



Kansas

Overall Rank

#31

Kansas remains in the middle of the pack in overall education freedom and is currently ranked #31. The state ranks near the bottom in teacher freedom.

Education Choice Rank

#23

Kansas ranks #23 for education choice. Kansas does fairly well in allowing families to choose among private schools and district schools, but could do more to expand education choice. Kansas generally respects the autonomy of homeschooling families. Kansas could improve its ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy, expanding eligibility for and boosting participation in its private education choice policy, 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

#35

In 2013, lawmakers adopted a parent bill of rights¹ that says that it is “the fundamental right of every parent to control the care and custody of such parent’s minor children, including, but not limited to, control over education, discipline, religious and moral instruction, health, medical care, welfare,” and more. Lawmakers have not adopted proposals to make K-12 academic content more transparent to taxpayers and families, nor have policymakers rejected the application of critical race theory in schools.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#41

The Sunflower State ranks low in terms of teacher freedom, ranking 41st among states. Although Kansas does not use Common Core-aligned tests, that is where the good news ends. Just 24 percent of its teachers are alternatively certified, and the state does not allow full reciprocity of teacher licensure. While all school districts with more than 15,000 students employ a “chief diversity officer,” only five school districts in the state enroll that many students. Kansas can improve its teacher freedom score further by significantly increasing the number of aspiring teachers who have alternative routes into the K-12 classroom, or ending certification requirements altogether, and by allowing full reciprocity of teacher licensure.

Return on Investment Rank

#27

Kansas ranks 27th overall in return on investment (ROI) for education spending. Kansas spends the 26th-most per pupil among states, spending \$15,225 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Kansas ranks 30th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Sunflower State employs 1.02 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Kansas’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 4.5 percent of its state GDP. Kansas can improve its ROI ranking by lowering per-pupil spending, improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, and limiting its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 5	▲ 9	▲ 2	▲ 4	▼ 7

NOTE:

1. http://www.kslegislature.org/li_2014/b2013_14/measures/hb2203/