

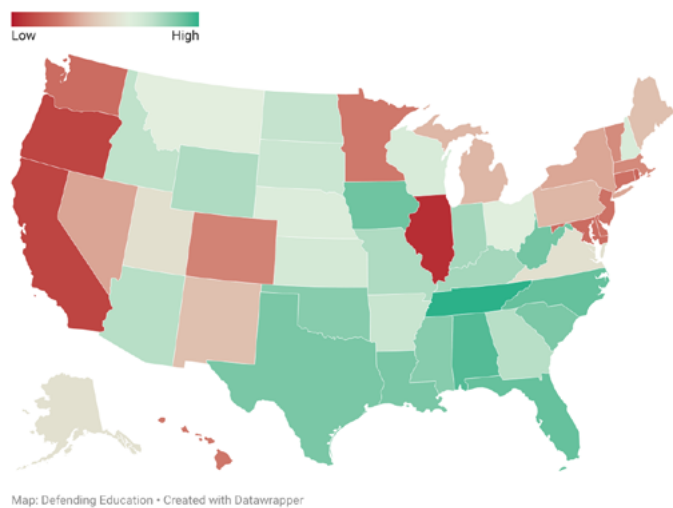
Helping Public Schools RISE

Rankings on Integrity in State Education (RISE)

American students and parents face a wide variety of challenges in today’s society: gender ideology introduced for the youngest students, elements of anti-racism and critical race theory embedded into curricula and standards, union influence on teachers, foreign funding undermining learning, and more. Defending Education’s **Rankings on Integrity in State Education (RISE)** compares how state governments are handling these issues and what they are doing to protect students and families, and keep public education in the best interest of students.

We scored all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia on five major education categories (gender and sexuality, “diversity, equity, and inclusion”, parental rights, teacher policies, and foreign influence), and ranked them based on their performance. Tennessee earns the top score in 2026, while Illinois ranks the worst, only over the District of Columbia which takes the 51st spot.

Ranking School Integrity by State



Our 2026 Rankings

1	Tennessee	27	Montana
2	Alabama	28	Alaska
3	Florida	28	Virginia
3	North Carolina	30	Utah
5	Iowa	31	New Mexico
6	West Virginia	31	Maine
7	Louisiana	33	Pennsylvania
7	Texas	33	Michigan
9	South Carolina	35	New York
10	Oklahoma	36	Nevada
10	Mississippi	37	Vermont
12	Kentucky	38	Massachusetts
12	Indiana	39	Colorado
14	Missouri	40	Minnesota
14	Wyoming	41	Hawaii
16	Arizona	42	New Jersey
16	Georgia	43	Connecticut
18	Idaho	43	Delaware
19	North Dakota	45	Maryland
20	Arkansas	45	Washington
21	South Dakota	47	Rhode Island
22	Kansas	48	California
23	Wisconsin	48	Oregon
23	New Hampshire	50	Illinois
25	Nebraska	51	District of Columbia
26	Ohio		