

NORTH DAKOTA

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 North Dakota'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

North Dakota's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$10,992 per student in 2002 to \$16,624 per student in 2020, a 51.2% growth rate that ranked 4th highest in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 101.7%—ranking 14th in the country—going from \$1,633 per student to \$3,294 per student. In 2020, North Dakota had \$864,512,000 in total education debt, up \$5,156 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	\$10,992	\$16,624	51.2%	4	19
Support Services	\$3,058	\$4,647	52.0%	7	23
Instruction	\$5,938	\$8,616	45.1%	5	17
Benefits	\$1,633	\$3,294	101.7%	14	23
Capital	\$783	\$2,434	210.8%	5	5
Total Debt	\$2,288	\$7,444	225.4%	5	25

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

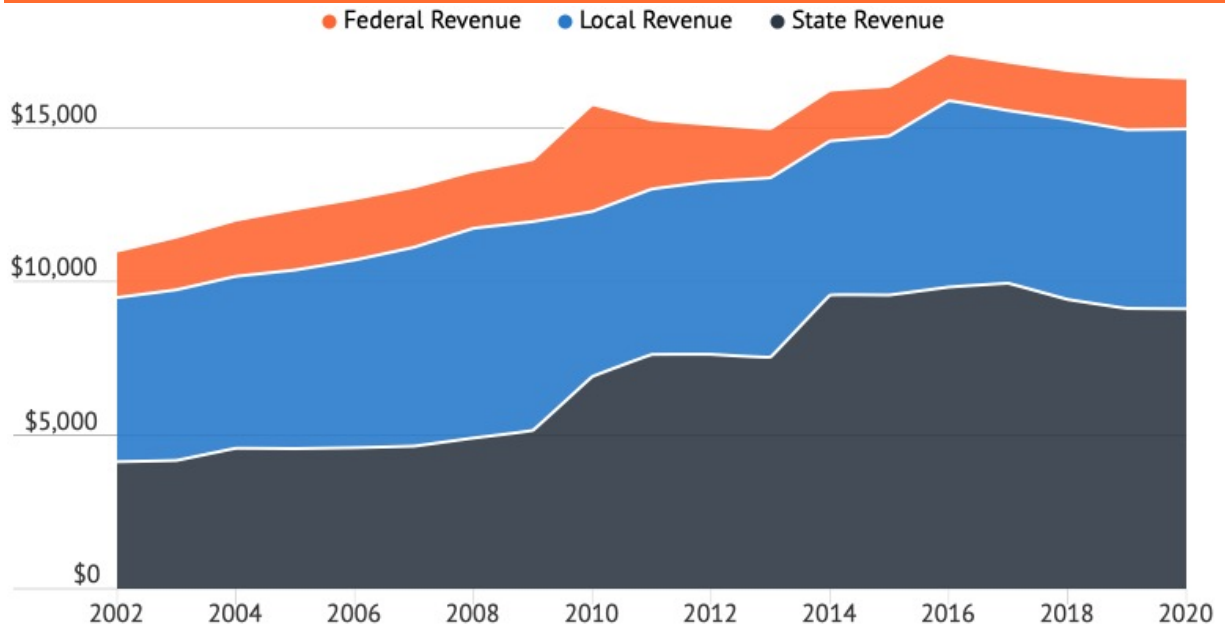
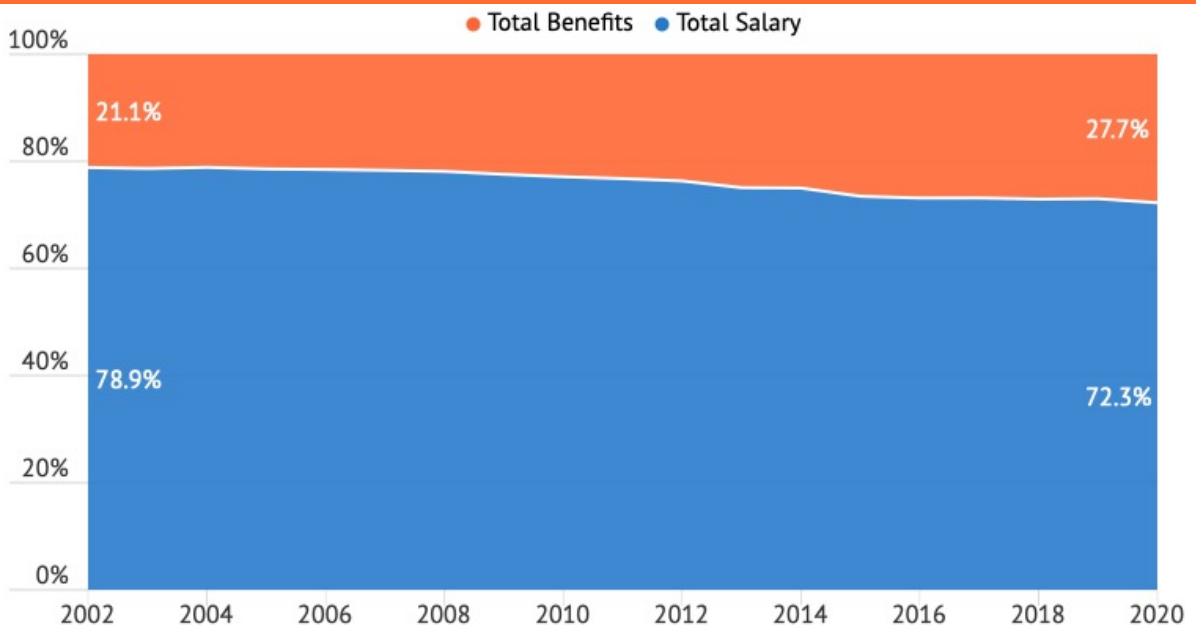


