



Georgia

Overall Rank

#9

Georgia moves up to #9 in overall education freedom, entering the top 10 from its #12 rank in 2023. The state's education choice and return on investment rankings increased from 2023.

Education Choice Rank

#13

Georgia ranks 13th for **education choice**, up three spots since 2023 due in large part to its enactment of a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy this year. Georgia does exceptionally well in empowering families to choose among private and charter schools but could do more to expand education choice. Georgia generally respects the autonomy of homeschooling families. Georgia could improve its ranking by boosting participation in its existing private education choice policies, funding ESAs via the state education funding formula, making it easier for more charter schools to open and operate, and giving families more choices among traditional public schools beyond their assigned school.

Transparency Rank

#16

Georgia ranks 16th in **academic transparency**. In 2022, Georgia lawmakers adopted a proposal that rejects the application of racist ideas from critical race theory in K-12 schools. The proposal says:¹ “Each local board of education, local school superintendent, and the governing body of each charter school shall prohibit employees from discriminating against students and other employees based on race.” The proposal also contains a provision that says that nothing in the proposal prohibits “the full and rigorous implementation of curricula, or elements of a curriculum, that are required as part of advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or dual enrollment coursework; provided, however, that such implementation is done in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs.” Georgia lawmakers also passed a parental bill of rights² in 2022. In 2024, Georgia lawmakers introduced a proposal³ that increases the transparency of sex education instruction for state families: Parents would be allowed to review all class materials related to sexual orientation or gender identity instruction. The proposal also states, “No school nurse, counselor, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel shall knowingly: (1) Encourage or coerce a student under the age of 18 years to withhold from his or her parent or legal guardian that his or her perception of his or her gender is inconsistent with his or her sex; or (2) Withhold from the parent or legal guardian of a student under the age of 18 years information related to his or her perception that his or her gender is inconsistent with his or her sex.” The proposal did not advance.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#13

Georgia ranks 13th in terms of **teacher freedom**. Just 21 percent of its teachers are alternatively certified, and the Peach State does not allow full reciprocity of teacher licenses. Educators in Georgia are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. However, a relatively low 22 percent of its school districts with more than 15,000 students have a “chief diversity officer.” The state does not use Common Core-aligned tests. Georgia can improve its teacher freedom score by significantly increasing the number of teachers who are alternatively certified, enabling aspiring educators to enter the classroom via a route other than a university-based college of education, or by ending certification requirements altogether. Georgia should also embrace full reciprocity of teacher licenses with other states and should eliminate the Praxis test requirement.

NOTES:

1. <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/61477>
2. <https://www.legis.ga.gov/api/legislation/document/20212022/204930>
3. <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66338>

Return on Investment Rank

#12

Georgia ranks 12th in **return on investment (ROI)** for education spending. Georgia spends the 39th-most per pupil among states, spending \$14,173 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Georgia ranks 25th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Peach State employs 2.71 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Georgia's unfunded teacher pension liability represents 5.3 percent of its state GDP. Georgia can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic achievement in math and reading on the NAEP and by lowering its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 3	▲ 3	▼ 3	▲ 1	▲ 3