

WYOMING

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 Wyoming'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

Wyoming's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$14,903 per student in 2002 to \$19,384 per student in 2020, a 30.1% growth rate that ranked 15th highest in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 79.1%—ranking 21st in the country—going from \$2,503 per student to \$4,484 per student. In 2020, Wyoming had \$43,590,000 in total education debt, down \$1,839 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	\$14,903	\$19,384	30.1%	15	12
Support Services	\$4,482	\$6,283	40.2%	14	10
Instruction	\$7,620	\$9,899	29.9%	12	10
Benefits	\$2,503	\$4,484	79.1%	21	13
Capital	\$1,520	\$1,890	24.3%	19	15
Total Debt	\$2,301	\$463	-79.9%	49	49

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

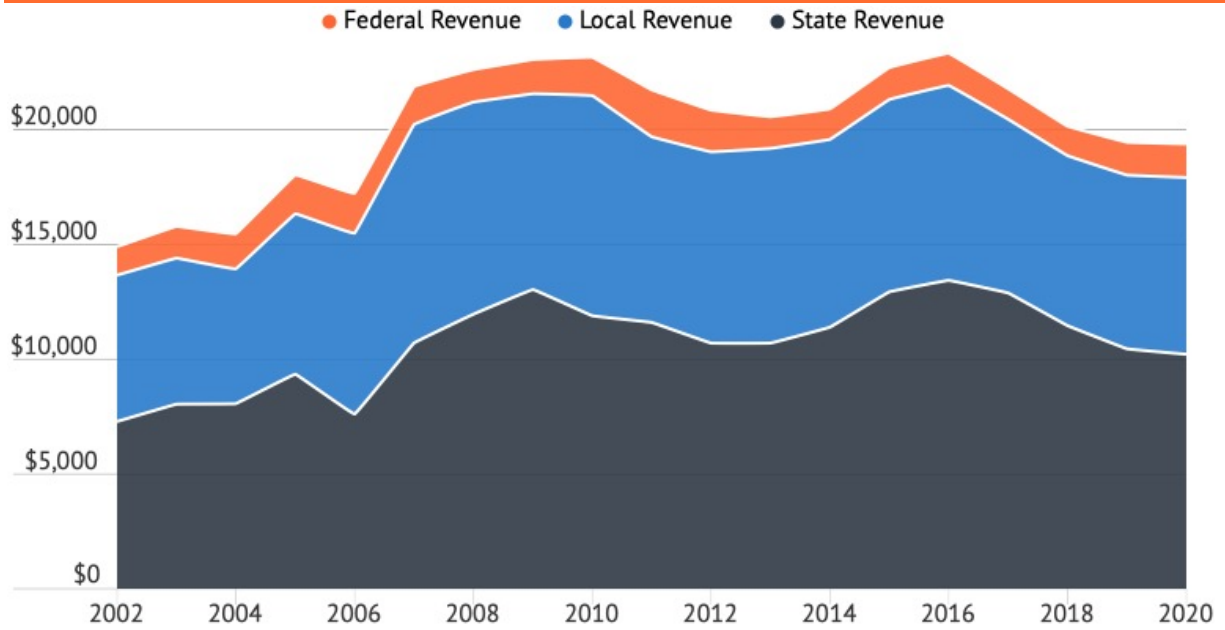
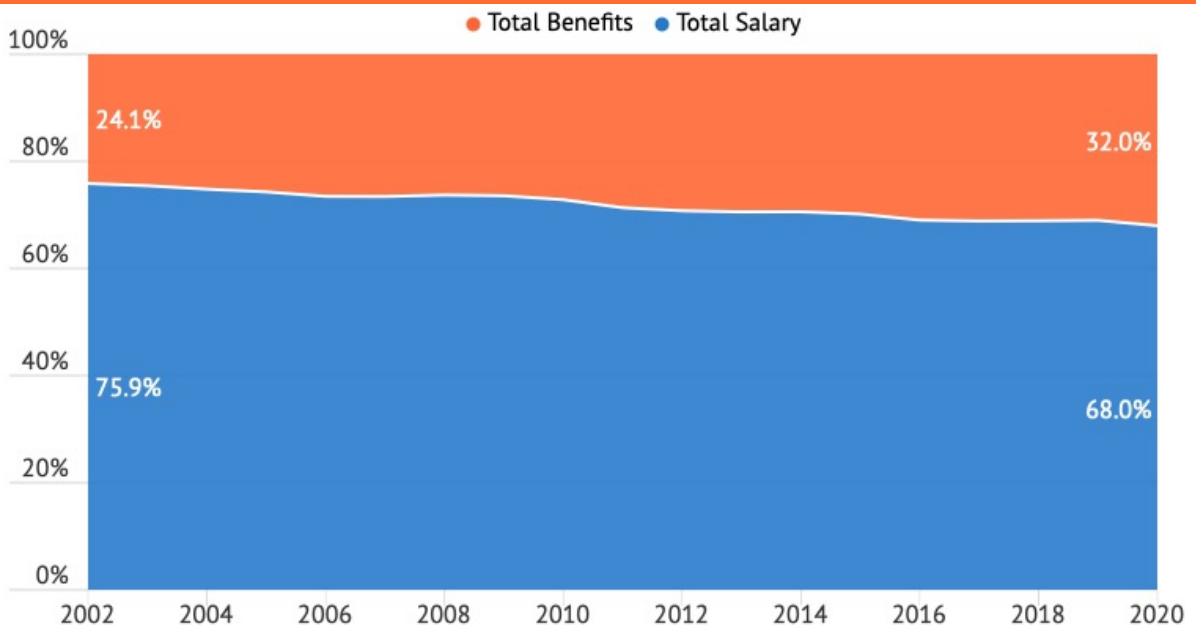


