

CONNECTICUT

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 Connecticut'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

Connecticut's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$17,158 per student in 2002 to \$24,875 per student in 2020, a 45.0% growth rate that ranked 8th highest in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 139.4%—ranking 6th in the country—going from \$2,600 per student to \$6,224 per student. In 2020, Connecticut had \$3,184,024,000 in total education debt, down \$652 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	\$17,158	\$24,875	45.0%	8	2
Support Services	\$4,855	\$7,827	61.2%	4	4
Instruction	\$9,044	\$12,880	42.4%	8	2
Benefits	\$2,600	\$6,197	138.4%	6	3
Capital	\$1,425	\$1,607	12.8%	23	23
Total Debt	\$5,938	\$6,590	11%	36	31

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

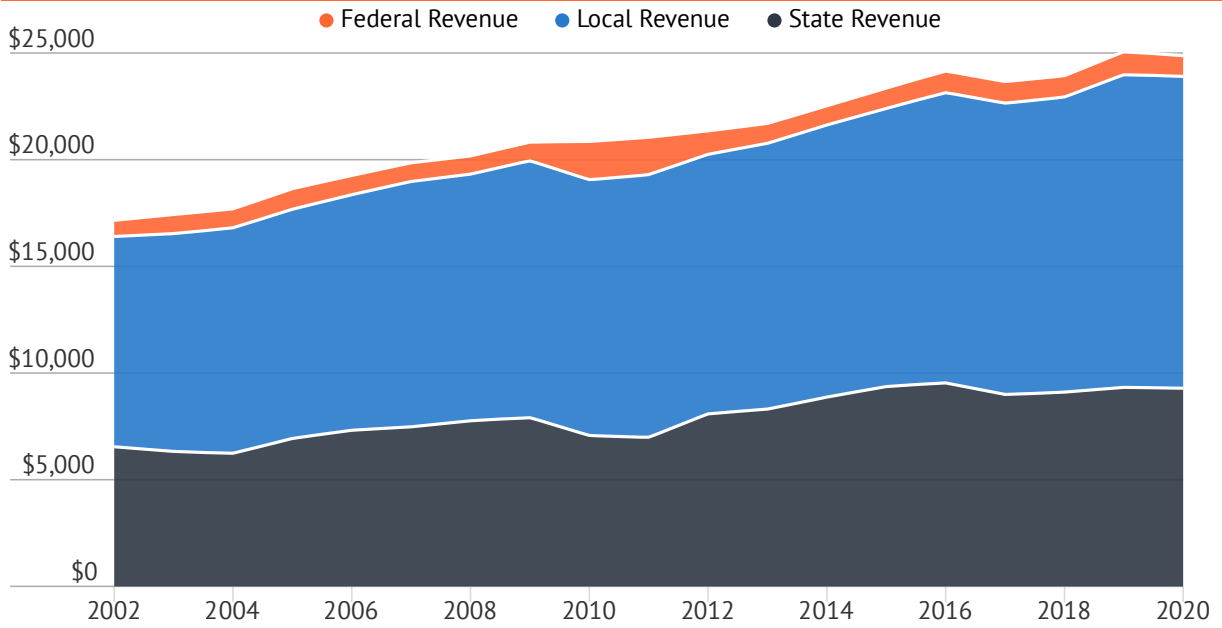
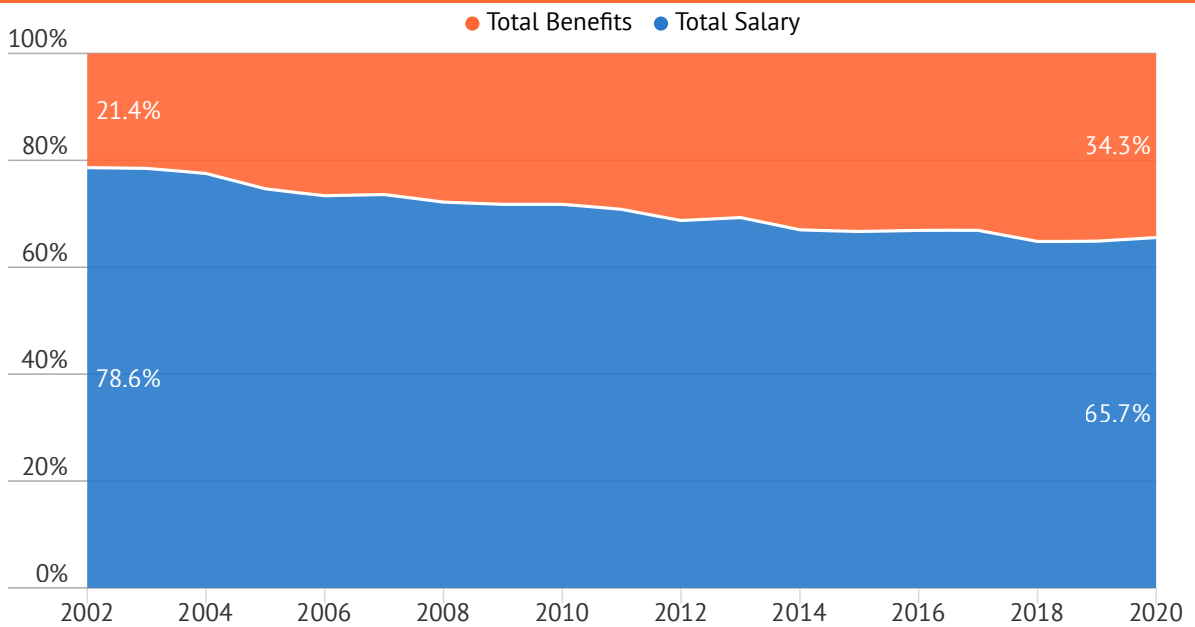


