

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2071 (Hoover) – As Amended April 13, 2026

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 9 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE), on or before January 1, 2028, to develop a plan to expand digital wellness instruction in public schools. The bill defines digital wellness as a state of well-being in which an individual uses technology to support physical health, mental health, social connections, and overall quality of life, while minimizing potential harms.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Minor and absorbable costs to the CDE.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

In today's digital landscape, you cannot consider mental health concerns without considering the impact of digital media. Digital literacy is directly contributing to our ongoing mental health crisis, and students deserve access to the tools and education needed to prepare them for safe digital citizenship. As a state, we are failing to meet students at this critical moment in their development. With the right skills, students are empowered to navigate digital spaces with confidence and discernment.

2) **Background.** Current law does not contemplate the concept of digital wellness. However, pursuant to current law, CDE provides various media literacy and digital citizenship resources for use by local educational agencies (LEAs) and educators. For example, along with a host of links to existing resources and a discussion of relevant definitions, CDE's digital citizenship webpage warns "it is critical to support students to be accountable for their safe, responsible, healthy balanced online interactions."

This bill requires the CDE to develop a digital wellness instruction plan, including strategies for keeping curriculum current with digital and AI technology as well as strategies for ensuring support and professional development opportunities for educators regarding digital wellness topics, such as through collaboration with mental health organizations.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1644 (Muratsuchi), of the current legislative session, requires a full school-day bell-to-bell ban on student smartphone use at school. AB 1644 is pending hearing in this committee.

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