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, Wyoming’s student population grew by 7.4%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 21.5%, with teachers increasing by 10.9% and non-teachers increasing by 31.5%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$54,637 in 2002 to \$59,786 in 2020, a 9.4% growth rate that ranked 5 in the U.S.

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

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	88,128	94,616	7.4%	21	49
Total Staff	13,684	16,626	21.5%	13	50
Teachers	6,662	7,391	10.9%	19	50
Non-Teachers	7,022	9,235	31.5%	10	49
Average Teacher Salary	\$54,637	\$59,786	9.4%	5	19

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

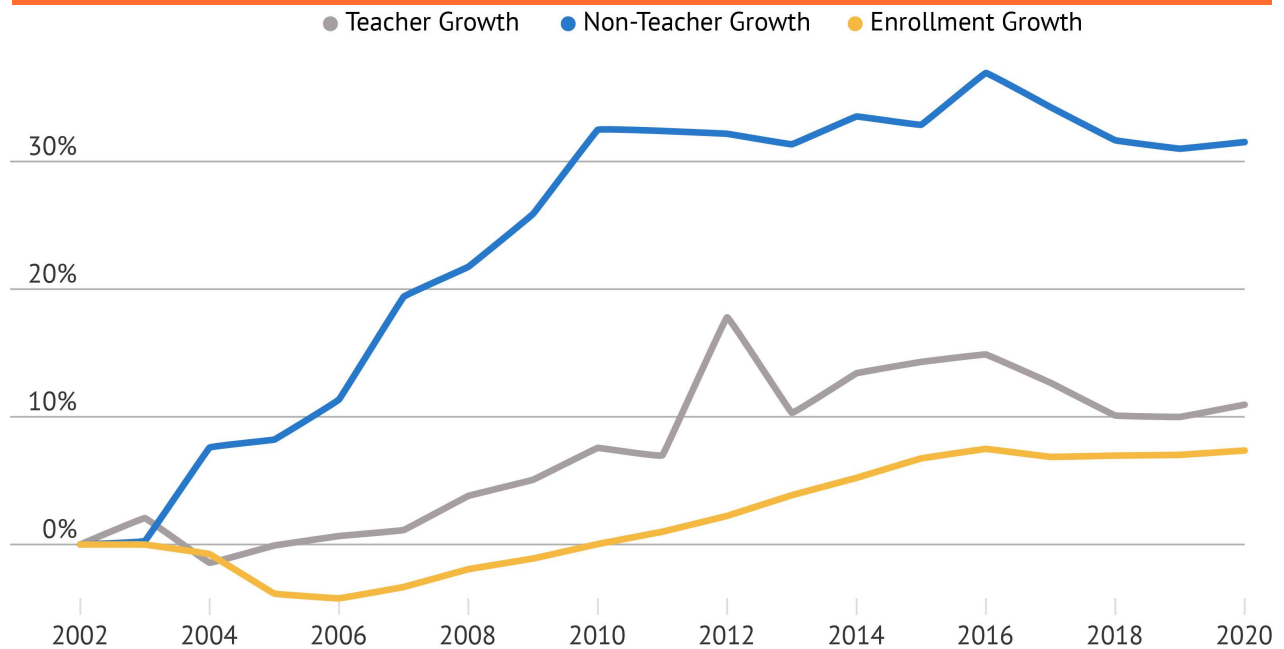
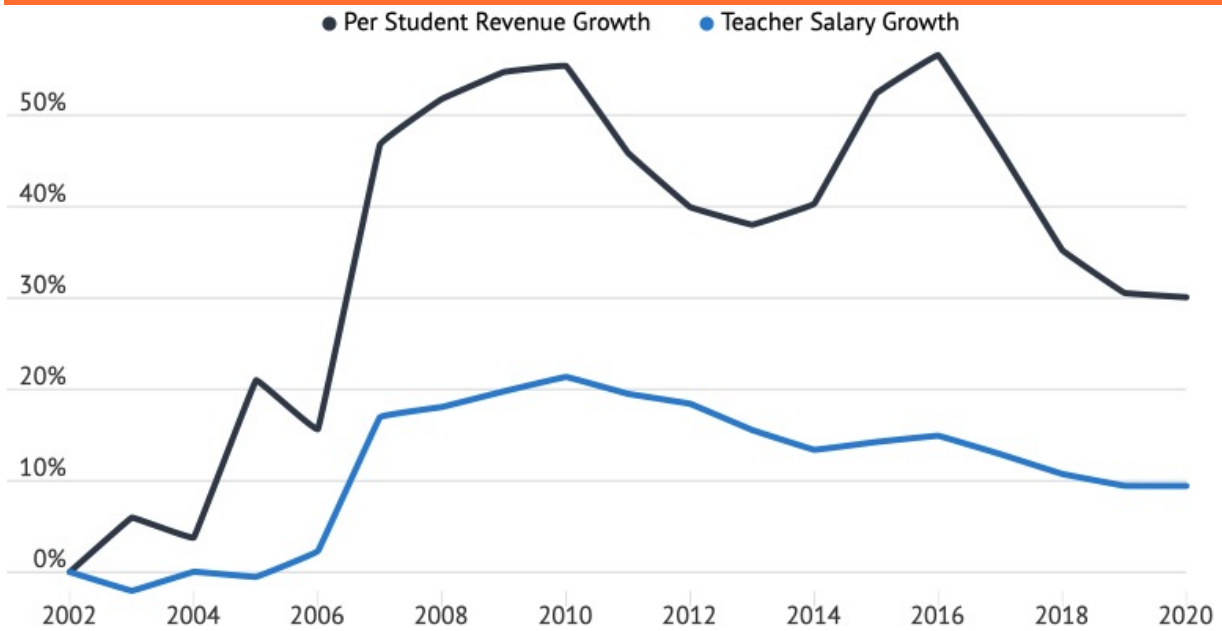


