

VERMONT

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 Vermont'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

Vermont's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$15,875 per student in 2002 to \$23,575 per student in 2020, a 48.5% growth rate that ranked 7th highest in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 129.6%—ranking 8th in the country—going from \$2,447 per student to \$5,618 per student. In 2020, Vermont had \$304,886,000 in total education debt, down \$116 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	\$15,875	\$23,575	48.5%	7	4
Support Services	\$4,833	\$7,895	63.4%	3	2
Instruction	\$8,729	\$12,457	42.7%	7	3
Benefits	\$2,447	\$5,618	129.6%	8	6
Capital	\$972	\$742	-23.7%	43	50
Total Debt	\$3,657	\$3,541	-3.2%	40	46

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

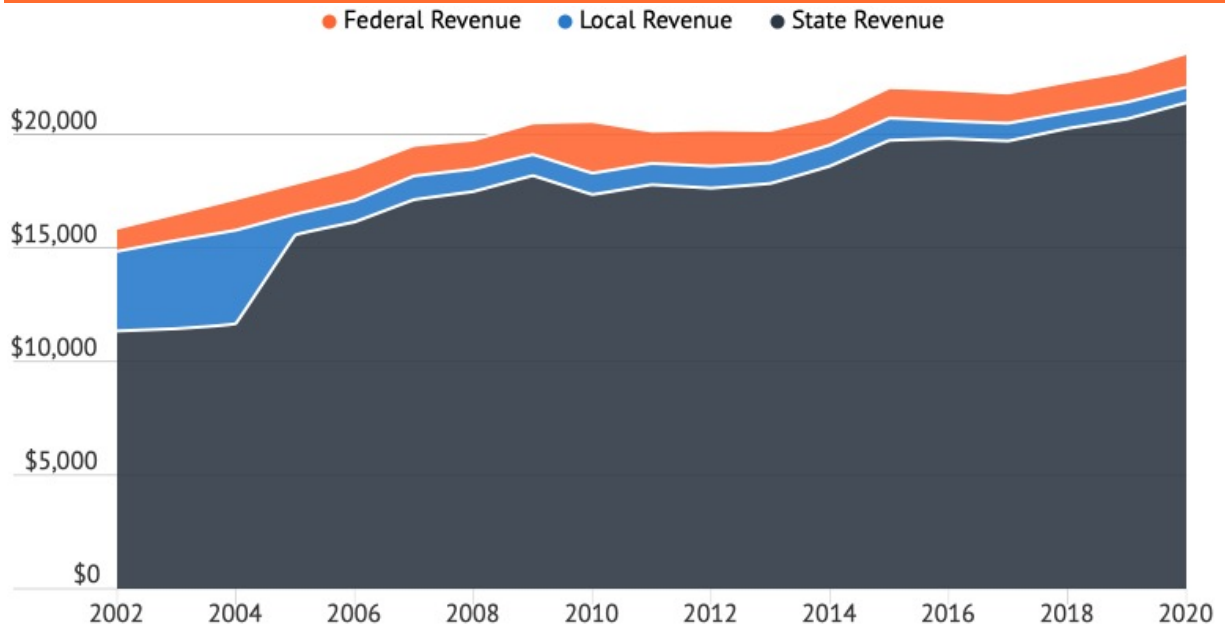
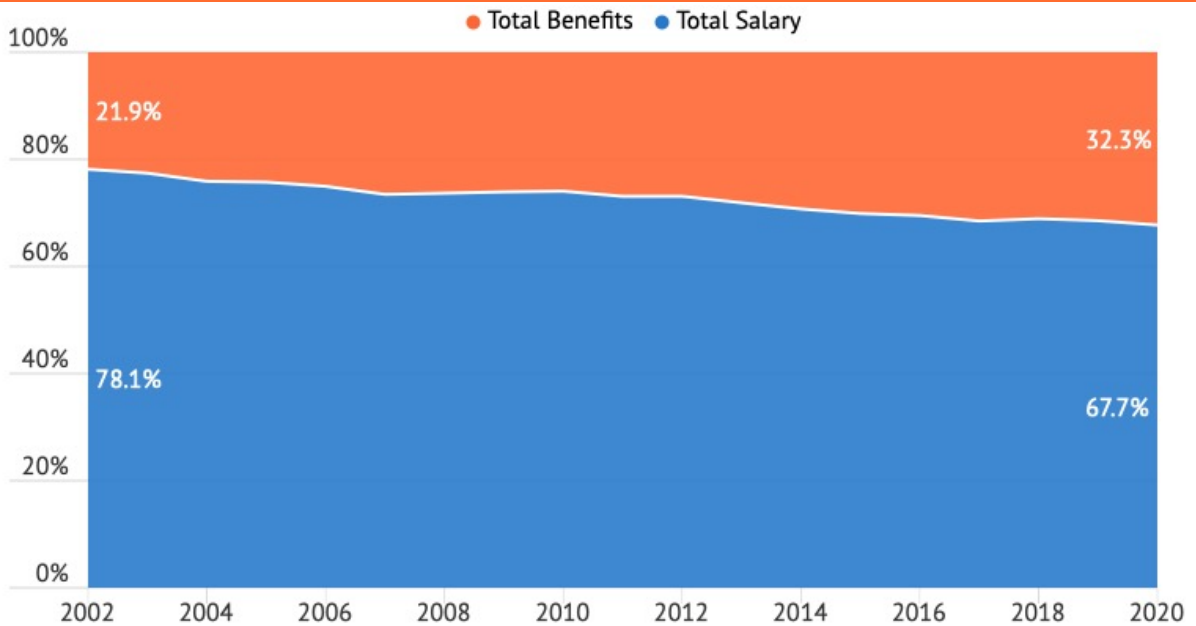