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, North Dakota’s student population grew by 9.6%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 28.5%, with teachers increasing by 15.5% and non-teachers increasing by 43.6%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$46,573 in 2002 to \$53,525 in 2020, a 14.9% growth rate that ranked 4th in the U.S.

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

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	106,047	116,185	9.6%	20	48
Total Staff	14,895	19,133	28.5%	6	46
Teachers	8,035	9,284	15.5%	12	47
Non-Teachers	6,860	9,849	43.6%	6	46
Average Teacher Salary	\$46,573	\$53,525	14.9%	4	36

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

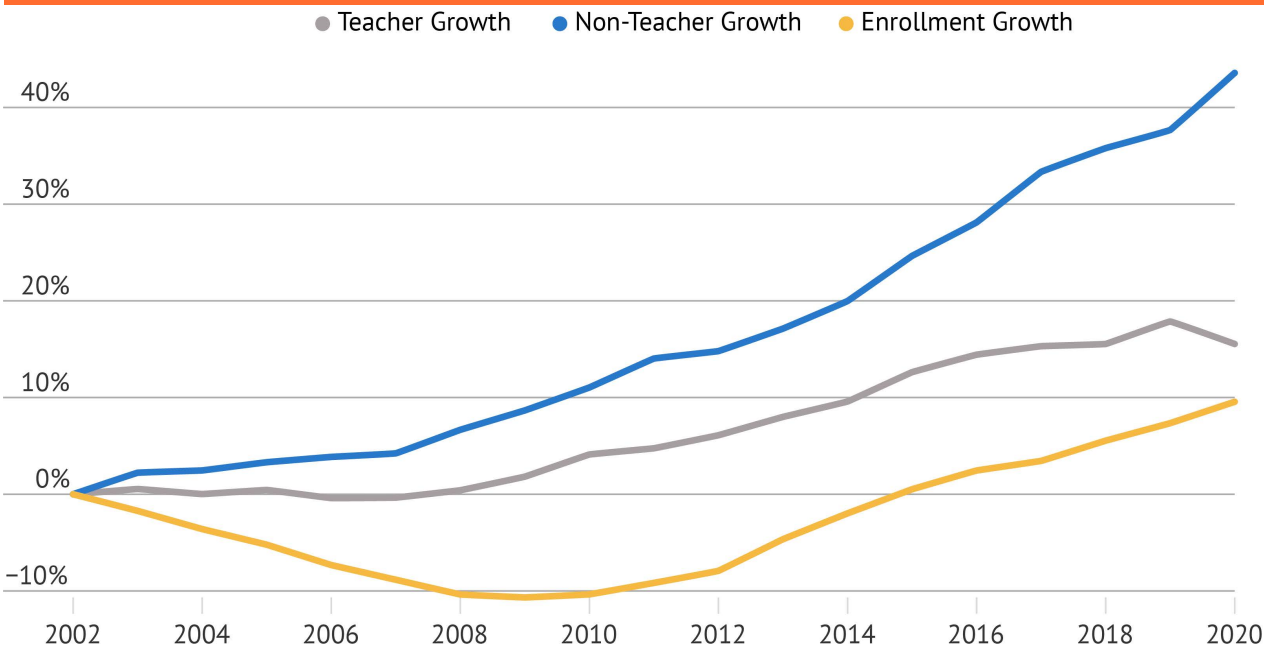
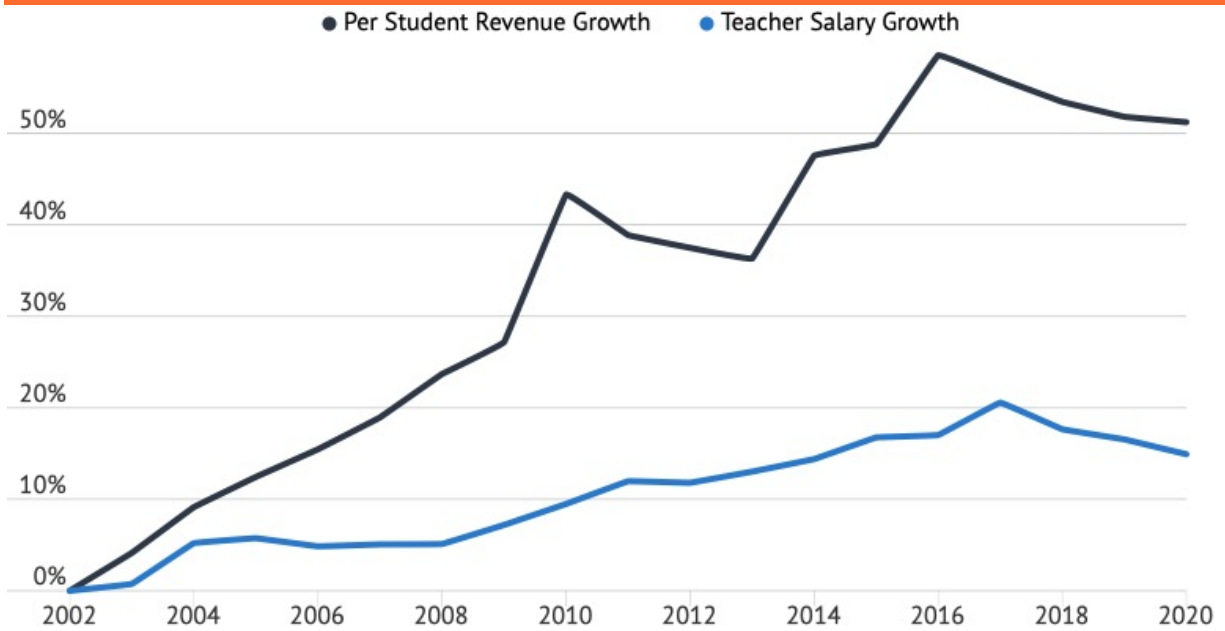


