

ARIZONA

Faced with an unprecedented set of challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, public education is at a crossroads. To be sure, much has changed since 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic swept the nation, but pre-pandemic trends provide policymakers with a critical anchor for navigating post-pandemic decisions. This section provides a snapshot of Arizona's K-12 public education resources and outcomes so that policymakers are better equipped to make critical choices that will shape generations to come. Looking forward, they should use this information to ask important questions like what their goals are for students and whether resources are being deployed toward those aims.

SPENDING TRENDS

Arizona's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$10,353 per student in 2002 to \$10,790 per student in 2020, a 4.2% growth rate that ranked 47th in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 67.9%—ranking 24th in the country—going from \$1,018 per student to \$1,710 per student. In 2020, Arizona had \$6,132,535,000 in total education debt, down \$420 per student in real terms since 2002.

TABLE 1: SPENDING TRENDS (2002-2020)

Category (Per Student)	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Revenue	\$10,353	\$10,790	4.2%	47	46
Support Services	\$3,081	\$3,563	15.6%	39	43
Instruction	\$4,468	\$4,801	7.5%	36	50
Benefits	\$1,018	\$1,710	67.9%	24	49
Capital	\$1,624	\$1,352	-16.8%	36	29
Total Debt	\$6,970	\$6,550	-6.0%	42	32

FIGURE 1: REVENUE PER STUDENT BY FUNDING SOURCE (2002-2020)

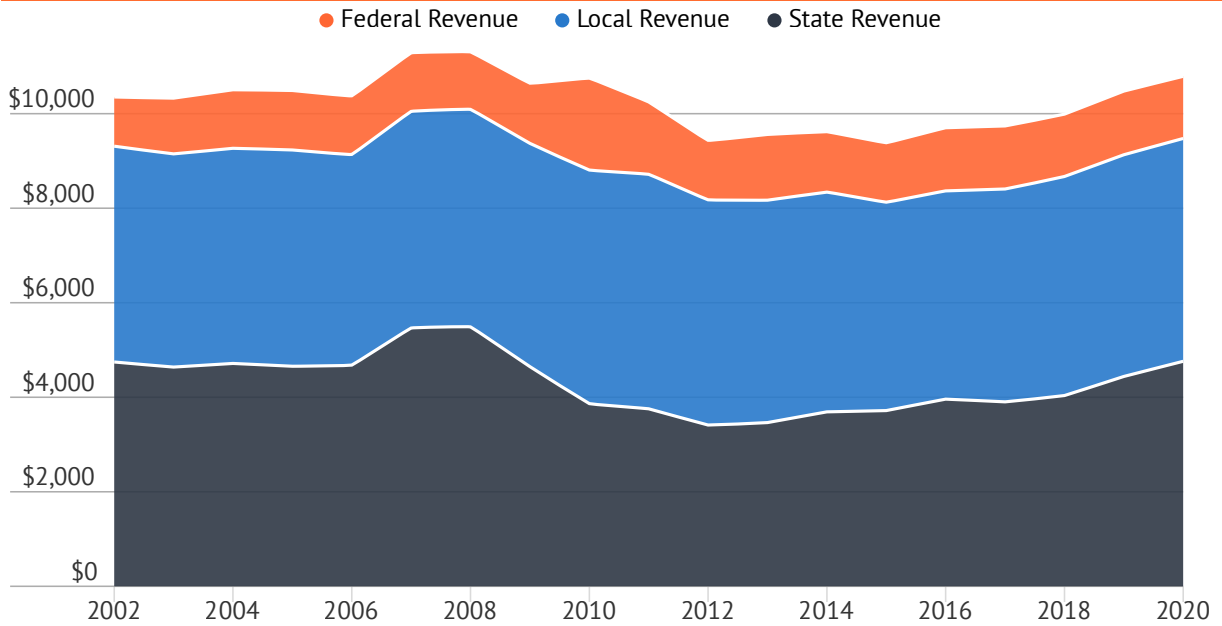
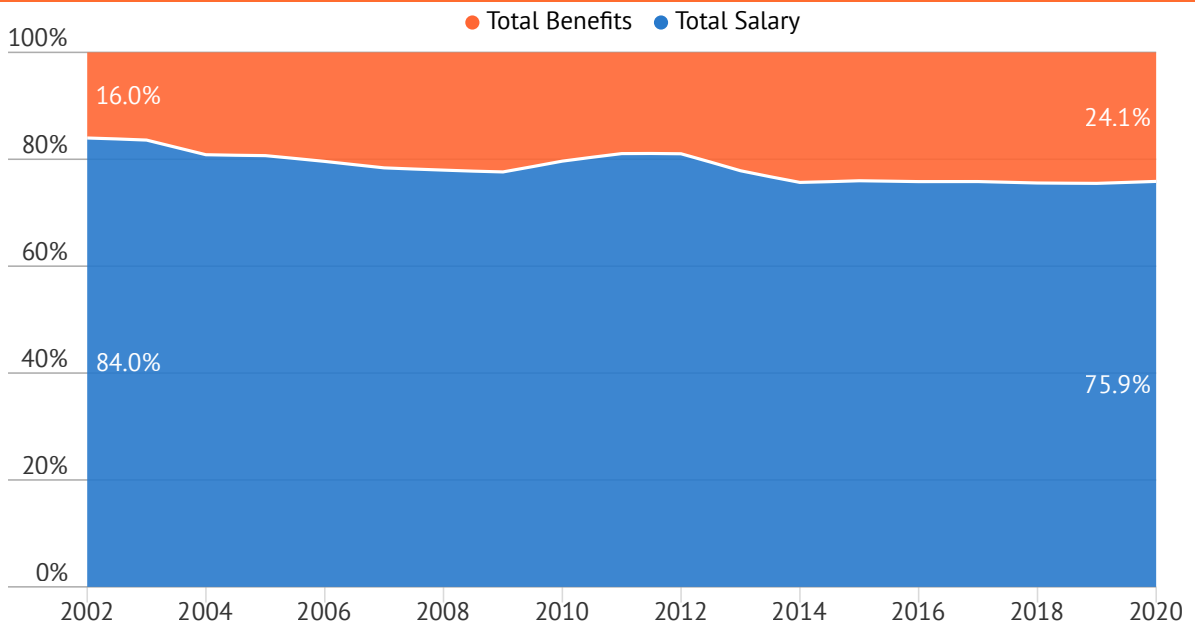


