



Arizona

Overall Rank

#2

Arizona ranks #2 overall in education freedom for the second year. The state again holds its #1 ranking in education choice, along with top-ten ranks in teacher freedom and transparency.

Education Choice Rank

#1

For the second year in a row, Arizona ranks #1 for education choice. Arizona does exceptionally well in giving families the freedom to choose among private, charter, and district schools as well as other learning environments. Arizona offers K-12 education savings accounts (ESAs) that all families can use to customize the education of eligible students. Arizona also generally respects the autonomy of homeschooling families.

Transparency Rank

#4

In 2022, Arizona lawmakers considered¹ proposals² to improve academic transparency and reject critical race theory, but lawmakers did not adopt proposals that would have advanced these policies. However, Arizona already has a modest provision³ in state law requiring school district boards to create processes that allow parents to review curricular materials.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#5

Arizona ranks fifth in teacher freedom. Although only about 9 percent of teachers are alternatively certified, the state allows full teacher licensure reciprocity with other states. Approximately 20 percent of Arizona school districts employ a “chief diversity officer.” The Grand Canyon State does not use standardized Common Core-aligned tests. Arizona can do even better in teacher freedom by increasing the number of teachers who are alternatively certified or by removing certification barriers entirely, and should limit future growth in administrative staff, such as chief diversity officers in schools.

Return on Investment Rank

#12

Arizona ranks 12th overall for return on investment (ROI) in education spending. Arizona spends the 49th-most per pupil among states, spending \$10,835 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. However, Arizona ranks 32nd in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Grand Canyon State employs 0.84 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Arizona’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 8.3 percent of its state GDP. Arizona can improve its ROI ranking by continuing to make progress on academic achievement on the NAEP, stopping growth in non-teaching staff, and lowering its unfunded teacher liabilities.

Arizona: One-Year Rank Changes (2022–2023)

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

NOTES:

- <https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/55leg/2R/bills/SB1211S.pdf>
- <https://apps.azleg.gov/billStatus/BillOverview/76477>
- https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/55leg/1R/summary/S.1058ED_ASPASSED_COW.pdf