UTAH

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 Utah'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

Utah's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from $8,607 per student in 2002 to $10,027 per student in 2020, a 16.5% growth rate that ranked 34th in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 48.0%—ranking 35th in the country—going from $1,524 per student to $2,255 per student. In 2020, Utah had $3,754,693,000 in total education debt, up $2,057 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	$8,607	$10,027	16.5%	34	49
Support Services	$2,054	$2,690	31.0%	22	50
Instruction	$4,612	$5,281	14.5%	30	48
Benefits	$1,524	$2,255	48.0%	35	40
Capital	$1,281	$1,763	37.7%	15	19
Total Debt	$4,130	$6,187	49.8%	22	33

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

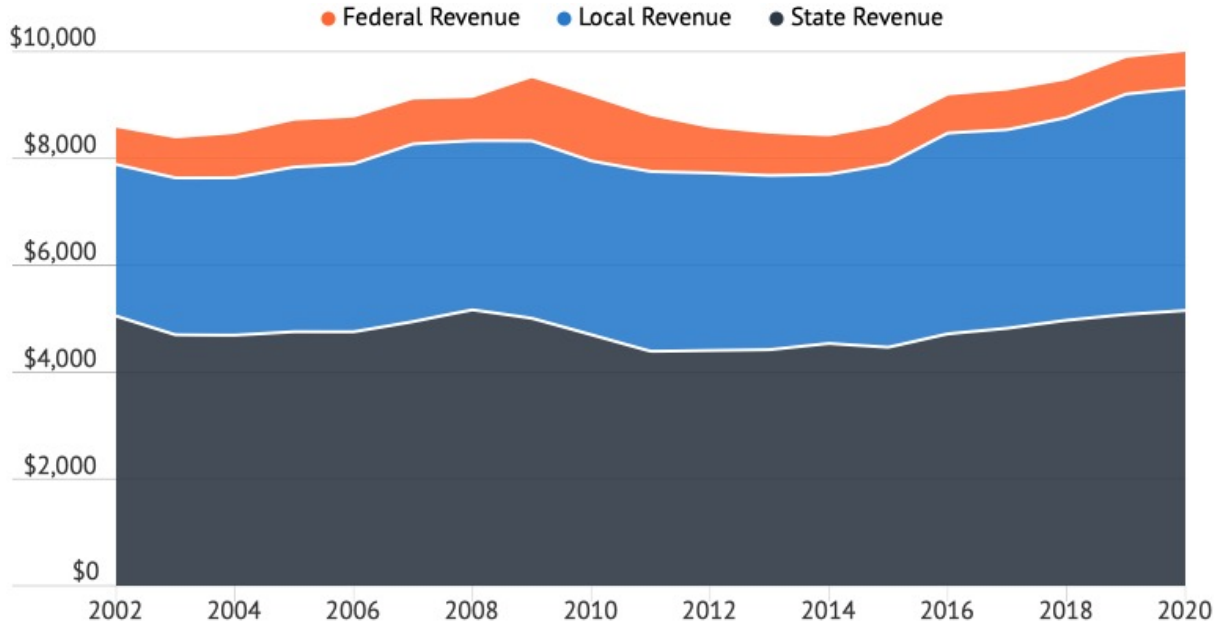
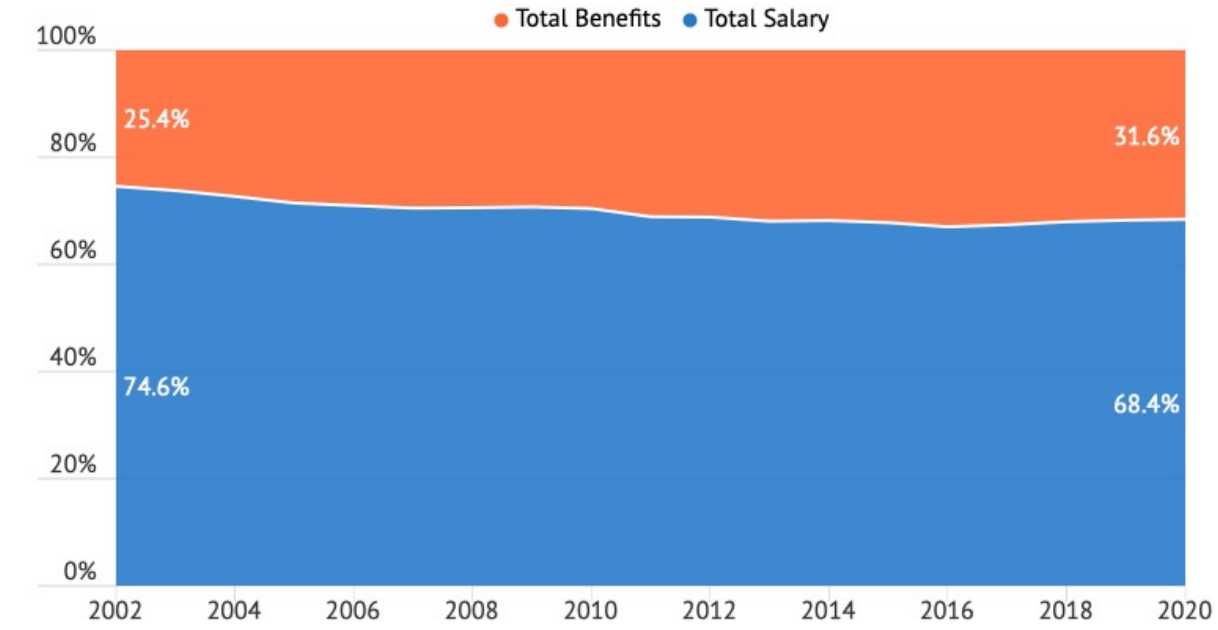


