



Mississippi

Overall Rank #11

Mississippi drops to #11 in overall education freedom. The state has dropped slightly in education choice and teacher freedom rankings.

Education Choice Rank #15

Mississippi ranks 15th for **education choice**, down two spots since 2023. Mississippi does well in empowering families to choose among private and district schools but could do more to expand education choice. Additionally, Mississippi offers K-12 education savings accounts (ESAs) that families can use to customize the education of eligible students and generally respects the autonomy of homeschooling families. Mississippi could improve its ranking by expanding eligibility for and boosting participation in its existing private education choice policies, 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 #32

Mississippi ranks 32nd in **academic transparency**. In 2022, Mississippi lawmakers adopted a proposal¹ that rejects the application of critical race theory, an ideology that advocates racial discrimination, in K-12 schools. The proposal says that no public school shall “direct or otherwise compel students to personally affirm, adopt or adhere” to ideas or concepts that would violate state or federal civil rights laws.

Teacher Freedom Rank #4

Mississippi ranks fourth for **teacher freedom**. A solid 54 percent of teachers in the state found their way to the classroom through alternative teacher certification options and Mississippi has full reciprocity of teacher licensure with other states. Educators in Mississippi are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. No school district in the Magnolia State employs a “chief diversity officer,” and Mississippi does not use Common Core-aligned assessments. Mississippi can maintain its high teacher freedom ranking score by continuing to foster alternative pathways to the classroom for aspiring teachers or by eliminating teacher certification requirements altogether, and by eliminating the requirement for prospective teachers to take the Praxis exam.

Return on Investment Rank #18

Mississippi ranks 18th in **return on investment (ROI)** for education spending. Mississippi spends the 42nd most (meaning the ninth-least) per pupil among states, spending \$13,677 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Mississippi ranks 39th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Magnolia State employs 2.25 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Mississippi’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 14.8 percent of its state GDP. Mississippi can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, stopping growth in non-teaching staff, and addressing its significant unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▼ 5	▼ 2	▼ 1	▼ 3	▼ 2

NOTE:

1. <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2022/html/SB/2100-2199/SB2113CS.htm>