



Virginia

Overall Rank

#22

Virginia's overall rank in education freedom dips two spots to #22. The state ranks #37 in education choice but ranks #2 in transparency.

Education Choice Rank

#37

Virginia ranks #37 for education choice. Virginia does fairly well in allowing families to choose among private schools but could do much more to expand education choice. Virginia 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

#2

In January 2022, Governor Glenn Youngkin (R) issued an executive order¹ that declares: "Critical race theory and related concepts are teaching our children to engage in the very behavior the Constitution prohibits." The governor's order added: "Executive Employees shall be prohibited from directing or otherwise compelling students to personally affirm, adopt, or adhere to inherently divisive concepts." In 2023, the state department of education released guidance² that included provisions similar to The Heritage Foundation's Given Name Act. Virginia lawmakers adopted a parent bill of rights³ in 2013.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#26

Virginia ranks 26th among states in terms of teacher freedom. Just 12 percent of teachers in the Old Dominion made their way to the K-12 classroom through alternative teacher certification routes, and the state does not have full reciprocity of teacher licensure. Moreover, more than half (56 percent) of school districts in the state with more than 15,000 students employ a "chief diversity officer." Virginia does not use Common Core-aligned tests. Virginia can improve its teacher freedom score by increasing the number of aspiring teachers who make their way to the K-12 classroom through alternative teacher certification routes, by allowing full reciprocity of teacher licensure, or by eliminating teacher certification requirements altogether. Virginia should also stop the growth in non-teaching administrative staff in schools, such as chief diversity officers.

Return on Investment Rank

#32

Virginia ranks 32nd overall for return on investment (ROI) for education spending. Virginia spends the 35th-most per pupil among states, spending \$13,559 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Virginia ranks 23rd in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Old Dominion employs 0.88 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Virginia's unfunded teacher pension liability represents 4.9 percent of its state GDP. Virginia can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, stopping growth in non-teaching staff, and addressing its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▼ 2	▲ 5	▲ 8	0	▼ 8

NOTES:

- <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?131+ful+HB1642ER>
- <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/46509/638252918535370000>
- <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?131+ful+HB1642ER>