

DELAWARE

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 Delaware'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

Delaware's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$14,896 per student in 2002 to \$20,032 per student in 2020, a 34.5% growth rate that ranked 10th highest in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 91.3%—ranking 17th in the country—going from \$2,592 per student to \$4,958 per student. In 2020, Delaware had \$758,537,000 in total education debt, up \$3,690 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	\$14,896	\$20,032	34.5%	10	9
Support Services	\$4,573	\$6,826	49.3%	11	6
Instruction	\$8,310	\$9,827	18.3%	23	11
Benefits	\$2,592	\$4,958	91.3%	17	9
Capital	\$2,000	\$1,224	-38.8%	49	34
Total Debt	\$2,449	\$6,139	150.7%	6	36

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

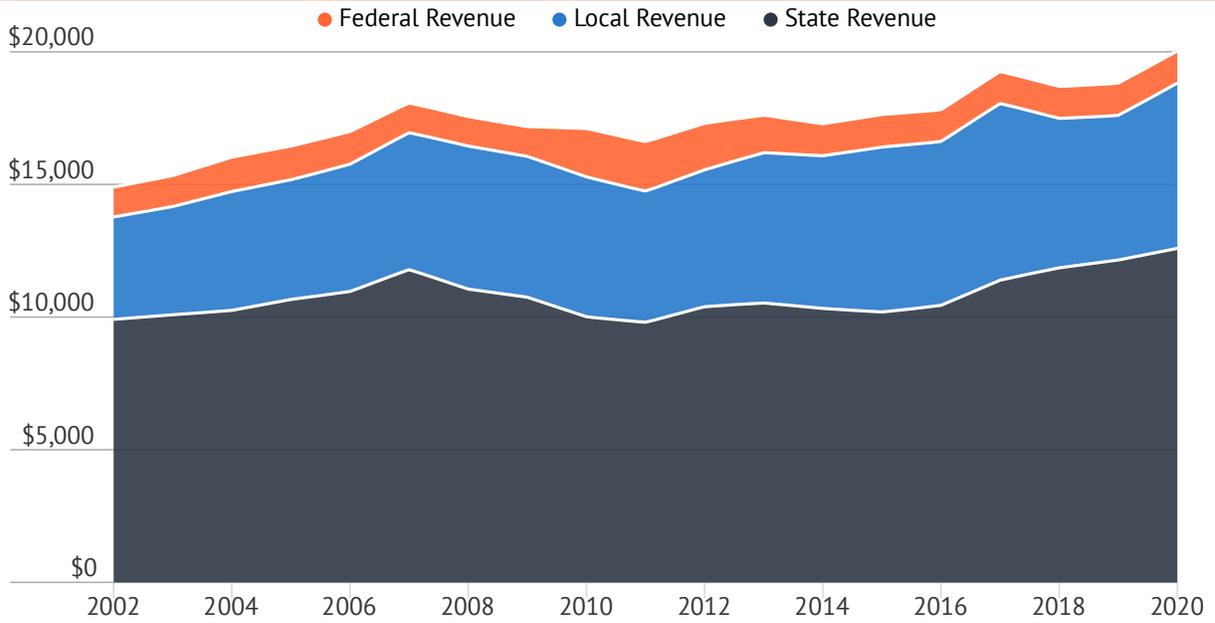
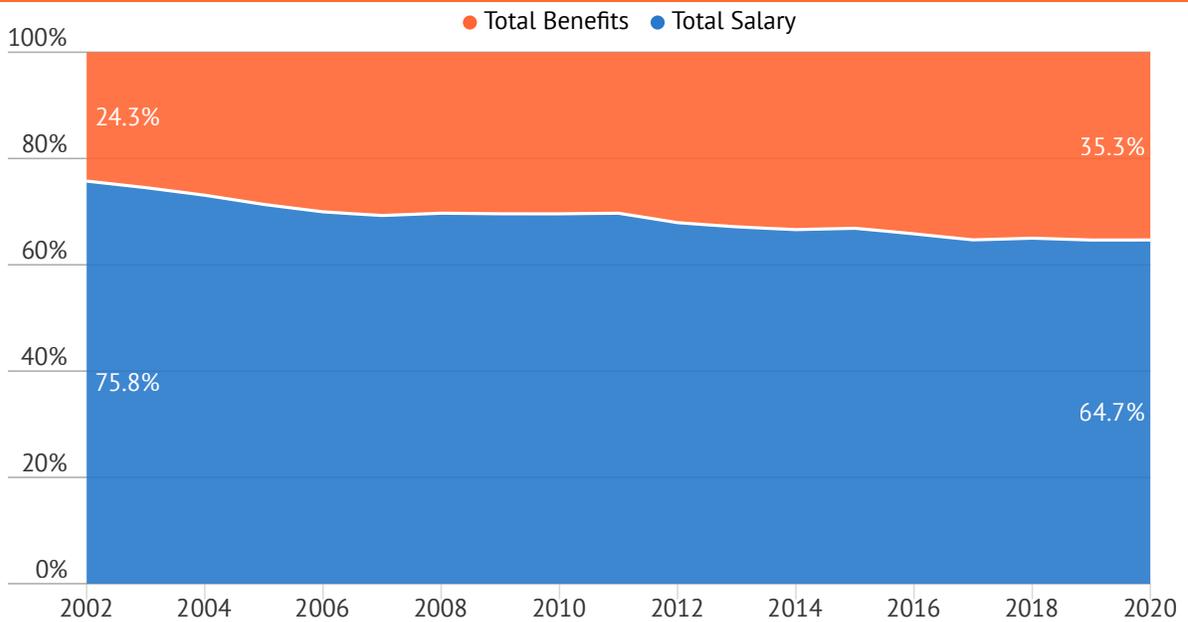


