



Pennsylvania

Overall Rank

#29

Pennsylvania ranks #29 in overall education freedom but #37 in return on investment. The state ranks middle of the pack in education choice (#26) and transparency (#24).

Education Choice Rank

#26

Pennsylvania ranks 26th for **education choice**, down five spots since 2023. Pennsylvania does fairly well in empowering families to choose among private and charter schools but could do more to expand education choice. Pennsylvania could improve its ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy, expanding eligibility for and boosting participation in its private education choice policies, making it easier for more charter schools to open and operate, removing excessive regulations on homeschool families, and giving families more choices among traditional public schools beyond their assigned school.

Transparency Rank

#24

Pennsylvania ranks 24th in **academic transparency**. Pennsylvania law¹ requires school district officials to adopt policies that allow parents to view school curricula, though the provision should be expanded to include taxpayers, policymakers, and voters. State officials have not adopted a proposal that rejects the application of critical race theory’s prejudice through compelled speech, nor have lawmakers approved a parental bill of rights.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#30

Pennsylvania ranks 30th for **teacher freedom**. Just 8 percent of teachers in the Keystone State made it to the classroom through alternative teacher certification routes, largely relying instead on university-based colleges of education. Pennsylvania does not have full reciprocity of teacher licensure with other states. Educators in Pennsylvania are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. Eighty percent of school districts in the state with more than 15,000 students employ a “chief diversity officer.” Pennsylvania does not use Common Core-aligned tests. To improve its teacher freedom score, Pennsylvania should enable aspiring teachers to enter the K-12 classroom through more alternative certification routes or eliminate teacher certification requirements altogether, and policymakers should allow full reciprocity of teacher licensure. Pennsylvania should also eliminate the Praxis mandate and stop the growth in non-teacher staff, including chief diversity officers.

Return on Investment Rank

#37

Pennsylvania ranks 37th in **return on investment (ROI)** in education spending. Pennsylvania spends the ninth-most per pupil among states, spending \$20,615 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Pennsylvania ranks 21st in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Keystone State employs 2.72 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Pennsylvania’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 7.7 percent of its state GDP. To improve its ROI rank, Pennsylvania should reduce per-pupil spending, improve academic outcomes on the NAEP, and address its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 1	▼ 5	0	▲ 4	▲ 5

NOTE:

1. <http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/022/chapter4/s4.4.html&d=reduce>