

Laws in Texas Teachers Need to Know About

In Texas, there are specific laws and guidelines that govern what can and cannot be discussed in classrooms, particularly regarding topics like race, sex, and gender. Here are some key laws and regulations:

1. House Bill 3979 (passed in 2021)

- **Critical Race Theory (CRT):** HB 3979 restricts the teaching of concepts related to CRT. It prohibits teachers from discussing that one race or sex is inherently superior to another or that an individual is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously, because of their race or sex.
- **Current Events:** The bill requires teachers who discuss current events or controversial issues to explore these topics from diverse perspectives, without promoting one viewpoint over another.
- **Civic Engagement:** The law prohibits schools from requiring or awarding course credit for political activism or lobbying.

2. Senate Bill 3 (passed in 2021)

- **Expansion of HB 3979:** SB 3 expands and clarifies the restrictions of HB 3979. It broadens the ban on CRT and includes additional restrictions on how topics related to race and sex can be taught in schools.
- **Instructional Materials:** Teachers are prohibited from using instructional materials that discuss any of the prohibited concepts listed in the bill.
- **Teacher Training:** The bill restricts school districts from requiring teachers to undergo training that includes concepts prohibited by the law.

3. Sex Education Laws

- **Texas Education Code, Section 28.004:**
 - **Parental Consent:** Schools must obtain written parental consent (opt-in) before a student can participate in sex education.
 - **Abstinence Emphasis:** The curriculum must emphasize abstinence as the preferred method of contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted infections.
 - **Limits on Content:** The curriculum may not promote homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle or depict sexual activity as normal or safe outside of marriage.

4. Religious Expression

- **Religious Neutrality:** Teachers and school districts must maintain religious neutrality, meaning they cannot promote or denigrate any particular religion.
- **Bible Courses:** Schools can offer elective courses on the Bible and its historical or literary significance, but they must be taught objectively and not promote any religious viewpoint.

5. Prohibited Content

- **Texas Penal Code, Section 43.24:**
 - **Obscenity and Harmful Materials:** It is illegal to distribute or exhibit obscene or harmful materials to minors, including in an educational setting.

These laws and guidelines shape what can be discussed in Texas classrooms, emphasizing neutrality on controversial topics and restricting discussions that could be seen as promoting specific political, racial, or sexual viewpoints.

In light of current discussions in the Texas legislature, be prepared for more laws to be passed having to do with these same topics or others that could be considered controversial.

More specific information can be found on the [TEA website](#).