

# New Report Grades State Lawmakers on Support for Public Education

*A new report from the Network for Public Education (NPE) grades state lawmakers on their support for public schools and the children they serve.*

RALEIGH, NC, UNITED STATES, June 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The

[Network for Public Education](#) (NPE)

released a new report detailing how well state lawmakers across the nation

(and the District of Columbia) treat public schools and the children who depend on them: [Public Schooling in America](#). North Carolina's score put it behind all other states except Arizona and Florida.



The data reveal a troubling and consistent pattern: “The states most aggressively redirecting public funds toward private alternatives — charter schools, voucher programs, and education savings accounts — are the same states most neglectful of their public schools, their teachers, and their students. Our analysis found a strong, statistically significant negative relationship between the expansion of privatization and public school support ( $p < 0.0001$ ). Privatization and disinvestment, it turns out, go hand in hand.”

All of the states in the southeast region earned an overall F grade except Mississippi. Mississippi has been in the [national news](#) for leading the nation in NAEP reading and math score gains and also its resistance to voucher expansion.

Researchers evaluated state-level policies that represent lawmakers' commitment to public education. Each state was scored out of 102 possible points divided among four categories:

- 1) Privatization: Voucher and Charter Expansion and Student Protections (58 points)
- 2) Protections for Homeschooled Students (4 points)
- 3) School Funding (16 points)
- 4) Conditions for Teaching and Learning (24 points)

Only two states—Nebraska and Vermont—received an A. Florida and Arizona were the lowest-scoring states, followed by North Carolina and Louisiana. All four states received an F.

Collectively, the four reporting categories shine a spotlight on the impact that state policies can have on conditions for public education.

The most heavily weighted category of the four used in the ranking of the states was “Privatization: Voucher and Charter Expansion and Student Protections.” NPE examined the degree to which state lawmakers have pushed voucher programs (including educational savings accounts), charter schools and other market-based alternatives to public schools. Further, the researchers evaluated the quality of the legal and regulatory guardrails established to safeguard students and families who choose a private voucher-accepting school and examined protections for the taxpayers whose dollars are funding the programs.

This examination found that states with little voucher regulation created fertile ground for fraud. An example they documented was in Arizona: “A recent audit of the Arizona ESA program, the Empowerment Scholarship Account, flagged almost 84,000 cases of misspending between December 2024 and October 2025. ABC15, an Arizona news service, identified purchases that included “diamond necklaces, lingerie, jet ski rentals, gaming consoles, and designer purses.” (1)

Another category considered in grading state legislators was “Conditions for Teaching and Learning” which ranked states on multiple factors that enable teachers and students to thrive. Factors included the proportion of qualified teachers, teaching attractiveness, student-to-teacher ratios, student-to-counselor ratios and protections against discrimination and physical punishment.

The report found that, “The relationship between the percentage of qualified teachers and the state’s teacher attractiveness rating was both positive and statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). That means that states that are more attractive to teach in have higher percentages of qualified teachers. Kentucky, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming were in the top decile on both ratings. The states with the worst scores in both were Arizona, the District of Columbia, Louisiana, and North Carolina.”

The report found a strong connection between the push toward educational privatization and disinvestment in public education, poor teaching conditions and poor teacher pay.

The report also found that strong support for education was bipartisan, with some of the highest-scoring states led by lawmakers of both major political parties.

1. ESA audit flags millions of dollars in purchases with education funds:

[https://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/investigations/esa-audit-flags-millions-of-dollars-in-purchases-with-education-funds#google\\_vignette](https://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/investigations/esa-audit-flags-millions-of-dollars-in-purchases-with-education-funds#google_vignette)

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