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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 37 **Hearing Date:** June 7, 2017  
**Author:** O'Donnell  
**Version:** March 6, 2017  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Brandon Darnell

**Subject:** Pupil instruction: visual and performing arts: content standards in media arts

## SUMMARY

This bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC), to recommend visual and performing arts (VAPA) content standards in the subject of media arts to the State Board of Education (SBE) for action by January 31, 2019.

## BACKGROUND

- 1) Specifies that the adopted course of study for grades 1 through 6 includes instruction in VAPA, including instruction in the subjects of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, aimed at the development of aesthetic appreciation and the skills of creative expression (Education Code § 51210).
- 2) Specifies that the adopted course of study for grades 7-12 shall offer courses in VAPA, including dance, music, theater, and visual arts, with emphasis upon development of aesthetic appreciation and the skills of creative expression (EC § 51220).
- 3) Requires that a pupil complete one course in visual or performing arts, foreign language, or career technical education while in grades 9 to 12 in order to graduate from high school (EC § 51225.3).
- 4) Authorizes the SPI, in consultation with the IQC, to recommend revisions to the VAPA content standards in the subjects of dance, theater, music, and visual arts, to the SBE by November 30, 2018 and the SBE to adopt, reject, or modify any revisions to the standards by January 31, 2019 (EC § 60605.13).

## ANALYSIS

This bill requires the SPI, in consultation with the IQC, to recommend VAPA content standards in the subject of media arts to the SBE for action by January 31, 2019. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) States findings and declarations regarding the definition and importance of media arts education.
- 2) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Instructional Quality Commission, to recommend visual and performing arts

(VAPA) standards in the subject of media arts to the State Board of Education (SBE) on or before November 30, 2018.

- 3) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC), to convene a group of experts in media arts for purposes of assisting the SPI in developing the recommended standards, and further specifies that a majority of this group of experts must be current public school credentialed teachers.
- 4) Specifies that the National Core Arts Standards shall serve as the basis for the recommended standards in media arts.
- 5) Requires the SPI, in consultation with the IQC, to hold a minimum of two public hearings in order for the public to provide input on the recommended standards.
- 6) Requires that the SBE adopt, reject or modify the media arts standards recommended by the SPI, on or before January 31, 2019.
- 7) Specifies that, if the SBE modifies or rejects the media arts standards recommended by the SPI, they must explain in writing the reasons for their actions to the Governor and the Legislature, and that the SBE not adopt revised content standards at the same meeting it provides written reasons for the modifications, but shall adopt the revised standards on or before March 31, 2019.
- 8) Authorizes media arts content to be included in the next VAPA curriculum framework and instructional materials adoption.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “California, the world leader in technology and innovation, needs standards in media arts in order to support and promote this important subject matter. Media arts instruction may engage students in artistic projects such as video production, sound design, game design, online and mobile media design, multimedia live production, as well as virtual and augmented reality design.

Like other forms of art education, media arts can be used to teach and reinforce core academic content, as well as creative problem-solving, effective communication, team collaboration, and critical thinking. Students studying media arts gain critical literacies in media, technology and digital culture essential to becoming informed, discerning and engaged citizens. Media arts education also empowers students to engage in self-directed forms of inquiry, expression and creativity.

Media arts education allows students to learn key artistic and employment skills, critical in our increasingly technology-centered world. These skills are especially important in California’s creative economy. Ten percent of California’s jobs are in the creative industry, and 8% of the state’s productivity is related to the arts.

Establishing standards for media arts will support teachers and school districts that choose to teach media arts as a separate discipline in pre-K through 12th grade classes and complement the standards for digital production or exploration embedded in the disciplines of dance, music, theatre and visual art.”

- 2) **Existing VAPA standards and framework.** The current visual and performing arts (VAPA) standards were adopted in 2001 in four subjects: dance, theater, music, and visual arts, and the state adopted a VAPA framework aligned to those standards in 2004. Academic content standards define the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level. Curricular frameworks are the blueprint for implementing the standards, and include criteria by which instructional materials are evaluated. Standards adoptions generally precede the development of the frameworks. Curriculum frameworks are revised and adopted on an eight-year cycle, and instructional materials adoptions take place after new frameworks are adopted. The existing VAPA standards are currently scheduled to be revised by January 31, 2019. However, the Governor’s proposed education trailer bill for 2017-18 includes a proposal to delay the revision of VAPA standards by one, so that the State Board of Education (SBE) would take action on the standards recommended by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) on or before January 31, 2020 rather than January 31, 2019. If that change were to be enacted, this bill would need to be amended to comply with the changed timeline.
- 3) **The Joint Arts Education Task Force Report and its recommendations.** In order to advance the CREATE (Core Reforms Engaging Arts to Educate) CA reform effort, the SPI appointed the 67-member arts education task force in 2012 to draft recommendations that were included in *The Joint Arts Education Task Force Report: How the Arts and Creative Education Can Transform California’s Classrooms*, which was published in 2013. The task force provided recommendations in nine different policy areas, including the area of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. In regard to media arts the task force made the following recommendation: “In collaboration with community, industry partners and the State Board of Education, create and support a 21st century vision for the media arts within the visual and performing arts curriculum not only as a discrete area of study, but also as a powerful tool for integration and cross-curricular teaching among all arts disciplines and other content areas.” The task force also recommended that the state adopt or “adapt the National Media Arts Standards and Assessments in alignments with the California VAPA Standards”
- 4) **Fiscal Impact.** According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, The California State Department of Education (CDE) reports that there are no additional costs associated with this bill. The development of the media arts standards, as authorized by this bill, would be included in the upcoming revision of the VAPA standards.
- 5) **Why media arts?** A 2015 report to the SPI, A Blueprint for Creative Schools notes that “media arts are an important component of 21st century global culture and of California’s robust creative economy. Young people enter the educational setting familiar with a vast array of digital tools and are accustomed to a media-rich environment. The identification of media arts as a fifth arts discipline, with