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



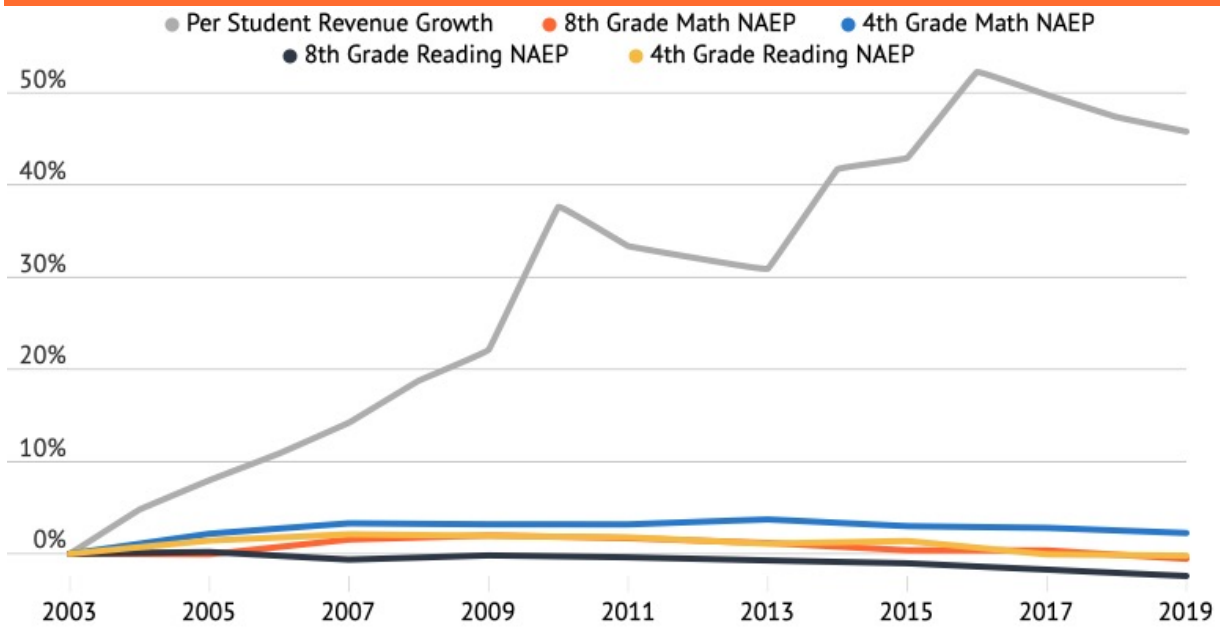
NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, North Dakota's 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by zero points (-0.2%), ranking 35th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by five points (+2.3%), ranking 27th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores decreased by six points (-2.4%), ranking 49th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores decreased by two points (-0.6%), ranking 46th.

TABLE 3: NAEP SCORES (2003-2019)

Subject	4th Grade			8th Grade		
	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank
Reading	0	35	21	-6	49	24
Math	5	27	14	-2	46	15

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH¹



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, North Dakota's low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by two points (-0.8%), ranking 44th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by three points (+1.2%), ranking 37th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores decreased by nine points (-3.4%), ranking 49th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores decreased by six points (-2.2%), ranking 50th.

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	-2	44	13	-9	49	20
Math	3	37	13	-6	50	17

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