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, Delaware’s student population grew by 21.1%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 20.9%, with teachers increasing by 28.7% and non-teachers increasing by 11.9%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$69,836 in 2002 to \$64,853 in 2020, a –7.1% growth rate that ranked 42nd in the U.S.

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

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	115,555	139,930	21.1%	7	46
Total Staff	14,171	17,133	20.9%	14	48
Teachers	7,571	9,747	28.7%	4	46
Non-Teachers	6,600	7,386	11.9%	36	50
Average Teacher Salary	\$69,836	\$64,853	-7.1%	42	14

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

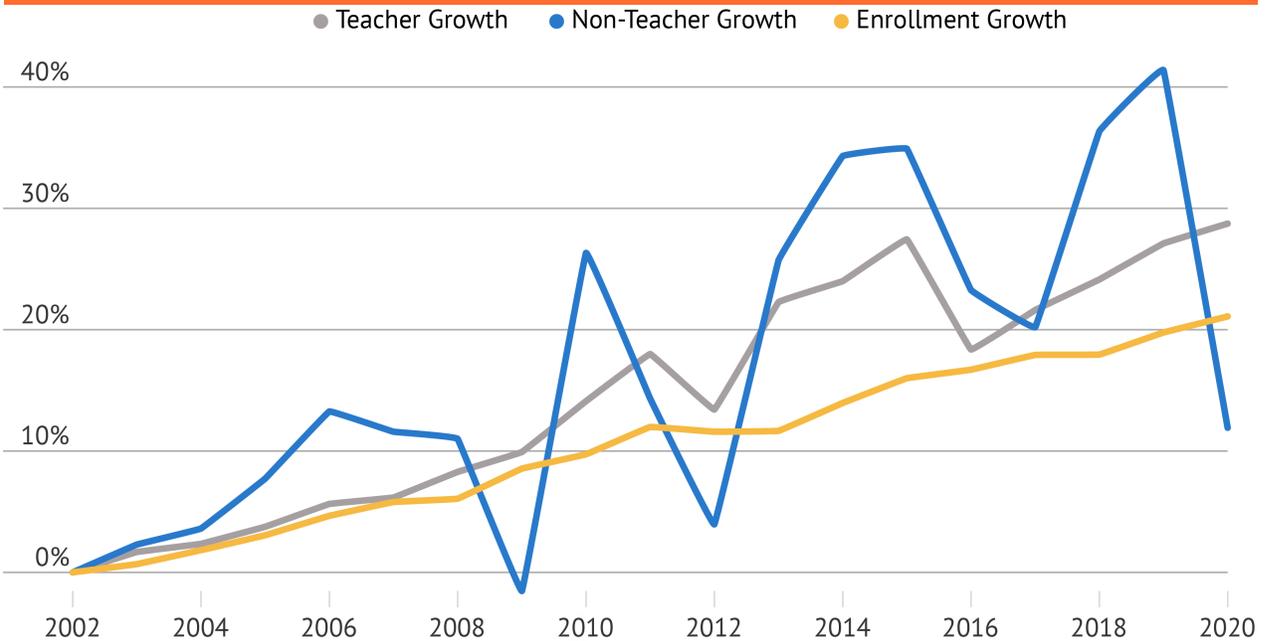
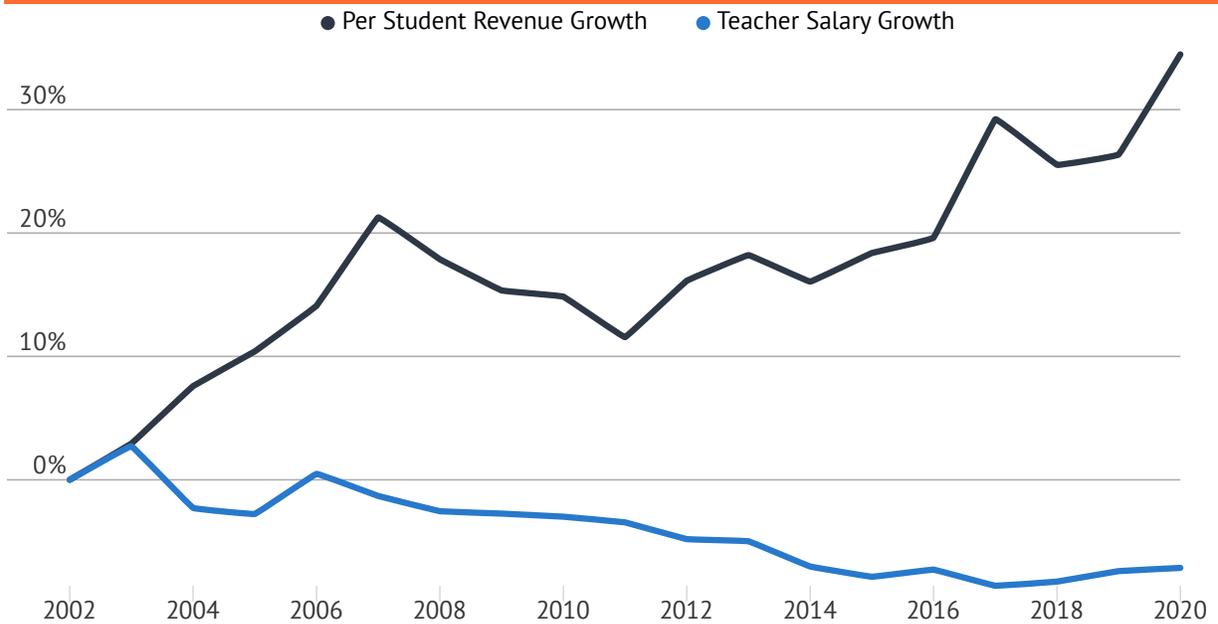


