



## Revisions to Texas Civics Education Are Redundant

IDRA Testimony against HB 2273, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas House Public Education Committee, April 18, 2023

Dear Chair Buckley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., and I am deputy director of policy at IDRA, an independent, non-partisan non-profit committed to achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

HB 2273 is redundant with existing Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and could cause greater confusion around teaching civics education and civic engagement. The attached table compares the proposed changes to the civics education TEKS with similar language already existing in social studies standards across elementary through required high school courses.

The substance of all proposed changes appears in the existing TEKS, except for the change in (h-2)(2)(D) that students' civic knowledge include the ability to "advocate effectively before governing bodies and officials." SB 3, passed in the 87(2), disallowed schools and teachers from "requiring, making part of a course, or awarding a grade or course credit, including extra credit" for a student's work with an organization to influence legislation at the local, state or federal levels, or engage with any organization engaged in social policy advocacy or public policy advocacy.

To support Texas students' civics education and engagement, IDRA recommends the following.

- Repeal restrictions to Texas students' civics education instituted by SB 3 (87, 2);
- Advance opportunities for students to engage in effective advocacy; and
- Revisit the TEKS once the State Board of Education conducts its social studies standards review, now slated for 2025.

For more information, please contact Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., at [chloe.sikes@idra.org](mailto:chloe.sikes@idra.org).

### Resources

Castillo, M., Craven, M., Gómez, & Latham Sikes, C. (2022). What Texas' Classroom Censorship Law Means for Students and Schools. IDRA. <https://idra.news/WhatTxSB3means>

Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 2, Chapter 113: Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies.

*IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization led by Celina Moreno, J.D. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by leading policy analyses and advocacy; dynamic teacher training and principal coaching; useful research, evaluation and frameworks for action; and innovative student, family and community engagement.*

HB 2273 Changes	Elementary School	Middle School	High School (U.S. Government & U.S. History)
<p><u>(h-1)(2) political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism, that conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy essential to the founding principles of the United States;</u></p>	<p>Exists in Social Studies TEKS</p> <p>K: “Understand democratic values of state and nation”</p> <p>Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5: “understand a constitutional republic,” “democratic values,” “understand the role of the U.S. free enterprise system... capitalism”</p>	<p>Exists in Social Studies TEKS</p> <p>Grade 6: “Identify and give examples of governments with rule by one, few or many; “compare ways in which various societies such as China, Germany, India and Russia organize government and how they function”</p> <p>Grades 7, 8: “Understand that a constitutional republic is a representative form of government whose representatives derive their authority from the consent of the governed”</p>	<p>U.S. Government</p> <p>Introduction: “Students learn major political ideas and forms of government in history.”</p> <p>“Students analyze major concepts of republicanism, federalism, checks and balances, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights and compare the U.S. system of government with other political systems”</p>
<p><u>(3) the student’s shared rights and responsibilities as a resident of this state;</u></p>	<p>Exists in Social Studies Citizenship TEKS Grades 1, 2, 3</p> <p>Grade 3: “Identify characteristics of good citizenship, including truthfulness, justice, equality, respect for oneself and others, responsibility in daily life, and participation in government... and voting”</p>	<p>Exists in Social Studies citizenship TEKS</p> <p>Grade 6: “The student understands the relationship among individual rights, responsibilities, duties and freedoms in societies with representative governments.”</p> <p>Grade 7: “explain rights of Texas citizens; and explain civic responsibilities of Texas citizens and the importance of civic participation.”</p>	<p>U.S. Government, citizenship TEKS: “explain the responsibilities, duties and obligations of citizenship”</p> <p>U.S. History: “explain how participation in the democratic process reflects our national identity, patriotism and civic responsibility”</p>
<p><u>(h-2)(1)(C) the civic-minded expectations of an upright and desirable citizenry that recognizes and accepts responsibility for preserving and defending the blessings of liberty inherited from prior generations and</u></p>	<p>Exists as Citizenship TEKS in Grades 1, 2, 3, 4.</p> <p>Grade 4: “Explain how individuals can participate voluntarily</p>	<p>Exists as Citizenship TEKS</p> <p>Grade 6, “Identify and explain the duty of civic participation in societies with</p>	<p>U.S. Government, Citizenship TEKS</p> <p>“A) analyze the effectiveness of various methods of participation in the political process at</p>

<p><u>secured by the U.S. Constitution;</u></p>	<p>in civic affairs at state and local levels”</p> <p>“Identify the importance of historical figures and important individuals who modeled active participation in the democratic process.”</p>	<p>representative governments.”</p> <p>Grade 7: “The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society... Identify the contributions of Texas leaders such as...”</p> <p>Grade 8: “Identify examples of responsible citizenship, including obeying rules and laws, staying informed on public issues, voting, and serving on juries.”</p>	<p>local, state, and national levels; (B) analyze historical and contemporary examples of citizen movements to bring about political change or to maintain continuity; and (C) describe the factors that influence an individual's political attitudes and actions.”</p> <p>U.S. History: “Describe how American values are different and unique from those of other nations.”</p>
<p><u>(D) advocate effectively before governing bodies and officials;</u></p>	<p>Not in the TEKS; prohibitions in SB 3 (87, 2)</p>	<p>Not in the TEKS; prohibitions in SB 3 (87, 2)</p>	<p>Not in the TEKS; prohibitions in SB 3 (87, 2)</p>
<p><u>(h-3) The State Board of Education shall adopt oral history resources to be used by school districts in instruction in the essential knowledge and skills adopted under Subsections (h-1) and (h-2) that provide portraits in patriotism based on the personal stories of diverse individuals who demonstrate civic-minded qualities, including first-person accounts of victims of other nations' governing philosophies who can compare those philosophies with the governing philosophies of the United States.</u></p>	<p>Exists in source materials</p> <p>Grade 1, 2: Use of primary sources.</p> <p>Grade 3: “Study the effects inspiring heroes have had on communities, past and present.”</p>	<p>Exists in source materials</p> <p>Grades 6, 7, 8: “Use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material”</p>	<p>Exists in source materials</p> <p>“Use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material”</p>

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