



District of Columbia

Overall Rank

#40

The District of Columbia ranks #40 in overall education freedom and remains near the bottom in teacher freedom, transparency, and return on investment.

Education Choice Rank

#20

Washington, DC, ranks #20 for education choice. The District does well in allowing families to choose among private schools and charter schools, but could do more to expand education choice. Congress could improve DC's ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy, expanding eligibility for, and boosting participation in, the Opportunity Scholarship Program, and eliminating unnecessary regulations on participating private schools, including the standardized-test mandate and interference with schools' admissions standards. Policymakers could also improve the ranking by removing excessive regulations on homeschooling families, and giving families a choice of traditional public schools beyond their assigned school.

Transparency Rank

#50

Federal lawmakers have not enacted proposals to reject the application of critical race theory in K-12 schools, nor have they adopted proposals to make K-12 curricular materials more transparent to families and taxpayers. In 2021, Representative Glenn Grothman (R-WI) introduced a proposal¹ that would have protected teachers and students in the District of Columbia from critical race theory's bias, but the proposal did not advance.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#46

The nation's capital ranks 46th on this report card in terms of teacher freedom. Although Washington, DC, has the highest number of alternatively certified teachers in the country, with 87 percent of teachers entering the classroom through alternative certification, the District's rankings fall on other measures of teacher freedom. Although DC has teacher licensure reciprocity, it only applies to initial certification (valid for three years), at which point teachers must complete DC-specific requirements. The District has but one school district—District of Columbia Public Schools—which has a “chief diversity officer.” The District also still uses Common Core-aligned assessments. Washington, DC, can improve teacher freedom by ending its use of Common Core tests, stopping the growth in non-teaching personnel, such as chief diversity officers, and allowing full teacher licensure reciprocity, or ending certification requirements altogether.

Return on Investment Rank

#48

Washington, DC, ranks 48th overall in return on investment (ROI) for education spending. DC spends the most per pupil, outpacing all states, spending \$26,894 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. DC ranks 49th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score, tied with West Virginia. The nation's capital employs 0.81 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. DC's unfunded teacher pension liability represents -0.3 percent of its GDP. The District can improve its ROI ranking by lowering per-pupil spending, improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, and stopping growth in non-teaching staff.

District of Columbia: One-Year Rank Changes (2022–2023)

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 11	▲ 5	0	▼ 5	▲ 1

NOTE:

1. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2021/06/16/protect-dc-students-from-critical-race-theorys-racial-bias-congressman-says/>