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



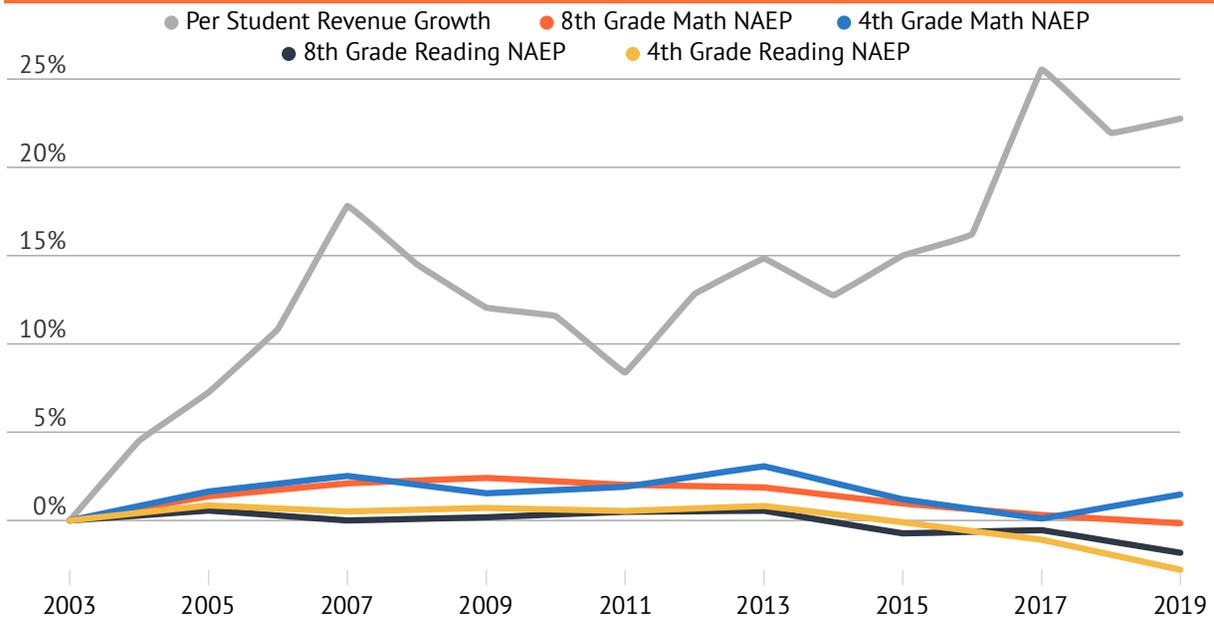
NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Delaware's 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by six points (-2.8%), ranking 49th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by three points (+1.5%), ranking 35th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores decreased by five points (-1.8%), ranking 45th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores fell by zero points (-0.2%), ranking 43rd.

TABLE 3: NAEP SCORES (2003-2019)

Subject	4th Grade			8th Grade		
	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank
Reading	-6	49	37	-5	45	36
Math	3	35	29	0	43	37

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH¹



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Delaware’s low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by nine points (−4.3%), ranking 50th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by two points (+0.8%), ranking 38th. During this time, the state’s 8th grade reading scores decreased by five points (−2.0%), ranking 46th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores fell by two points (−0.6%), ranking 48th.

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	−9	50	44	−5	46	46
Math	2	38	33	−2	48	48

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

