

# HB 3979 Conflicts with Established TEKS and Proven Effective Teaching Strategies

Teachers who teach about current events and issues are doing what TEA requires them to do. They are compelled by the TEKS to facilitate student learning about current issues, events or conditions nearly a dozen times starting in third grade and continuing through high school.

Instruction about Current Events	
HB 3979, Subsection H-2*	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills*
<p>In the instruction of the essential knowledge and skills for the social studies curriculum, in applicable courses of Texas, United States, and world history, government, civics, social studies, or similar subject areas:</p> <p>(1) <b>no teacher shall be compelled</b> by a policy of any state agency, school district, campus, open-enrollment charter school, or school administration <b>to discuss current events or widely debated and currently controversial issues</b> of public policy or social affairs;</p> <p>(2) <b>no teachers who choose to discuss current events or widely debated and currently controversial issues</b> of public policy or social affairs shall, to the best of their ability, <b>strive to explore such issues from diverse and contending perspectives without giving deference to any one perspective</b>;</p>	<p><b>Grade 3</b></p> <p>(b) (14) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) <b>gather information, including historical and current events</b> and geographic data, about the community using a variety of resources;</p>
	<p><b>Grade 4</b></p> <p>(b) (19) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(D) <b>identify different points of view about an issue, topic, historical event, or current event.</b></p>
	<p><b>Grade 5</b></p> <p>(b) (23) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(D) <b>identify different points of view about an issue, topic, historical event, or current event;</b> and</p>
	<p><b>Grade 6</b></p> <p>(b) (1) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) trace characteristics of various contemporary societies in regions that resulted from <b>historical events or factors such as colonization, immigration, and trade</b>;</p> <p>(B) analyze the historical background of various contemporary societies to <b>evaluate relationships between past conflicts and current conditions.</b></p> <p>(b) (19) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(D) <b>identify different points of view about an issue or current topic.</b></p>
	<p><b>World Geography Studies</b></p> <p>(c) (2) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) describe the human and physical characteristics of the same regions at different periods of time to <b>analyze relationships between past events and current conditions</b>;</p> <p>(c) (14) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) <b>analyze current events</b> to infer the physical and human processes that lead to the formation of boundaries and other political divisions;</p> <p>(c) (21) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(E) <b>identify different points of view about an issue or current topic.</b></p>
	<p><b>United States Government</b></p> <p>(c) (19) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(B) create a product on a <b>contemporary government issue or topic</b> using critical methods of inquiry;</p>

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(C) **analyze and defend a point of view on a current political issue;**

**Sociology**

(c) (15) The student is expected to:

(B) **argue and defend some current issues in American education;**

**Ethnic Studies: Mexican American Studies**

(c) (7) The student is expected to:

(F) discuss **current issues related to the Mexican American labor force.**

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*\* emphasis added*

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The Social Studies TEKS make clear the importance of civic engagement. Service learning with non-profit organizations, including political organizations, is an effective teaching strategy for helping students concretize theoretical ideas around civic engagement. Teachers should have the freedom and flexibility to develop student knowledge in practical ways and should not be limited in their use of proven effective teaching strategies. Students should be able to learn civic engagement through being civically engaged and should not be prohibited from earning academic credit for learning about policy and advocacy. These objectives, in particular, lend themselves to learning by doing.

## Instruction about Civic Engagement

### HB 3979, Subsection H-2

### Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

In the instruction of the essential knowledge and skills for the social studies curriculum, in applicable courses of Texas, United States, and world history, government, civics, social studies, or similar subject areas:

(3) no school district or teacher shall require, make part of a course, or award course grading or credit including extra credit for, student work for, affiliation with, or service learning in association **with any organization engaged in lobbying for legislation at the local, state or federal level, or in social or public policy advocacy;**

(4) no school district or teacher shall require, make part of a course, or award course grading or credit including extra credit for, **political activism, lobbying, or efforts to persuade members of the legislative or executive branch to take specific actions by direct communication at the local, state or federal level, or any practicum or like activity involving social or public policy advocacy.**

#### **Grade 3**

- (b) (15) The student is expected to:
- (A) explain how individuals can participate voluntarily in civic affairs at state and local levels through activities such as respectfully holding public officials to their word, writing letters, and participating in historic preservation and service projects;
  - (C) explain the duty of the individual in state and local elections such as being informed and voting;
  - (E) explain how to contact elected and appointed leaders in state and local governments.

#### **Grade 5**

- (b) (17) The student is expected to:
- (A) explain why individuals have a duty to participate in civic affairs at the local, state, and national levels; and
  - (B) explain how to contact elected and appointed leaders in local, state, and national governments.

