



Missouri

Overall Rank

#17

Missouri ranks #17 in education freedom. While the state ranks #5 in teacher freedom, it ranks #46 in transparency.

Education Choice Rank

#11

Missouri ranks 11th for **education choice**. Missouri does well in empowering families to choose among private, charter, and district schools, as well as other learning environments, but could do more to expand education choice. Additionally, Missouri offers K-12 education savings accounts (ESAs) that families can use to customize the education of eligible students and respects the autonomy of homeschooling families. Missouri could improve its ranking by expanding eligibility for and boosting participation in its K-12 ESAs, 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

#46

Missouri ranks 46th in **academic transparency**. Missouri lawmakers have not adopted proposals to increase academic transparency, to create a parental bill of rights, or to reject the prejudice caused by the application of critical race theory in schools.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#5

Missouri ranks fifth in **teacher freedom**. Twenty percent of the state’s teachers are alternatively certified, enjoying alternative pathways to the K-12 classroom. Missouri also allows full reciprocity of teacher licensure and does not use Common Core-aligned tests. However, educators in Missouri are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service, and 46 percent of its school districts with more than 15,000 students employ a “chief diversity officer.” The Show-Me State can improve its teacher freedom ranking by stopping the growth in non-teaching staff, particularly chief diversity officers. And it should eliminate the Praxis mandate and continue to foster alternative pathways to the K-12 classroom or eliminate teacher certification requirements altogether so that more aspiring teachers have options for entering the profession.

Return on Investment Rank

#16

Missouri ranks 16th in **return on investment (ROI)** for education spending. Missouri spends the 35th-most per pupil among states, spending \$14,942 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Missouri ranks 36th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Show-Me State employs 3.07 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Missouri’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 4.6 percent of its state GDP. Missouri can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic outcomes on the NAEP and lowering its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▼ 2	0	0	▲ 2	▲ 1