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, Utah's student population grew by 41.3%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 48.4%, with teachers increasing by 36.2% and non-teachers increasing by 62.8%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from $54,026 in 2002 to $54,678 in 2020, a 1.2% growth rate that ranked 21st in the U.S.

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

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	484,684	684,694	41.3%	1	28
Total Staff	41,111	61,023	48.4%	1	34
Teachers	22,211	30,256	36.2%	1	33
Non-Teachers	18,900	30,767	62.8%	3	34
Average Teacher Salary	$54,026	$54,678	1.2%	21	30

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

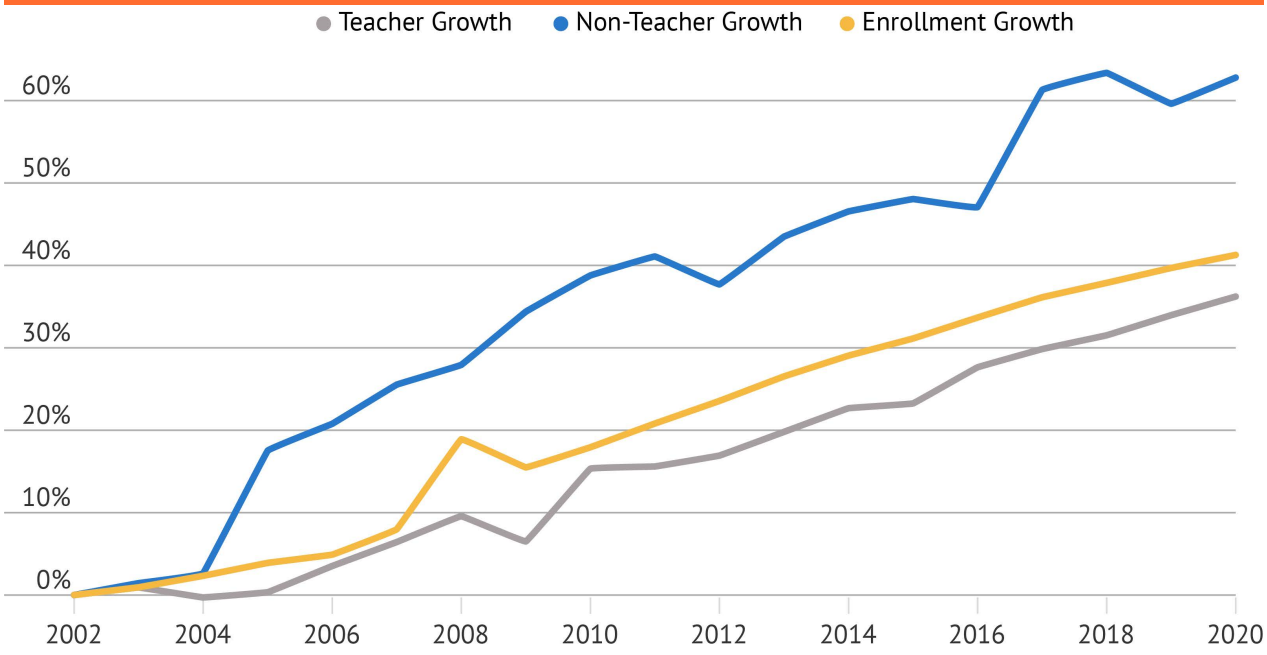
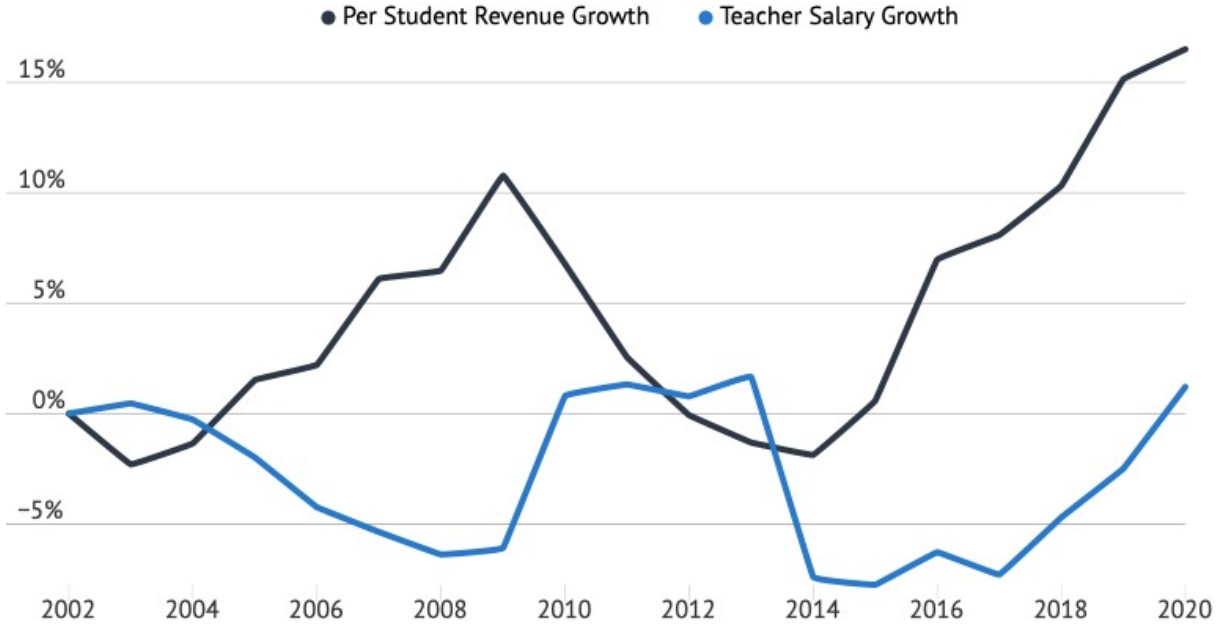