associated standards, curriculum, and supportive programming structures, will foster quality and sustainable instructional programs in the entire range of media arts forms.

Through largely non-physical and integrative forms of cinema, animation, sound, web, virtual, and interactive design, media arts present engaging learning opportunities for students in interdisciplinary projects. These projects can integrate the arts and other core content areas, and engage the entire community. For example, the production of a video game can incorporate visual art and storytelling, experiential and environmental design, sound production, physics concepts, computer programming, 3D modeling and motion graphics, aspects of sociology and psychology, and accounting and marketing. Media arts are uniquely beneficial in supporting education's adaptations to changes in California's economy and society, as well as the infusion of educational technology."

- 6) **Media arts in the schools.** There are numerous examples of successful media arts programs throughout the state, including:
- At the Oakland School for the Arts, high school students learn current digital art skills including digital image creation and manipulation, computer art, filmmaking, animation, digital graphic design, and web design with an emphasis on portfolio preparation. Students participate in solo and collaborative projects, develop their portfolios and reels, and submit their work to festivals and contests year-round. Many Digital Media students also collaborate across emphases with classes and projects in music, theater, production, and visual art.
  - The Media Arts Program at Sonoma Valley High School opens doorways to creativity in the digital arts through filmmaking classes, animation, scriptwriting, film theory, and storytelling. Each year, hundreds of students are introduced to the process of filmmaking, producing dozens of acclaimed student shorts, many of which can be seen at the "Student Works" showcase of films during the annual Sonoma International Film Festival.
  - Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) offers "Introduction to Interactive and Virtual Design", a middle school course for sixth, seventh and eighth grade, which explores the media arts through the discipline of interactive and virtual design (e.g. web and game design), towards achieving the standards of media arts. Students experience the technical, creative and aesthetic aspects of interactive and virtual design production, in conjunction with learning about historical and contemporary traditions, genres, trends and contexts of digital and analog based productions.
- 7) **National Core Arts Standards.** In 2014 the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards produced the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS). The Coalition membership included eight organizations representing the breadth of arts education, including representatives of state agencies. The standards cover five areas of arts instruction (dance, visual arts, theater, music, and media arts), with

four “process” categories common to all arts instruction: creating, performing/presenting/producing, responding, and connecting. For each of these processes there are several “anchor standards” (eleven in total) which cut across the different forms of the arts.

In recognition that media arts education is a specialized field of instruction which requires distinct standards, the 2014 National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), produced by art education experts and practitioners, includes media arts standards as a distinct subject. The document notes that “media arts standards do not dictate what or how to teach, but define age-appropriate outcomes for students, towards the achievement of Enduring Understanding and Artistic Literacy.”

- 8) **Media arts in CTE and visual and performing arts (VAPA).** California’s current Career Technical Education (CTE) standards for grades seven through twelve, adopted in 2013, include media arts in the Arts, Media, and Entertainment section, within the Design, Visual, and Media Arts Pathway. CTE is designed to prepare students for ongoing education, long-term careers, citizenship, and entry into the workplace. The CTE model curriculum standards blend rigorous academic content with industry-specific knowledge and skills.
- 9) **Previous legislation.** AB 2862 (O’Donnell) Chapter 647 of the Statutes of 2016 authorized the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC), to recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE), revisions to the visual and performing arts standards and requires the SBE to adopt, reject, or modify any revisions by January 31, 2019.

SB 1057 (Corbett) of the 2013-14 Session would have created a process to update the history-social science content standards. This bill was vetoed by the Governor, who expressed a concern that the IQC did not have a role in the proposed revision process, among other issues.

AB 1033 (Feuer) of the 2011-12 Session would have established a content standards review commission, if the SPI and the SBE jointly found a need to revise or modify the academic content standards. The SBE could adopt or reject the recommendations. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 124 (Fuentes) Chapter 605 of the Statutes of 2011 requires the SPI, in consultation with the SBE, to convene a group of experts in English language instruction, curriculum, and assessment to align the English language development standards to English-language arts content standards. The SBE could adopt, reject, or modify the recommendations

## SUPPORT

California Alliance for Arts Education  
 California Art Education Association  
 California Association for Bilingual Education  
 California Digital Arts Studio Partnership/Tower of Youth

California Music Educators Association  
California School Boards Association  
California State PTA  
California Teachers Association  
Compton Unified School District  
Delta Kappa Gamma California  
Los Angeles County Office of Education  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
Sacramento County Office of Education  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson

**OPPOSITION**

None received

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