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



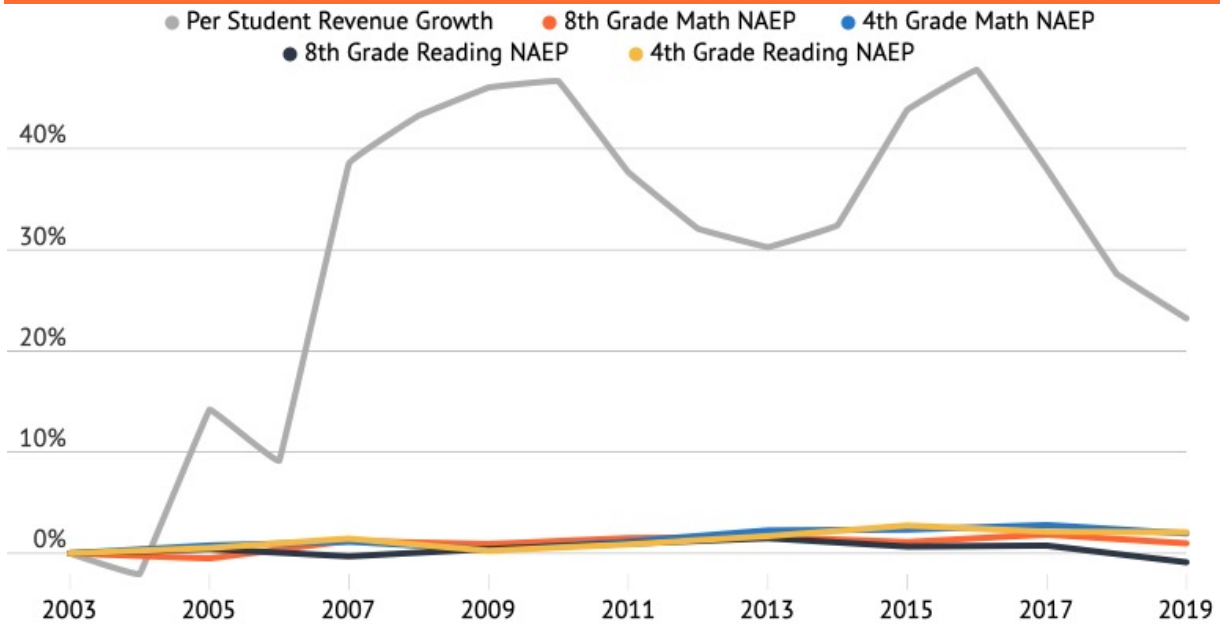
NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Wyoming's 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by five points (+2.1%), ranking 11th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by five points (+2.0%), ranking 30th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores decreased by two points (-0.9%), ranking 33rd in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by three points (+1.0%), ranking 29th.

TABLE 3: NAEP SCORES (2003-2019)

Subject	4th Grade			8th Grade		
	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank
Reading	5	11	3	-2	33	16
Math	5	30	6	3	29	9

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH¹



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Wyoming's low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by three points (+1.4%), ranking 24th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by three points (+1.4%), ranking 36th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores decreased by three points (-1.0%), ranking 38th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by two points (+0.8%), ranking 36th.

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	3	24	2	-3	38	12
Math	3	36	3	2	36	1

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