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, Connecticut’s student population declined by 8.2%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 14.1%, with teachers increasing by 1.5% and non-teachers increasing by 26.4%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$77,328 in 2002 to \$78,427 in 2020, a 1.4% growth rate that ranked 20th in the U.S.

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

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	570,228	523,690	-8.2%	45	30
Total Staff	84,884	96,886	14.1%	24	25
Teachers	41,773	42,386	1.5%	35	25
Non-Teachers	43,111	54,500	26.4%	17	23
Average Teacher Salary	\$77,328	\$78,427	1.4%	20	4

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

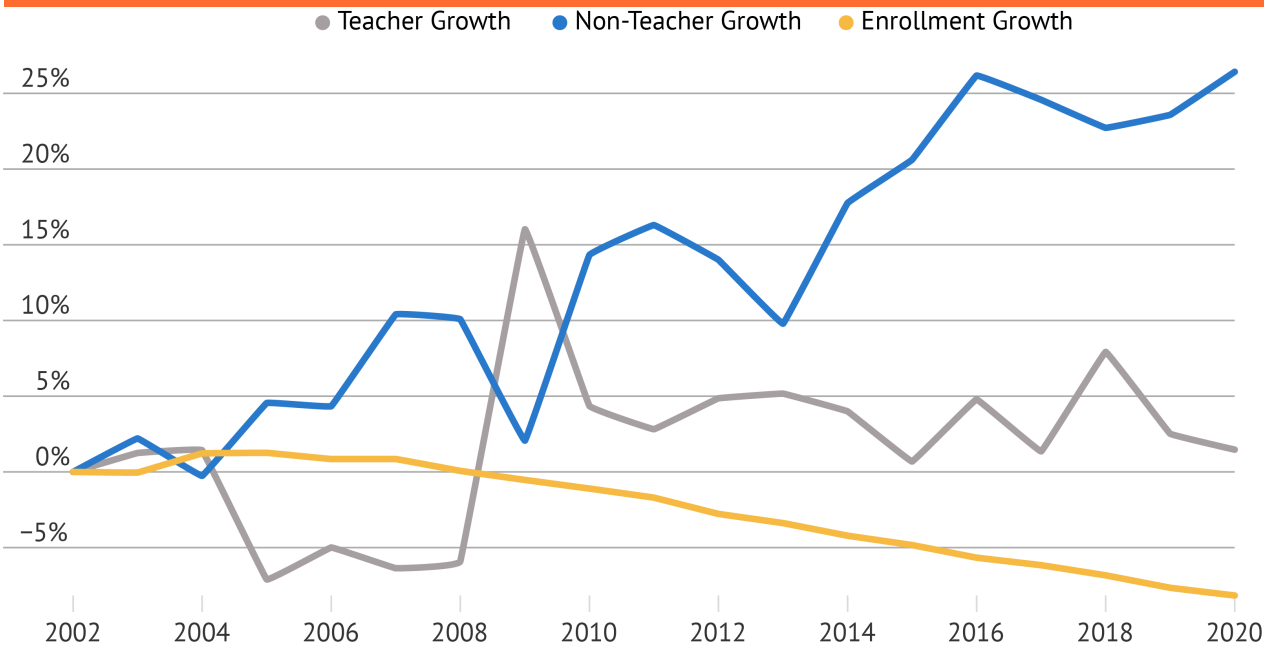
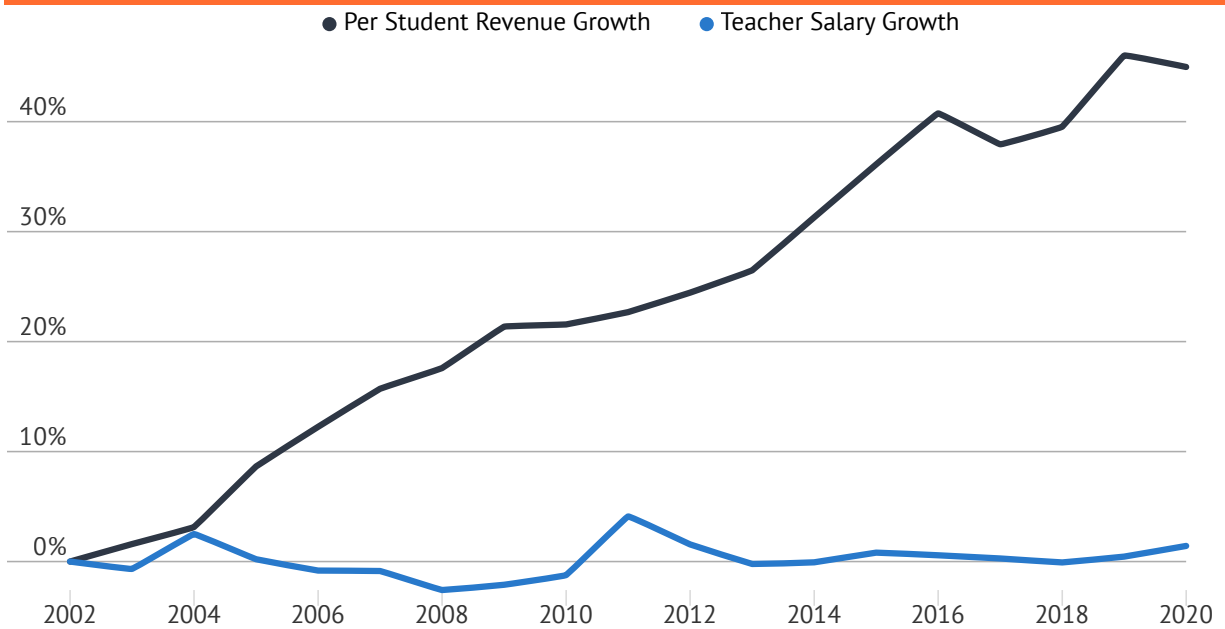


