



Florida

Overall Rank

#1

Florida ranks #1 in overall education freedom for the third year in a row. The state also ranks #1 in transparency.

Education Choice Rank

#2

Florida ranks second for **education choice**. Florida does exceptionally well in empowering families to choose among private, charter, and district schools, as well as other learning environments. Florida offers K-12 education savings accounts (ESAs) that all families can use to customize the education of eligible students. Additionally, Florida generally respects the autonomy of homeschooling families.

Transparency Rank

#1

Florida ranks first in **academic transparency**. Florida lawmakers set a high standard for academic transparency and rejected critical race theory's pernicious ideas in 2022. State officials approved a proposal that prohibits students from being compelled to affirm the prejudiced ideas that critical race theory teaches. Lawmakers also approved a proposal¹ that requires academic transparency so that parents and taxpayers can review classroom assignments before educators use them as part of K-12 instruction. Florida lawmakers have also adopted a parental bill of rights.² State legislators have also adopted a law that³ says that "an employee, contractor, or student of a public K-12 educational institution may not be required...to refer to another person using that person's preferred personal title or pronouns if such personal title or pronouns do not correspond to that person's sex."

Teacher Freedom Rank

#2

The Sunshine State ranks second in **teacher freedom**, making it one of the freest states for teachers and students to pursue education largely devoid of red tape. An impressive 49 percent of Florida teachers are alternatively certified, making their way to the K-12 classroom through a means other than a traditional university-based college of education. The state has full reciprocity of teacher licensure, allowing anyone with a valid teaching license from another state to teach in Florida, or anyone who holds a certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Educators in Florida are also not required to take the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. Florida does not use Common Core-aligned tests. Despite its number one rank, the Sunshine State has some room for improvement. Fifty-one percent of its school districts with more than 15,000 students employ a "chief diversity officer." Florida can demonstrate even more leadership in teacher freedom by limiting growth in non-teaching staff, such as chief diversity officers, and continuing to embrace alternative routes for teachers to the K-12 classroom, or by ending certification requirements altogether.

Return on Investment Rank

#8

Florida ranks eighth in **return on investment (ROI)** for education spending. Florida spends the 48th-most (meaning the third-least) per pupil among states, spending \$12,108 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Florida is tied with Colorado and Idaho for ninth place in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Sunshine State employs 1.98 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Florida's unfunded teacher pension liability represents 2.9 percent of its state GDP. Florida can improve its ROI ranking by limiting growth in non-teaching staff and continuing to lower its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

Florida: One-Year Rank Changes (2023-2024)

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

NOTES:

- <https://www.flgov.com/2022/03/25/governor-ron-desantis-signs-bill-that-requires-curriculum-transparency/>
- <https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=70313>
- <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2023/1069/BillText/er/PDF>