



Idaho

Overall Rank

#11

Idaho drops out of the top ten in overall education freedom and is now ranked #11. The state's rank was pulled down because other states have far outpaced Idaho in education choice.

Education Choice Rank

#29

Idaho ranks #29 for education choice, down nine spots from 2022, as lawmakers in other states expanded education choice options in 2023, while officials in Idaho did not. Idaho does well in allowing families the freedom to choose among charter schools and district schools, but could do much more to expand private education choice. Idaho respects the autonomy of homeschooling families. Idaho could improve its ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy and making it easier for charter schools to open and operate.

Transparency Rank

#8

In 2021, Idaho lawmakers enacted House Bill No. 377¹, which says: “No public institution of higher education, school district, or public school, including a public charter school, shall direct or otherwise compel students to personally affirm, adopt, or adhere” to ideas that violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or otherwise say that individuals of certain ethnicities are responsible for actions committed by other people of the same ethnicity or background throughout history. This prohibition on compelled speech protects students from being forced to believe ideas that violate their conscience, such as the false notion in critical race theory that America is irredeemably racist. Idaho lawmakers should consider proposals that address the threats to minor-age children from the teaching of “gender” in place of biological sex.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#23

Idaho performs in the middle in terms of teacher freedom, ranking 23rd among states. Although 46 percent of the state's teachers are alternatively certified, the Gem State does not allow full reciprocity of teacher licensure. And while no school district with more than 15,000 students employs a “chief diversity office,” the figure reflects in part the fact that only four school districts of 115 have more than 15,000 students. Idaho also still uses Common Core-aligned tests. The state can improve its teacher freedom score by exiting the Common Core tests, continuing the growth of the number of pathways to the K-12 classroom available to aspiring teachers, or ending certification requirements altogether, and allowing full reciprocity of teacher licensure.

Return on Investment Rank

#1

Idaho ranks first in the nation overall in return on investment for education spending. Idaho spends the least per pupil among all states, spending \$10,161 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Idaho is tied for ninth place with Colorado and Florida in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Gem State employs 1.35 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Idaho's unfunded teacher pension liability represents 2.8 percent of its state GDP. Idaho can maintain its first-place standing by continuing to improve academic outcomes on the NAEP and further lowering its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▼ 8	▼ 9	▼ 4	▼ 2	0

NOTE:

1. <https://legislature.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sessioninfo/2021/legislation/H0377.pdf>