

Date of Hearing: April 12, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 873 (Berman) – As Amended March 16, 2023

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: media literacy: curriculum frameworks

SUMMARY: Requires that, when English language arts/English language development (ELA/ELD) curriculum framework is next revised, the Instructional Quality Commission (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. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) 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.
- 2) Requires the IQC to consider incorporating media literacy curriculum content into the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks when those frameworks are next revised.
- 3) Defines the following terms:
 - a) Defines “digital citizenship” to mean a diverse set of skills related to current technology and social media, including the norms of appropriate, responsible, and healthy behavior; and
 - b) Defines “media literacy” to mean the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and use media and information and encompasses the foundational skills that lead to digital citizenship.

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, “Misinformation and disinformation on the internet intensify political polarization, threaten public health, and undermine faith in democratic institutions. As kids spend more time online and get the majority of their news from social media, they need to be equipped to detect, analyze, and evaluate negative or false media messages. AB 873 would ensure that all K-12 students in California are prepared with media literacy skills necessary to safely, responsibly, and critically consume and use social media and other forms of media and information. Media literacy develops students’ critical thinking skills around all types of media, and teaches students to evaluate online information that affects them, their communities, and the world. It includes digital citizenship, which is a diverse set of skills related to current technology and social media, including the norms of appropriate, responsible, and healthy behavior. The bill follows the lead of a number of other states in integrating media literacy curriculum content into the core subjects so that all students receive this critically important and timely instruction.”

This bill is intended to connect and integrate information/media literacy standards (currently in the Model School Library Standards) into the ELA and other curricula. Media literacy content in the K-12 curriculum is primarily located in the Model School Library Standards adopted in 2010. The Model School Library Standards are used in school library instruction and programs, and as such they have not been well integrated into the rest of the curriculum. This bill attempts to connect and integrate these standards into ELA and other curricula.

What is media literacy? There are varying definitions of media literacy, but most identify key skills as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.

The Center for Media Literacy defines media literacy as “a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.”

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 a need to provide instruction in media literacy:

- A 2022 Pew Research Report found that the share of teens who say they use the internet about once a day or more has grown since 2014-15. Today, 97% of teens say they use the internet daily, compared with 92% of teens in 2014-15 who said the same. The study also found that 46% of teens say they use the internet almost constantly, up from only about a quarter (24%) of teenagers who said the same in 2014-15. Social media use has also grown for younger kids. About half of parents of children ages 10 to 12 and 32% of parents of kids ages 7 to 9 reported their child used social media apps in 2021. (Clark, 2021)
- A 2019 Stanford University study gauged students' ability to evaluate digital sources on the open internet. 96% of high school students surveyed failed to consider that ties to the fossil fuel industry might affect the credibility of a website about climate change, while more than half believed a grainy video on that claimed to show ballot stuffing (which was actually shot

in Russia) constituted “strong evidence” of voter fraud in the United States. (Breakstone, 2019) Another study found that 82% of middle school students struggled to distinguish advertisements from news stories. (Wineburg, 2016)

According to the Stony Brook University Center for News Literacy, the Digital Age poses four information literacy challenges for civil society:

- 1) The overwhelming amount of information that floods over us each day makes it difficult to sort out reliable from fabricated information.
- 2) New technologies to create and widely share information make it possible to spread misinformation that looks like it’s from an authoritative source.
- 3) The conflict between speed and accuracy has escalated. We all want information as quickly as possible, but accelerating the distribution of information in the Digital Era has also increased the chances that the information will be wrong.
- 4) The Internet and Social Media make it much easier to select only the information that supports our preexisting beliefs, reinforcing rather than challenging them.

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 by the SBE 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 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.”

The Committee may wish to consider that significant changes in media consumed and produced by students since 2010 – most recently in the area of artificial intelligence – may necessitate a revision of these standards.

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. The Computer and Communications Industry Association writes, “Given the complexity of tackling this critical issue, existing industry efforts to support child safety and

privacy online could be bolstered by educational curricula focused on how to be a good citizen online. Offering such education to children would provide a more holistic approach to fostering children's online safety. Specifically, we laud the efforts to identify standards of appropriate, responsible, and healthy online behavior. Enabling young people to properly identify and respond to such behavior would promote safer online habits and may serve as a deterrent to engaging in such activities.”

Recommended Committee amendments. Staff recommends that the bill be amended as shown below:

(b) When the English language arts/English language development (ELA/ELD) curriculum framework is next revised after January 1, 2024, the commission shall consider incorporating the Model Library Standards developed pursuant to Section 18101. The commission shall also consider incorporating media literacy standards content at each grade level.

(c) The commission shall consider incorporating media literacy ~~curriculum~~ content into the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks when those frameworks are next revised after January 1, 2024.

Related legislation. AB 787 (Gabriel) of the 2023-24 Session would require the SPI, in consultation with the SBE and an advisory committee, to identify best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship and media literacy and to report these 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.

AB 2284 (Gabriel) of the 2021-22 Session would have required the SPI to allocate funding to school districts, COEs, 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 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**

Computer and Communications Industry Association
GenUp
Media Alliance
Media Literacy Now

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Tanya Lieberman / ED. / (916) 319-2087