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, Arizona’s student population grew by 25.0%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 13.7%, with teachers increasing by 6.3% and non-teachers increasing by 20.8%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$57,721 in 2002 to \$50,782 in 2020, a -12.0% growth rate that ranked 46th in the U.S.

TABLE 2: ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS (2002-2020)

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	922,180	1,152,586	25.0%	5	13
Total Staff	93,976	106,835	13.7%	25	21
Teachers	46,015	48,912	6.3%	23	23
Non-Teachers	47,961	57,924	20.8%	25	19
Average Teacher Salary	\$57,721	\$50,782	-12.0%	46	45

FIGURE 3: ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS (2002-2020)

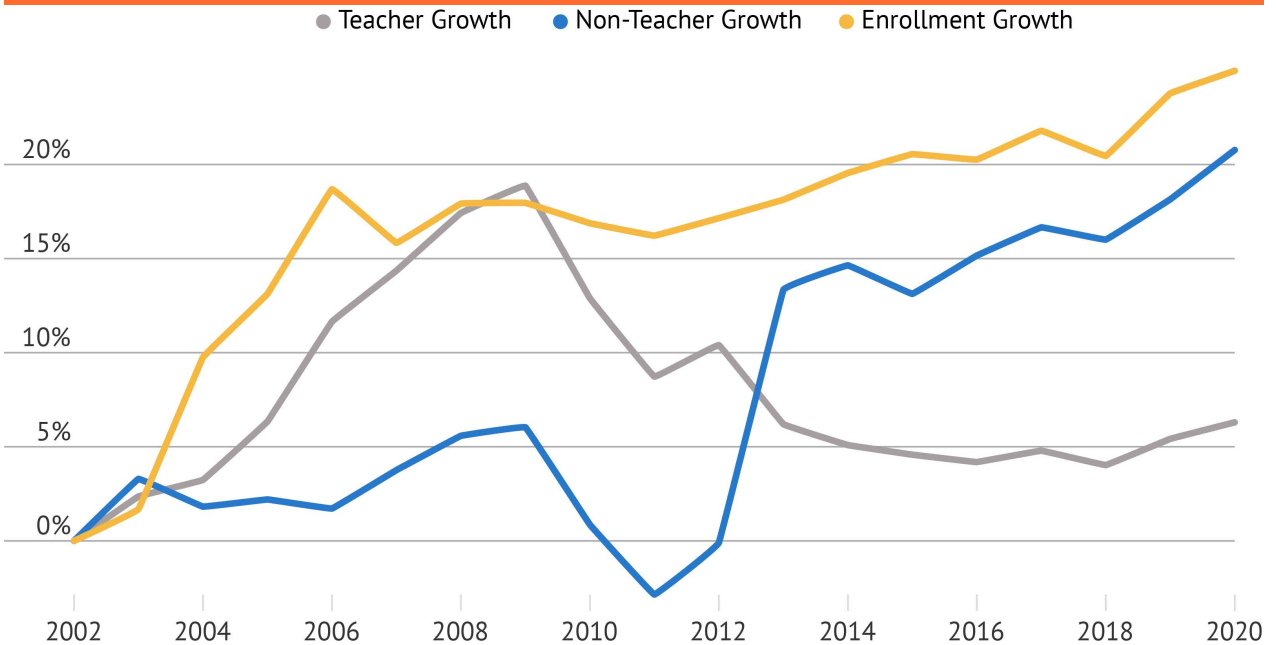
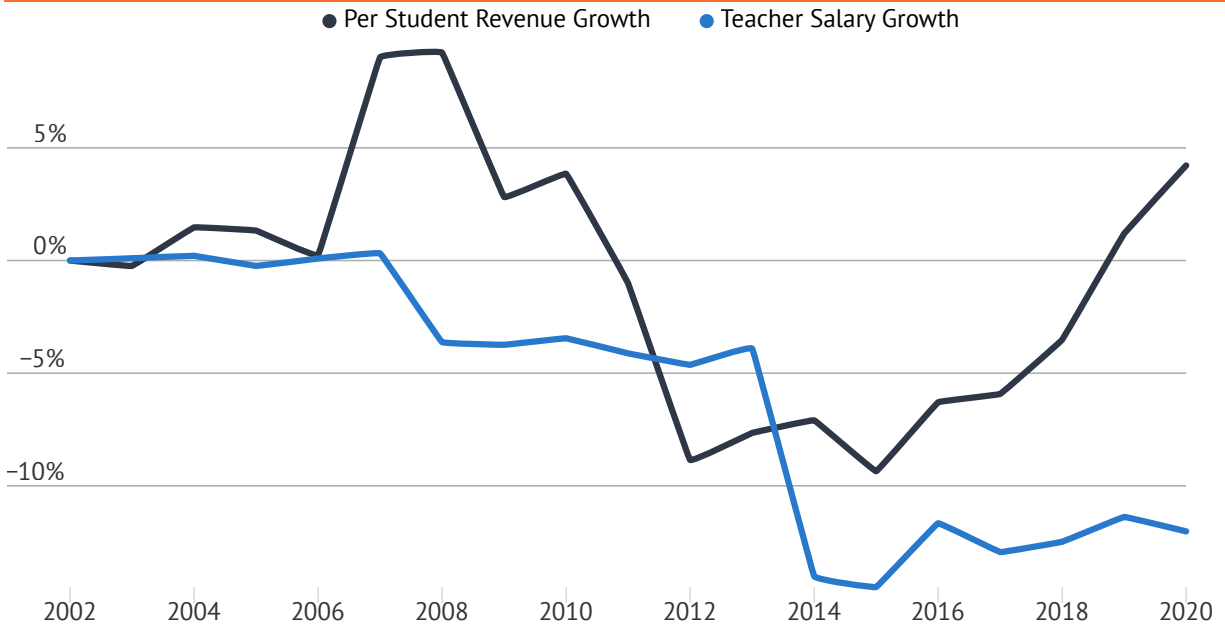


