

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 965 (Blakespear) – As Amended June 22, 2026

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill prohibits a public library, beginning January 1, 2028, from requiring the presence of a parent or guardian to issue a library card to a California resident of 16 or 17 years of age. The bill does allow a public library to require a parent or guardian's consent or signature to issue the library card.

FISCAL EFFECT:

No new state costs.

COMMENTS:

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

SB 965 expands access to public libraries for 16- and 17-year olds by prohibiting the requirement for a parent or guardian to be physically present when they apply for a library card. Public libraries provide important access to information, technology, educational resources and safe study places. Many older teens already manage significant responsibilities, and in-person requirements can create unnecessary barriers for families with busy work schedules or transportation limitations. SB 965 does not impact libraries' ability to require a parent or guardian signature or set policies regarding liability. SB 965 simply removes a procedural hurdle so more teens can access library services.

2) **Background.** Current law provides discretion to local libraries to determine minimum requirements for issuing a library card to individuals under 18 years old. While this discretion generally allows each local library to choose what approach best meets the needs of their local community, it has also led to a lack of uniformity throughout the state for youths attempting to obtain a library card. As noted in the Assembly Committee on Education policy analysis, even within the same region libraries may have different issuance requirements. For example, the Los Angeles County Library allows a child under 18 to obtain a library card if the child provides an application with their parent or guardians signature whereas the South Pasadena Public Library requires the parent or guardian to be in person to sign the application, show valid identification and verify residence. This bill

prescribes a uniform statewide prohibition on public libraries requiring the presence of a parent or guardian when issuing a library card to a 16- or 17-year-old.

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