



Washington

Overall Rank #43

Washington remains ranked #43 in overall education freedom for the second year. The state ranks low in education choice (#47) and teacher freedom (#49).

Education Choice Rank #47

Washington 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.

Transparency Rank #36

Washington lawmakers have not adopted proposals to increase academic transparency or that reject the prejudice caused by the application of critical race theory in schools.

Teacher Freedom Rank #49

Washington ranks 49th among states in terms of teacher freedom. Just 19 percent of teachers in the Evergreen State made their way to the K-12 classroom through alternative teacher certification routes, and the state does not allow full reciprocity of teacher licensure with other states. Moreover, a full 70 percent of school districts in the state with more than 15,000 students employ a “chief diversity officer,” and the state still uses Common Core-aligned tests. Washington can improve its teacher freedom score by allowing more aspiring teachers to make their way into the K-12 classroom through alternative teacher certification routes, bypassing traditional university-based colleges of education. It should also allow full reciprocity of teacher licensure or eliminate teacher certification requirements altogether. And, Washington should end its participation in the Common Core-aligned assessments.

Return on Investment Rank #8

Washington ranks eighth overall in return on investment (ROI) for education spending. Washington spends the 16th-most per pupil among states, spending \$16,623 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Washington ranks 21st in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Evergreen State employs 1.51 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Washington’s unfunded teacher pension liability represents 0.9 percent of its state GDP. Washington can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic outcomes on the NAEP, and by stopping the growth in non-teaching staff.

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

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
0	0	▲ 4	▼ 1	▲ 3