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



NAEP TRENDS

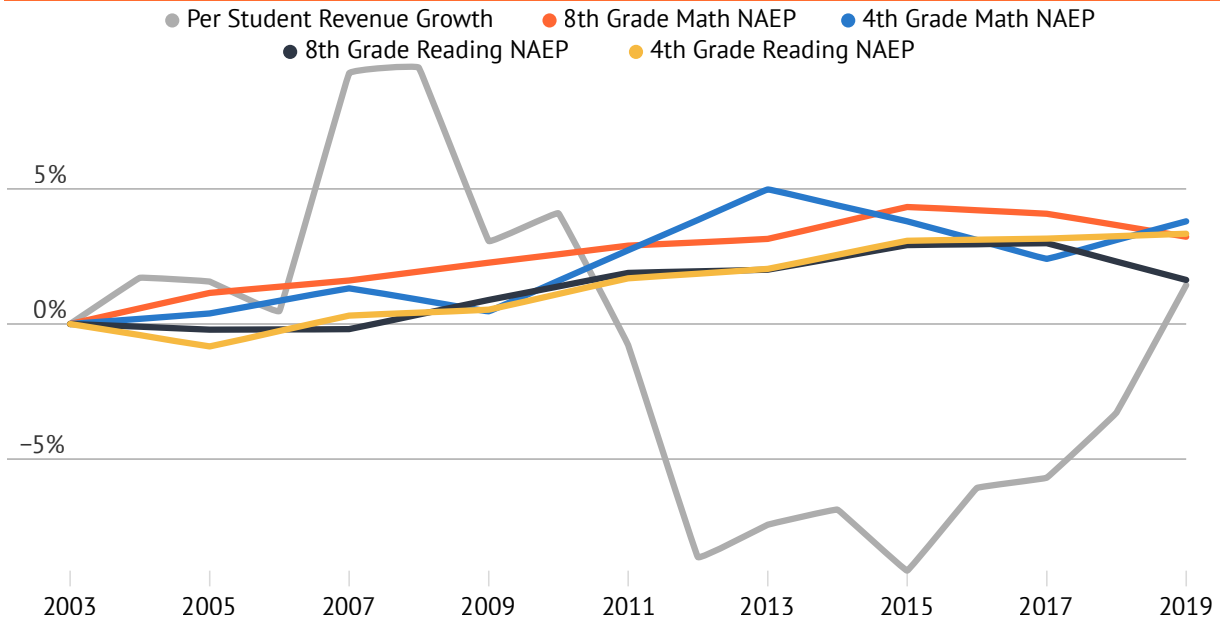
Between 2003 and 2019, Arizona's 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by seven points (+3.3%), ranking 6th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by nine points (+3.8%), ranking 8th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores increased by four points (+1.6%), ranking 7th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by nine points (+3.2%), ranking 6th.

Table 3: NAEP Scores (2003-2019)

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Subject	4th Grade			8th Grade		
	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank
Reading	7	6	44	4	7	37
Math	9	8	36	9	6	31

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH¹



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Arizona’s low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by eight points (+4.4%), ranking 6th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by nine points (+4.0%), ranking 14th. During this time, the state’s 8th grade reading scores increased by seven points (+2.8%), ranking 8th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by 12 points (+4.6%), ranking 6th.

Table 4: Low Income NAEP Scores (2003-2019)

TABLE 4: LOW-INCOME NAEP SCORES (2003-2019)

Subject	4th Grade			8th Grade		
	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank	Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank
Reading	8	6	47	7	8	35
Math	9	14	40	12	6	11

¹ It should be noted that NAEP scores and revenue are inherently different in their potential for growth and shouldn’t be expected to move in perfect unison (e.g. a 10% increase in funding shouldn’t be expected to result in a 10% improvement in NAEP).

FIGURE 6: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (LOW-INCOME STUDENTS)¹