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



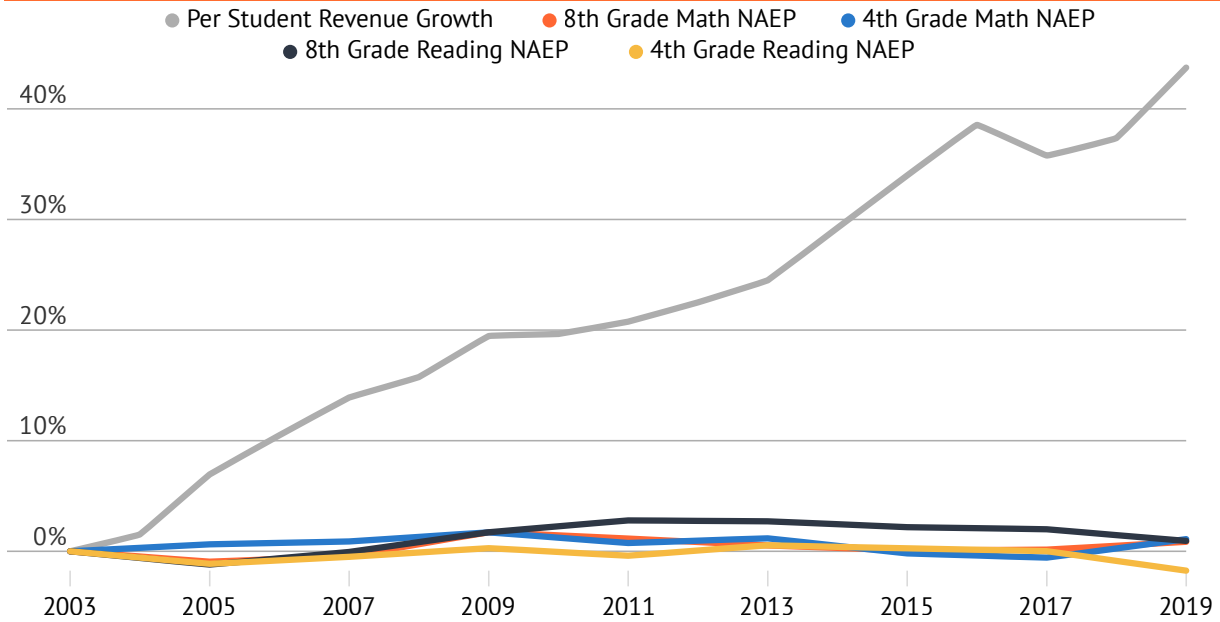
NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Connecticut's 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by four points (-1.7%), ranking 45th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by three points (+1.1%), ranking 38th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores increased by three points (+0.9%), ranking 12th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by two points (+0.9%), ranking 32nd.

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	45	7	3	12	3
Math	3	38	13	2	32	10

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH¹



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Connecticut's low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by zero points (-0.0%), ranking 36th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by seven points (+3.3%), ranking 18th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores increased by nine points (+3.5%), ranking 3rd in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by three points (+1.2%), ranking 33rd.

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	0	36	36	9	3	8
Math	7	18	27	3	33	38

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

