



# Rhode Island

## Overall Rank

#42

Rhode Island ranks #42 in overall education freedom, up seven spots from 2023. The state ranks last in transparency.

## Education Choice Rank

#38

Rhode Island ranks 38th for **education choice**. Rhode Island does fairly well in empowering families to choose among private and charter schools but could do more to expand education choice. Rhode Island could improve its ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy, expanding eligibility for and boosting participation in its existing private education choice policy, making it easier for more charter schools to open and operate, removing excessive regulations on homeschooling families, and giving families more choices among traditional public schools beyond their assigned school.

## Transparency Rank

#51

Rhode Island ranks 51st in **academic transparency**. Rhode Island lawmakers have neither adopted proposals that reject the prejudice caused by the application of critical race theory in schools nor addressed the threats to minors from the teaching of “gender” in place of biological sex. State officials should consider such proposals along with provisions that increase academic transparency.

## Teacher Freedom Rank

#35

Rhode Island ranks 35th in **teacher freedom**. Only one school district (Providence) enrolls more than 15,000 students, and that school district employs a “chief diversity officer.” Rhode Island does not use Common Core-aligned assessments. Just 6 percent of Rhode Island teachers made their way to the K-12 classroom through alternative certification routes, and the state does not have full reciprocity of teacher licensure with other states. Educators in Rhode Island are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. In order to improve its teacher freedom score, the Ocean State should allow more aspiring teachers to enter the K-12 classroom through alternative certification options or eliminate teacher certification altogether, allow reciprocity of teacher licensure with other states, and eliminate the Praxis test mandate.

## Return on Investment Rank

#36

Rhode Island ranks 36th in **return on investment (ROI)** in education spending. Rhode Island spends the 14th-most per pupil among states, spending \$19,289 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Rhode Island ranks 28th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Ocean State employs 2.11 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Rhode Island’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 7 percent of its state GDP. Rhode Island can improve its ROI ranking by lowering per-pupil spending, improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, and addressing its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

### Rhode Island: One-Year Rank Changes (2023–2024)

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 7	0	0	▲ 13	▼ 8