



Texas

Overall Rank

#15

Texas falls to #15 overall for education freedom after holding the #8 spot the previous year. Texas ranks in the top five for transparency and return on investment but is ranked #31 for education choice.

Education Choice Rank

#31

Texas ranks 31st for **education choice**, down one spot since 2023. Texas does fairly well in empowering families to choose among charter schools but could do much more to expand education choice. Texas respects the autonomy of homeschool families. Texas could improve its ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy, 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

#3

Texas ranks third in **academic transparency**. Texas lawmakers have adopted a proposal¹ that specifies that certain content should be taught in K-12 classrooms, including the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, and other writings of the Founding Fathers. The provision should be more specific and reject educators' application of critical race theory in K-12 schools by prohibiting compelled speech. State officials should also make academic content more transparent to parents and taxpayers. Texas lawmakers have improved academic transparency by adopting a proposal² saying that parents have the option to receive written notice of the material that their child obtains from the school library. Texas lawmakers have also adopted a parental bill of rights. Texas law³ says: "A state agency may not adopt rules or policies or take any other action that violates the fundamental right and duty of a parent to direct the upbringing of the parent's child."

Teacher Freedom Rank

#11

Texas ranks 11th in **teacher freedom**. An impressive 51 percent of teachers in the Lone Star State made their way to the classroom through alternative certification routes, bypassing traditional university-based colleges of education. However, Texas does not have full reciprocity of teacher licensure with other states. Educators in Texas are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. Approximately 25 percent of school districts with more than 15,000 students employ a "chief diversity officer." The state does not use prescriptive Common Core-aligned tests. Texas can further improve its standing in teacher freedom by allowing full reciprocity of teacher licensure or by eliminating teacher certification requirements altogether, and by ending the Praxis test mandate.

Return on Investment Rank

#5

Texas ranks fifth in **return on investment (ROI)** for education spending. Texas spends the 40th-most (meaning the 11th-least) per pupil, spending \$14,123 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Texas ranks 27th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Lone Star State employs 2.48 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Texas's unfunded teacher pension liability represents 4.0 percent of its state GDP. Texas can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, stopping growth in non-teaching staff, and addressing its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▼ 7	▼ 1	0	▼ 5	▲ 6

NOTES:

- <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/87R/billtext/pdf/HB039791.pdf>
- <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/88R/billtext/html/SB004201.htm>
- <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/FA/htm/FA.151.htm#:~:text=151.003,.upbringing%20of%20the%20parent>