safety; and
 - b) “Media literacy” means the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, develop, produce, and interpret media and encompasses the foundational skills that lead to digital citizenship. Media literacy includes digital literacy, consisting of the skills and perspectives needed to read and write using a range of digital devices, typically in a networked environment.
- 2) Requires, on or before January 1, 2026, the SPI, in consultation with the SBE, to identify best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy and to report to the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature on strategies to implement the best practices and recommendations statewide.
- 3) Requires the best practices and recommendations to be developed in consultation with an advisory committee, as defined.
- 4) Requires the best practices and recommendations to include instruction that provides guidance about thoughtful, safe, and strategic uses of online and other media resources and education on how to apply critical thinking skills when consuming and producing media in any form.
- 5) Makes the reporting requirement inoperative on January 1, 2030.
- 6) Requires the SPI to convene and consult with an advisory committee when developing best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy.

- 7) Requires that a majority of the membership of the advisory committee be composed of certificated teacher librarians and current certificated classroom teachers with experience teaching media literacy.
- 8) Requires the advisory committee to include representatives from all of the following:
 - a) A statewide association representing county superintendents of schools;
 - b) A statewide association representing school district governing boards;
 - c) Experts in digital citizenship, digital literacy, internet safety, and media literacy; and
 - d) Other stakeholders, including students, certificated teacher librarians, parent organizations, diverse current classroom teachers, and school administrators;
- 9) States that the recommendations of the advisory committee may include the following:
 - a) Revisions to the state content standards and the state educational technology plan;
 - b) Existing model policies and procedures on digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy;
 - c) School district processes necessary to develop customized school district policies and procedures on electronic resources and internet safety that can be used within a school district technology plan;
 - d) Best practices, resources, and models for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy;
 - e) Best practices, resources, and models for instruction that are compliant with the federal Universal Service E-rate program and federal mandates established in the federal Children's Internet Protection Act (Public Law 106-554); and
 - f) Strategies that will support school districts in local implementation of the best practices and recommendations developed by the CDE, including strategies for delivering professional development to educators and school administrators.
- 10) Requires that the members of the advisory committee serve without compensation, including compensation for travel and per diem expenses. States that nothing in the act shall be construed to limit the use of private funds for the compensation, travel expenses, or per diem of members of the advisory committee.
- 11) Requires that meetings of the advisory committee be conducted pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.
- 12) Requires, on or before January 1, 2025, the SPI, in consultation with the SBE, to survey teacher librarians, principals, and technology directors to understand how they are currently integrating digital citizenship and media literacy education into their curriculum.

13) States that the purpose of the survey is to determine how teacher librarians, principals, and technology directors can lead, teach, and support digital citizenship and media literacy across all grades and content areas. Requires the SPI to share the results of the survey with the advisory committee.

14) Repeals this requirement on January 1, 2026.

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. (Education Code (EC) 51206.4)

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. (EC 51206.4)

3) Requires the SBE to adopt standards, rules and regulations for school library services. (EC 180101)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. The author states, “More than any other time in history, children today have access to a vast amount of easily accessible information, made possible through digital media. This access has created new opportunities for children to interact with education, entertainment, and each other, but also created significantly enhanced risks. Increased digital media use has exacerbated challenges related to cyberbullying, negative body image issues, cheating, depression and anxiety, and misinformation.

Digital and media literacy can help prepare young people to safely and effectively navigate the challenges and opportunities that will confront in an increasingly digital world. AB 787 seeks to analyze the current state of digital citizenship and media literacy and bring together stakeholders to create actionable next steps on how we can educate the next generation of Californians on these issues.”

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 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.

Other resources are available online, such as curriculum developed by Common Sense Media’s K–12 Digital Citizenship Curriculum, which focuses on media balance and well-being; privacy and security; digital footprint and identity; relationships and communication; cyberbullying, digital drama and hate speech; and news and media literacy.

Research on the need for instruction in media literacy. Research provided by the author's office points to numerous issues relating to students' understanding of, and use of, electronic media. These include difficulty evaluating content (McCormick, 2017), safe use of technology (Anderson, 2018), and effects of technology on mental health and well-being (Muacevlc, 2020, Purnama, 2021).

Information literacy in California Model School Library Standards. The California Model School Library Standards for California Schools, adopted by the SBE in 2010, 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 Model School Library Standards were adopted in September 2010. 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 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 the 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, "Children are growing up with the power of digital media and technology to explore, connect, create, and learn in new ways. With this power, young people have great opportunities, but they also face challenges and dilemmas. Schools are dealing with the ramifications, including issues such as online safety, cyberbullying, privacy, hate speech, misinformation, and digital distraction. To address these issues, schools are creating a positive culture around media and technology by incorporating digital citizenship education as part of their curricula. California's adoption of a statewide survey and advisory committee on digital citizenship and media literacy instruction would ensure California's kids have the skills they need to take control of their digital lives."

Recommended Committee amendments. *Staff recommends that the bill be amended* to: 1) strike "internet safety" from the list of best practices the SPI would be required to address, as it is already addressed under digital citizenship, and 2) add curriculum frameworks and adopted instructional materials to the list of topics the advisory committee would address in their recommendations.

Related legislation. AB 2284 (Gabriel) of the 2021-22 Session would have required the SPI to allocate funding to school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and the state special schools, for the purchase of standards-aligned instructional materials in media literacy and digital literacy and for professional development in that content. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2064 (Irwin) of the 2021-22 Session would have established the Media Literacy Through Critical Thinking Program in the California State Library for purposes of supporting media literacy across multiple languages for individuals and developing media literacy skills for individuals to help navigate issues of public health and representation. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

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 Instructional Quality Commission (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 (co-sponsor)
TechNet (co-sponsor)
Active San Gabriel Valley
Computer and Communications Industry Association
Media Alliance

Para Los Ninos
SNAP Inc.
Unite-LA

Opposition

None on file

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