



Georgia

Overall Rank

#12

Georgia moves up slightly in overall education freedom and is currently ranked #12. The state’s school choice ranking declined slightly compared to last year.

Education Choice Rank

#16

Georgia ranks #16 for education choice, down two spots since last year, as lawmakers in other states expanded education choice options in 2023, while officials in Georgia did not. Georgia does exceptionally well in giving families the freedom to choose among private schools and charter schools, but could do more to expand education choice. Georgia generally respects the autonomy of homeschooling families. Georgia could improve its ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy, boosting participation in its existing private education choice policies, making it easier for charter schools to open and operate, and giving families a choice of traditional public schools beyond their assigned school.

Transparency Rank

#13

In 2022, Georgia lawmakers adopted a proposal that rejects the application of racist ideas from critical race theory in K-12 schools. The proposal¹ says: “Each local board of education, local school superintendent, and the governing body of each charter school shall prohibit employees from discriminating against students and other employees based on race.” The proposal also contains a provision that says that nothing in the proposal prohibits “the full and rigorous implementation of curricula, or elements of a curriculum, that are required as part of advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or dual enrollment coursework; provided, however, that such implementation is done in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs.” Georgia lawmakers also approved a parent bill of rights² in 2022.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#14

Georgia ranks 14th in terms of teacher freedom. Just 21 percent of its teachers are alternatively certified, and the Peach State does not allow full reciprocity of teacher licenses. However, a relatively low 18 percent of its school districts with more than 15,000 students have a “chief diversity officer.” The state does not use Common Core-aligned tests. Georgia can improve its teacher freedom score by significantly increasing the number of teachers who are alternatively certified, enabling aspiring educators to enter the classroom via a route other than a university-based college of education, or by ending certification requirements altogether. Georgia should also embrace full reciprocity of teacher licenses with other states.

Return on Investment Rank

#15

Georgia ranks 15th overall in return on investment (ROI) for education spending. Georgia spends the 39th-most per pupil among states, spending \$13,100 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Georgia ranks 25th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Peach State employs 0.99 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Georgia’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 4.6 percent of its state GDP. Georgia can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic achievement in math and reading on the NAEP and by lowering its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

Georgia: One-Year Rank Changes (2022-2023)

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 2	▼ 2	▲ 7	0	0

NOTES:

- <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/61477>
- <https://www.legis.ga.gov/api/legislation/document/20212022/204930>