
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 279 (Patel) - School libraries: model library standards

Version: June 23, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 18, 2025

Policy Vote: ED. 7 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), on or before July 1, 2028, in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE), to consider recommending revisions to the standards for school library services.

Fiscal Impact: The California Department of Education (CDE) estimates one-time General Fund costs of \$254,000 to facilitate at least three public meetings. This estimate includes reimbursement for travel and supplies, and to support professional writers to draft and edit the final document. The bill's provisions would be contingent upon an appropriation.

Background: Existing law 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.

Existing law requires that, when the 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.

Existing law requires the IQC to consider incorporating media literacy content into the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks and instructional materials when those frameworks are next revised and instructional materials are thereafter adopted. It also requires the IQC to consider including the Model Library Standards, including media content literacy, when ELA/ELD instructional materials are next considered.

Proposed Law: This bill requires the SPI, on or before July 1, 2028, and every eight years thereafter, in consultation with the SBE to consider recommending revisions to the standards for school library services.

This bill requires the SPI, if it decides to recommend revisions to the SBE, to convene a group of experts in the field of literacy, technology, and media to assist the SPI in developing recommended revisions to the standards for school library services. The experts that are selected shall include teachers who work regularly with trending technologies, media literacy, artificial intelligence, and social media in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, credentialed teacher librarians, and schoolsite principals, amongst others. The bill requires the SPI to ensure that one half of the members of the group are credentialed teacher librarians.

This bill requires the SPI, in consultation with the Instructional Quality Commission, to hold a minimum of two public hearings to allow the public to provide input on the recommended revisions. It also requires the SPI, within 18 months of convening the group of experts, to present to the SBE the revised content standards for school library services.

This bill requires SBE to adopt, reject, or modify any recommended revisions to the content standards, within four months of the presentation of recommended revisions, as specified.

The bill's provisions would be subject to an appropriation.

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 also consider incorporating artificial intelligence literacy content into the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks when those frameworks are next revised.

Staff Comments: The existing model school library standards were adopted by the SBE in 2010 and have not been updated since. While the standards establish foundational language for the integration of media and technology literacy, many things have changed over the last 15 years, particularly the ways in which students consume media and information. This bill would require the SPI and the SBE to consider revising standards for school libraries and also establish a process for developing the standards that brings in experts in literacy, technology, and media. 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."

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