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, Vermont’s student population declined by 14.3%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 3.6%, with teachers decreasing by 6.0% and non-teachers increasing by 12.2%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$56,663 in 2002 to \$61,108 in 2020, a 7.8% growth rate that ranked 7th in the U.S.

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

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	101,179	86,759	-14.3%	49	50
Total Staff	18,050	18,695	3.6%	38	47
Teachers	8,554	8,042	-6.0%	42	48
Non-Teachers	9,496	10,653	12.2%	33	44
Average Teacher Salary	\$56,663	\$61,108	7.8%	7	17

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

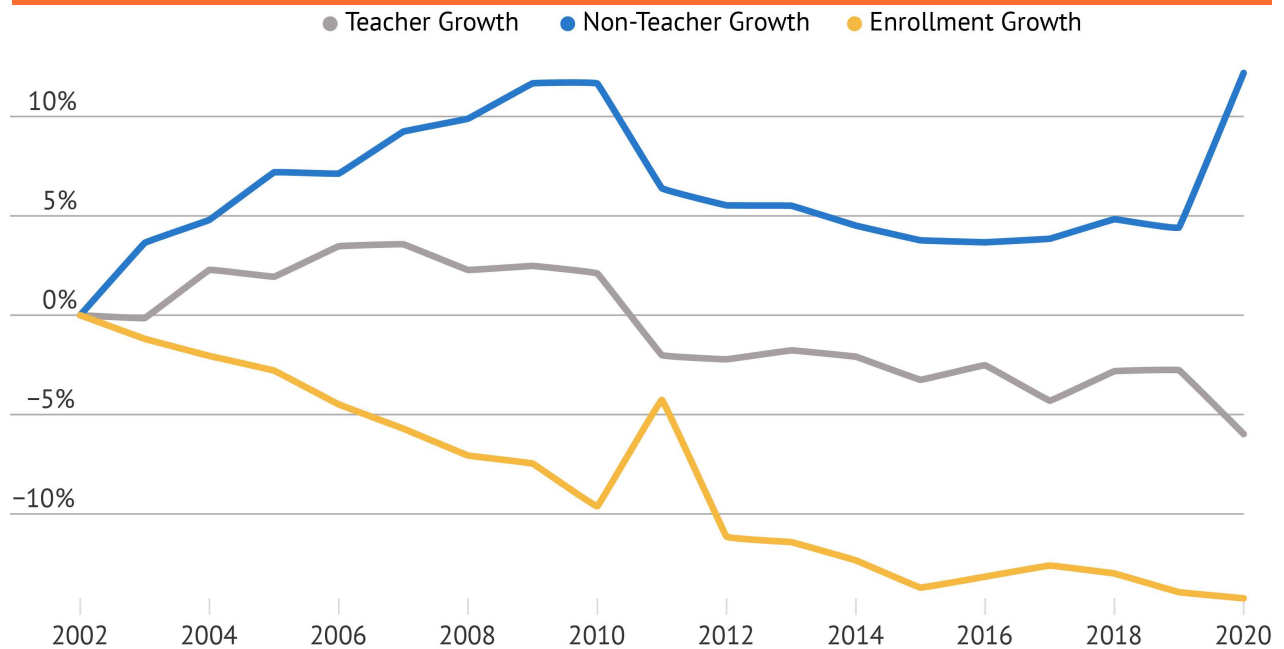
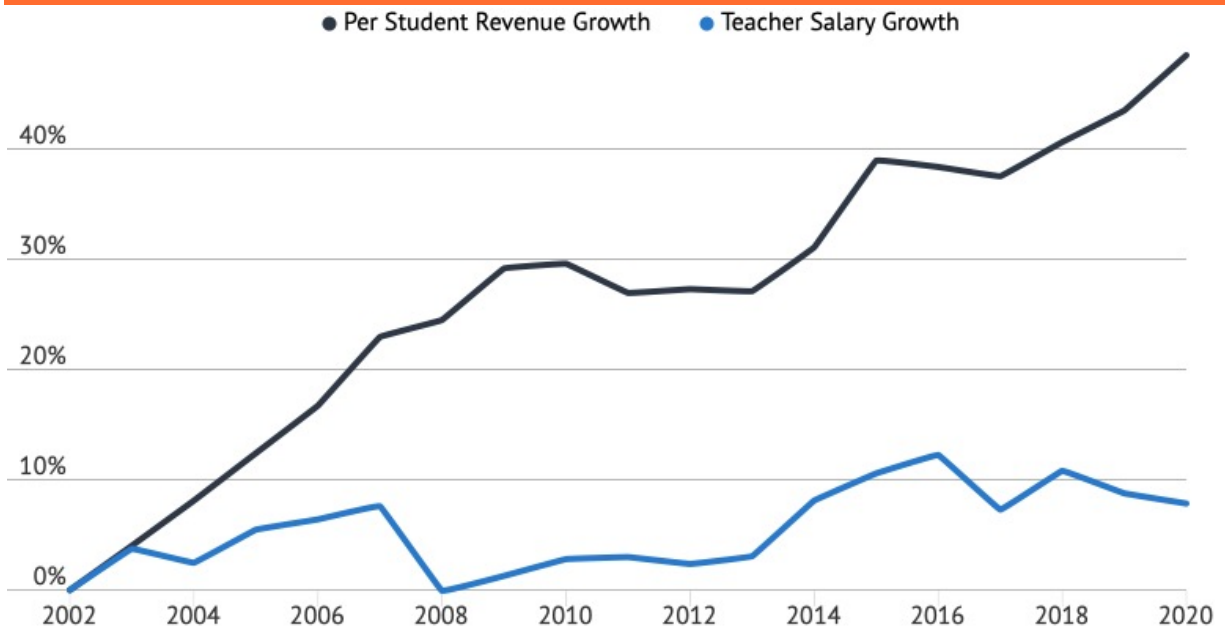