#### **Grade 6**

- (b) (12) The student is expected to:
- (A) identify and explain the duty of civic participation in societies with representative governments;
- (b) (15) The student is expected to:
- (A) explain rights of Texas citizens; and
  - (B) explain civic responsibilities of Texas citizens and the importance of civic participation.

#### **History Studies Since 1877**

- (c) (20) The student is expected to:
- (A) describe how people have participated in supporting or changing their governments;
  - (B) describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens and noncitizens in civic participation throughout history;
- (c) (22) The student is expected to:
- (A) identify and analyze methods of expanding the right to participate in the democratic process, including lobbying, non-violent protesting, litigation, and amendments to the U.S. Constitution;

(C) explain how participation in the democratic process reflects our national identity, patriotism, and civic responsibility;

**World History Studies**

(c) (20) The student is expected to:

(A) describe how people have participated in supporting or changing their governments;

(B) describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens and noncitizens in civic participation throughout history

**United States Government**

(c) (13) The student is expected to:

(B) explain the responsibilities, duties, and obligations of citizenship such as being well informed about civic affairs, serving in the military, voting, serving on a jury, observing the laws, paying taxes, and serving the public good;

**Ethnic Studies: Mexican American Studies**

(c) (9) The student is expected to:

(A) describe the rights and responsibilities of Mexican American citizens and Mexican immigrants in civic participation within the United States;

(c) (10) The student is expected to:

(C) describe the role of artistic expression in mobilizing Mexican Americans and others toward civic participation and action such as the role of "Teatro Campesino" during the farmworkers movement;

**Ethnic Studies: African American Studies**

(c) (11) The student is expected to:

(A) trace how perceptions of the rights and civic responsibilities of African Americans have changed over time, including the idea of being considered property with no rights under slavery;

*\* emphasis added*

# Redundant: These Learning Objectives Do Not Need to be Re-Adopted

Foundations and traditions of the United States are already covered in an existing course. Students learn about the country’s foundations and traditions in U.S. Government.

Instruction about U.S. Founding	
HB 3979, Subsection H-1	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
<p>In adopting the essential knowledge and skills for the social studies curriculum, the State Board of Education shall adopt essential knowledge and skills that develop each student ‘s civic knowledge, including an understanding of:</p> <p>(1) the fundamental moral, political, and intellectual foundations of the American experiment in self-government, as well as the history, qualities, traditions, and features of civic engagement in the United States;</p>	<p><b><u>United States Government</u></b></p> <p>(c) (1) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(B) identify major intellectual, philosophical, political, and religious traditions that informed the American founding, including Judeo-Christian (especially biblical law), English common law and constitutionalism, Enlightenment, and republicanism, as they address issues of liberty, rights, and responsibilities of individuals.</p>

The three branches of government are already covered in TEKS for several existing courses. Students begin learning about the three branches of government in fourth grade and continue through upper grades.

Instruction about Government Systems	
HB 3979, Subsection H-1	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
<p>(2) the structure, function, and processes of government institutions at the federal, state, and local levels;</p>	<p><b><u>Fourth Grade</u></b></p> <p>(b) (7) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) identify and explain the basic functions of the three branches of government.</p> <p>(B) identify local, state, and national government officials and explain how they are chosen; and</p> <p>(C) identify services commonly provided by local, state, and national governments.</p> <p><b><u>United States Government</u></b></p> <p>(c) (7) The student is expected to:</p> <p>(H) compare the structures, functions, and processes of national, state, and local governments in the U.S. federal system.</p>

The topics of U.S. founding documents are already covered in TEKS for several existing courses. Students begin learning about founding documents, like the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, in third grade and continue through upper grades.

Instruction about U.S. Founding Documents	
HB 3979, Subsection H-1	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
<p>(3) the founding documents of the United States, including the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Federalist Papers (including but not limited to Essays 10 and 51), excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville 's <i>Democracy in America</i>, the first Lincoln-Douglas debate, and the writings of the Founding Fathers of the United States.</p>	<p><sup>(b) (8)</sup> The student is expected to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><sup>(A)</sup> identify the purposes of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights;</p> <p>The Declaration of Independence is mentioned in 36 TEKS for high school social studies courses, the U.S. Constitution 45 times, and the Federalist Papers twice.</p> <p>The founding fathers are covered in TEKS <sup>(c) (1) (D)</sup>, <sup>(c) (8) (A)</sup> and <sup>(c) (12) (D)</sup>, for U.S. Government.</p> <p>Alexis de Tocqueville's <i>Democracy in America</i> is taught in U.S. History Studies Since 1877 <sup>(c) (21)</sup>.</p>