



Arizona

Overall Rank

#2

Arizona ranks #2 overall in education freedom for the third year. The state again holds its #1 ranking in education choice and now leads the nation in teacher freedom.

Education Choice Rank

#1

Arizona ranks first for **education choice** for the third year in a row. Arizona does exceptionally well in empowering families to choose among private, charter, and district schools as well as other learning environments. Arizona offers K-12 education savings accounts (ESAs) that all families can use to customize the education of eligible students. Arizona also generally respects the autonomy of homeschool families.

Transparency Rank

#5

Arizona ranks fifth in **academic transparency**. Lawmakers adopted Arizona’s Parent Bill of Rights in 2010, but state officials have adopted additional protections for children and families since that time. On curriculum transparency, Arizona law¹ says, “Before a parent provides written permission for the parent’s child to participate in any sex education curricula, the school district or charter school shall make the sex education curricula available for the parent’s review online.”

Teacher Freedom Rank

#1

Arizona leads the nation in **teacher freedom**, coming in at first place in 2024. Although only about 11 percent of teachers are alternatively certified, the state allows full teacher licensure reciprocity with other states. Educators in Arizona are also not required to take the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. Approximately 20 percent of Arizona school districts employ a “chief diversity officer.” The Grand Canyon State does not use standardized Common Core-aligned tests. Arizona can do even better and maintain its leadership in teacher freedom by increasing the number of teachers who are alternatively certified or by removing certification barriers entirely, and by limiting future growth in administrative staff, such as chief diversity officers in schools.

Return on Investment Rank

#13

Arizona ranks 13th for **return on investment (ROI)** in education spending. Arizona spends the 49th-most per pupil among states, spending \$12,032 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. However, Arizona ranks 32nd in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Grand Canyon State employs 1.75 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Arizona’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 5.9 percent of its state GDP. Arizona can improve its ROI ranking by continuing to make progress on academic achievement on the NAEP, stopping growth in non-teaching staff, and lowering its unfunded teacher liabilities.

Arizona: One-Year Rank Changes (2023–2024)

| OVERALL | EDUCATION CHOICE | TRANSPARENCY | TEACHER FREEDOM | RETURN ON INVESTMENT |
|---------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 0 | 0 | ▼ 1 | ▲ 4 | ▼ 1 |

NOTE:

1. <https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/55leg/1R/laws/0415.pdf>