



Oklahoma

Overall Rank

#13

Oklahoma dropped three spots to #13 in overall education freedom this year, with minor changes in each category.

Education Choice Rank

#7

Oklahoma ranks seventh for **education choice**, down two spots since 2023. Oklahoma does exceptionally well in empowering families to choose among private, charter, and district schools, as well as other learning environments, especially since it enacted a refundable personal-use tax credit that all families can use for education expenses. Additionally, Oklahoma respects the autonomy of homeschooling families. Oklahoma could improve its ranking by giving families more choices among traditional public schools beyond their assigned school.

Transparency Rank

#41

Oklahoma ranks 41st in **academic transparency**. In 2021, Oklahoma lawmakers adopted a proposal¹ that rejects the application of critical race theory in K-12 classrooms, but this proposal also bans the discussion of certain ideas and materials in schools. Such provisions can create confusion among educators and students and should be replaced with provisions that state that no teacher or student shall be compelled to affirm any idea that violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Oklahoma officials have adopted a parental bill of rights. State law² includes provisions that state:

All parental rights are reserved to a parent of a minor child without obstruction or interference from this state, any political subdivision of this state, any other governmental entity or any other institution, including, but not limited to, the following rights:
1. The right to direct the education of the minor child... 3. The right to direct the upbringing of the minor child; 4. The right to direct the moral or religious training of the minor child; 5. The right to make healthcare decisions for the minor child, unless otherwise prohibited by law...

Teacher Freedom Rank

#6

Oklahoma ranks sixth for **teacher freedom**. Although no teachers made their way to the classroom through alternative teacher certification options, the state does have full reciprocity of teacher licensure. Educators in Oklahoma are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. Fifty percent of school districts with more than 15,000 students employ “chief diversity officers,” but the state does not use Common Core-aligned tests. The Sooner State can improve its teacher freedom score by eliminating the Praxis requirement and allowing aspiring teachers to enter the K-12 classroom without having to go through university-based colleges of education or by eliminating teacher certification altogether. Oklahoma should also stop the growth of non-teaching staff, particularly of chief diversity officers.

Return on Investment Rank

#27

Oklahoma ranks 27th in **return on investment (ROI)** in education spending. Oklahoma spends the 45th-most (meaning the sixth-least) per pupil, spending \$12,715 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Oklahoma ranks 47th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Sooner State employs 2.10 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Oklahoma’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 4.4 percent of its state GDP. Oklahoma can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, stopping growth in non-teaching staff, and limiting its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

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

NOTES:

- http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2021-22%20ENR/hB/HB1775%20ENR.PDF
- <https://oksenate.gov/sites/default/files/2019-12/os25.pdf>