



Louisiana

Overall Rank

#4

Louisiana made the most significant leap in overall education freedom this year, moving from #18 to #4. The state jumped to #8 in education choice, up 17 spots from 2023.

Education Choice Rank

#8

Louisiana ranks eighth for **education choice**, up 17 spots since 2023, due in large part to its enactment of a universal K-12 education savings account (ESA) policy in 2024. Louisiana does exceptionally well in empowering families to choose among private, charter, and district schools. Additionally, Louisiana generally respects the autonomy of homeschooling families. Louisiana could improve its ranking by boosting participation in its existing private education choice policies, funding ESAs via the state education funding formula, and giving families more choices among traditional public schools beyond their assigned school.

Transparency Rank

#14

Louisiana ranks 14th in **academic transparency**. In 2024, Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry (R) signed an executive order rejecting the application of critical race theory in K-12 classrooms (this executive order was signed after the cutoff date for our data collection, and the state's score will be updated in next year's report). Governor Landry also signed H.B. 122,¹ a bill addressing parental rights. The bill prohibits teachers, school employees, or other guest presenters from engaging in topics of sexual orientation or gender identity beyond state content standards and approved curricula. In addition, the bill notes that students may seek guidance from a teacher or licensed mental health professional outside of classroom hours with parental consent. Governor Landry also signed a bill² in 2024 that contains provisions similar to those in The Heritage Foundation's proposed Given Name Act. The bill says that a school employee "shall not be required to address a student by a name other than the student's legal name, or a derivative thereof, and the employee shall not be required to use a pronoun that is inconsistent with the student's sex." Louisiana law already contains provisions³ that allow parents to view public school curricula, but school district officials may charge parents a fee for fulfilling their request. State officials should not require taxpayers and families to pay to see public school instructional materials. Proposals rejecting the application of critical race theory's biased ideas or to create a parental bill of rights have not advanced in the state legislature.

Teacher Freedom Rank

#7

Louisiana ranks seventh for **teacher freedom**. A full 57 percent of its teachers are alternatively certified, making their way into the classroom through routes other than a traditional, university-based college of education. However, the Pelican State does not have full reciprocity of teacher licenses with other states. Educators in Louisiana are required to pass the Praxis test, a teacher certification exam administered by the Educational Testing Service. Just 15 percent of districts in Louisiana with more than 15,000 students have "chief diversity officers," and the state does not use Common Core-aligned tests. To improve its teacher freedom score, Louisiana should allow full reciprocity of teacher licensure or end certification requirements altogether, eliminate the Praxis requirement, and continue to increase the opportunities available to aspiring teachers to enter the classroom.

NOTES:

1. <https://legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?i=245686>
2. <https://legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?i=245685>
3. <https://legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=920004>

Return on Investment Rank

#6

Louisiana ranks sixth in **return on investment (ROI)** for education spending. Louisiana spends the 30th-most per pupil among states, spending \$15,430 in cost-of-living-adjusted terms annually. Louisiana ranks 43rd in its combined fourth-grade and eighth-grade math and reading average NAEP score. The Pelican State employs 2.52 teachers for every non-teacher in its public schools. Louisiana's unfunded teacher pension liability represents 7.7 percent of its state GDP. Louisiana can improve its ROI ranking by improving academic outcomes on the NAEP and addressing its unfunded teacher pension liabilities.

Louisiana: One-Year Rank Changes (2023–2024)

OVERALL	EDUCATION CHOICE	TRANSPARENCY	TEACHER FREEDOM	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
▲ 14	▲ 17	▲ 12	▼ 3	▲ 7