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



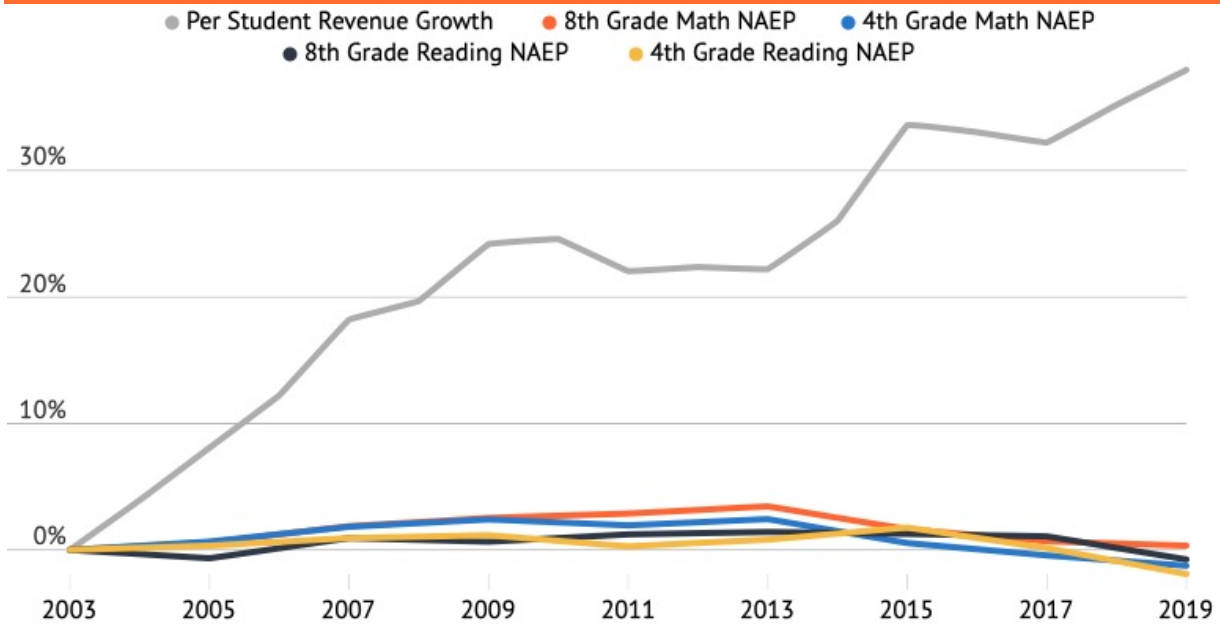
NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Vermont's 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by four points (-1.9%), ranking 47th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores fell by three points (-1.3%), ranking 50th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores decreased by two points (-0.8%), ranking 31st in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by one point (+0.3%), ranking 39th.

TABLE 3: NAEP SCORES (2003-2019)

Subject	4th Grade			8th Grade		
	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank
Reading	-4	47	16	-2	31	4
Math	-3	50	31	1	39	8

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH¹



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Vermont's low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by eight points (-3.7%), ranking 48th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by one point (+0.2%), ranking 45th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores increased by one point (+0.5%), ranking 24th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by three points (+1.2%), ranking 32nd.

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	48	34	1	24	1
Math	1	45	22	3	32	4

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

