



# Rhode Island

## Overall Rank

#49

Rhode Island ranks #49 in overall education freedom, a decline of five spots from last year.

## Education Choice Rank

#38

Rhode Island ranks #38 for education choice, dropping four spots, as lawmakers in other states expanded education choice options in 2023, while officials in Rhode Island did not. Rhode Island does fairly well in allowing families to choose among private schools and charter schools, but could do more to expand education choice. Rhode Island could improve its ranking by enacting a K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy, expanding eligibility for and boosting participation in its existing private education choice 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

#51

Rhode Island lawmakers have neither adopted proposals that reject the prejudice caused by the application of critical race theory in schools nor addressed the threats to minor-age children from the teaching of “gender” in place of biological sex. State officials should consider such proposals along with provisions that increase academic transparency.

## Teacher Freedom Rank

#48

Rhode Island ranks 48th among states in terms of teacher freedom. Only one school district (Providence) enrolls more than 15,000 students, and that school district employs a “chief diversity officer.” Rhode Island does not use Common Core-aligned assessments. Just 6 percent of Rhode Island teachers made their way to the K-12 classroom through alternative certification routes, and the state does not have full reciprocity of teacher licensure. In order to improve its teacher freedom score, the Ocean State should allow more aspiring teachers to enter the K-12 classroom through alternative certification options—or eliminate teacher certification altogether—and allow reciprocity of teacher licensure with other states.

## Return on Investment Rank

#28

Rhode Island ranks 28th overall in return on investment (ROI) in education spending. Rhode Island spends the 12th-most per pupil among states, spending \$17,868 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Rhode Island ranks 28th in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Ocean State employs 1.09 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Rhode Island’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 9.9 percent of its state GDP. Rhode Island can improve its ROI ranking by lowering per-pupil spending, improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, and addressing its considerable unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

### Rhode Island: One-Year Rank Changes (2022–2023)

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▼ 5	▼ 4	▼ 4	▼ 1	▲ 7