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



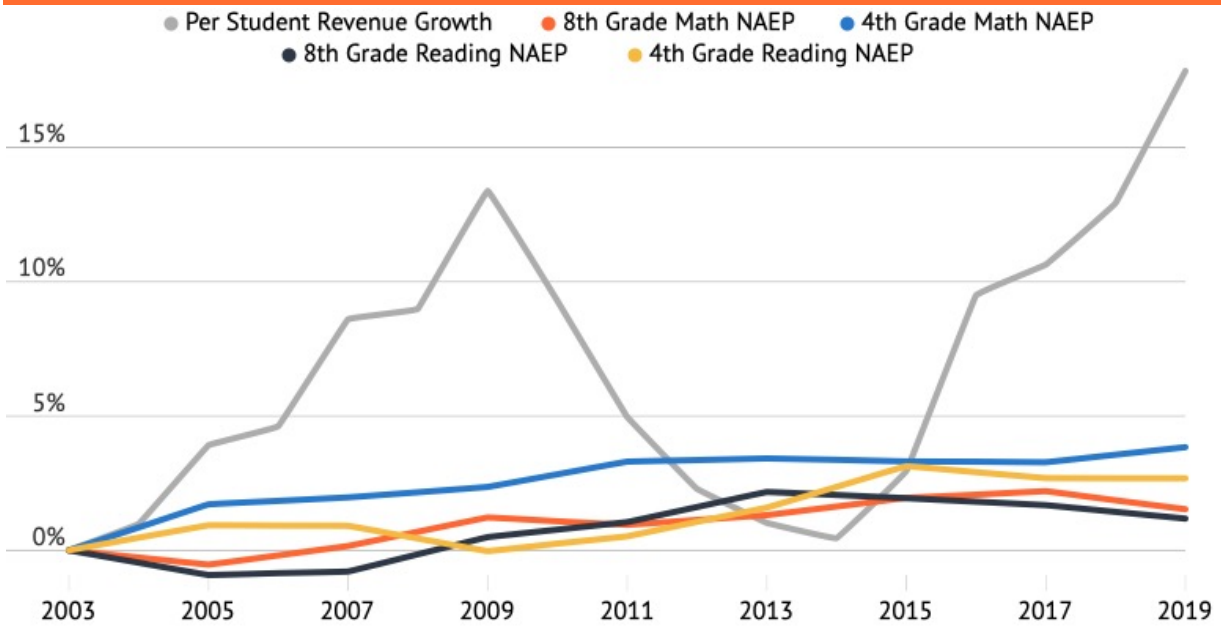
NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Utah's 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by six points (+2.7%), ranking 8th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by nine points (+3.8%), ranking 7th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores increased by three points (+1.2%), ranking 9th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by four points (+1.5%), ranking 23rd.

TABLE 3: NAEP SCORES (2003-2019)

	4th Grade			8th Grade		
Subject	**Score Growth**	**Growth Rank**	**2019 Rank**	**Score Growth**	**Growth Rank**	**2019 Rank**
Reading	6	8	4	3	9	6
Math	9	7	10	4	23	18

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH[1]



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Utah's low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by two points (+1.0%), ranking 29th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by seven points (+3.1%), ranking 20th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores increased by three points (+1.3%), ranking 14th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by zero points (+0.1%), ranking 41st.

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

	4th Grade			8th Grade		
Subject	**Score Growth**	**Growth Rank**	**2019 Rank**	**Growth**	**Growth Rank**	**2019 Rank**
Reading	2	29	17	3	14	6
Math	7	20	10	0	41	29

[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]