



Hawaii

Overall Rank

#33

Hawaii ranks #33 in overall education freedom but last in education choice. The state ranks in the top 10 in teacher freedom but ranks below average in transparency.

Education Choice Rank

#51

Hawaii ranks #51 for education choice, the same as last year. Hawaii could improve its ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy, making it easier for charter schools to open and operate, removing excessive regulations on homeschooling families, and giving families a choice of traditional public schools beyond their assigned school.

Transparency Rank

#32

Hawaii lawmakers have not adopted proposals to increase academic transparency, create a parent bill of rights, or reject the prejudice caused by the application of critical race theory in schools.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#3

Hawaii says “aloha” to teacher freedom, ranking third among states on this metric. Almost three-fourths (72 percent) of its teachers are alternatively certified, and the state allows full reciprocity of teacher licensure. However, Hawaii still uses Common Core-aligned tests. And while no school districts employ a “chief diversity officer,” Hawaii is unique among states with a single school district. Hawaii can improve its teacher freedom score by continuing to increase the number of aspiring teachers who have access to alternative teacher certification, or ending certification requirements altogether, and by ending its participation in Common Core assessments.

Return on Investment Rank

#21

Hawaii ranks 21st overall in return on investment (ROI) for education spending. Hawaii spends the 23rd-most per pupil among states, spending \$15,566 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Hawaii ranks 24th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Aloha State employs 1.10 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Hawaii’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 17 percent of its state GDP. Hawaii can improve its ROI ranking by limiting increases in per-pupil spending, improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, and addressing its significant unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 8	0	▼ 17	▲ 1	▲ 18