



West Virginia

Overall Rank

#12

West Virginia ranks #12 in overall education freedom, rising eight spots from 2023. The state ranks #6 in education choice. The state has an average ranking for transparency (#26) and a below-average ranking for return on investment (#34).

Education Choice Rank

#6

West Virginia ranks sixth for **education choice**, up one spot since 2023. West Virginia does exceptionally well in empowering families to choose among private schools, as well as other learning environments. West Virginia offers K-12 education savings accounts (ESAs) that families can use to customize the education of eligible students. West Virginia could improve its ranking by boosting participation in its 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

#27

West Virginia ranks 27th in **academic transparency**. In 2023, West Virginia lawmakers adopted a proposal¹ that requires public school officials to post class curriculum on the school’s website at the beginning of each school year or no later than 30 business days after the new or revised curriculum is adopted. The proposal is limited because only students, parents, or guardians can view the curriculum. Lawmakers should allow all taxpayers and policymakers to view public school curricula and require educators to post additional worksheets and other assignments online. In 2024, West Virginia lawmakers considered a proposal² that contains provisions similar to those of The Heritage Foundation’s Given Name Act but the proposal did not advance. State lawmakers also considered a proposal³ declaring that parents have the “liberty” to “direct the upbringing, education, and care, including medical care, of the parent’s child,” but this proposal also did not succeed.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#19

West Virginia ranks 19th in **teacher freedom**. Just 8 percent of teachers in the Mountain State made their way to the K-12 classroom through alternative teacher certification routes, largely attending university-based colleges of education instead. West Virginia also does not have full reciprocity of teacher licensure with other states. Educators in West Virginia are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. Fifty percent of the state’s school districts enrolling more than 15,000 students employ a “chief diversity officer.” West Virginia does not use prescriptive Common Core-aligned tests. West Virginia can improve its teacher freedom score by eliminating the Praxis test requirement, enabling more aspiring teachers to make their way to the K-12 classroom through alternative teacher certification routes and allowing full reciprocity of teacher licensure or by eliminating teacher certification requirements altogether. The state should also stop the growth in non-teaching personnel, such as chief diversity officers.

Return on Investment Rank

#31

West Virginia ranks 31st in **return on investment (ROI)** for education spending. West Virginia spends the 26th-most per pupil among states, spending \$16,032 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. West Virginia is tied with Washington, DC, ranking 49th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Mountain State employs 2.73 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. West Virginia’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 2.8 percent of its state GDP. West Virginia can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic outcomes on the NAEP and addressing its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

West Virginia: One-Year Rank Changes (2023–2024)

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 8	▲ 1	0	▲ 8	▲ 3

NOTES:

- https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_history.cfm?INPUT=422&year=2023&sessiontype=RS
- https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_history.cfm?INPUT=5442&year=2024&sessiontype=RS
- https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb4313%20intr.htm&yr=2024&sesstype=RS&j=4313