



# District of Columbia

## Overall Rank #37

The District of Columbia ranks #37 in overall education freedom and remains near the bottom in transparency and return on investment.

## Education Choice Rank #23

Washington, DC, ranks 23rd for **education choice**, down three spots since 2023. DC does well in empowering families to choose among private and charter schools but could do more to expand education choice. Congress could improve the District's ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy, expanding eligibility for and boosting participation in the Opportunity Scholarship Program, and eliminating unnecessary regulations on participating private schools, including the standardized test mandate and interference with schools' admissions standards. Policymakers could also improve the ranking by removing excessive regulations on homeschooling families, and giving families more choices among traditional public schools beyond their assigned school.

## Transparency Rank #48

Washington, DC, ranks 48th in **academic transparency**. Federal lawmakers have not enacted proposals to reject the application of critical race theory in K-12 schools, nor have they adopted proposals to make K-12 curricular materials more transparent to families and taxpayers. In 2021, Representative Glenn Grothman (R-WI) introduced a proposal<sup>1</sup> that would have protected teachers and students in the District of Columbia from critical race theory's racial bias, but the proposal did not advance.

## Teacher Freedom Rank #29

The nation's capital ranks 29th in **teacher freedom**. Although DC has the highest number of alternatively certified teachers in the country, with 87 percent of teachers entering the classroom through alternative certification, the District's rankings fall on other measures of teacher freedom. Although DC has teacher licensure reciprocity, it only applies to initial certification (valid for three years), at which point teachers must complete DC-specific requirements. Educators in DC are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. The District has but one school district—District of Columbia Public Schools—which has a “chief diversity officer.” However, the District now no longer uses Common Core-aligned assessments. Washington, DC, can improve teacher freedom by stopping the growth in non-teaching personnel, such as chief diversity officers, allowing full teacher licensure reciprocity or ending certification requirements altogether, and eliminating the Praxis requirement.

## Return on Investment Rank #48

Washington, DC, ranks 48th in **return on investment (ROI)** for education spending. DC spends the most per pupil, outpacing all states, spending \$28,858 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. DC ranks 49th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score, tied with West Virginia. The nation's capital employs 1.40 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. DC's unfunded teacher pension liability represents zero percent of its GDP. The District can improve its ROI ranking by lowering per-pupil spending, improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, and stopping growth in non-teaching staff.

### District of Columbia: One-Year Rank Changes (2023–2024)

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 3	▼ 3	▲ 2	▲ 17	0

**NOTE:**

1. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2021/06/16/protect-dc-students-from-critical-race-theorys-racial-bias-congressman-says/>