

LOUISIANA

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 Louisiana'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

Louisiana's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$10,411 per student in 2002 to \$13,753 per student in 2020, a 32.1% growth rate that ranked 12th highest in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 98.4%—ranking 15th in the country—going from \$1,634 per student to \$3,243 per student. In 2020, Louisiana had \$3,268,712,000 in total education debt, up \$685 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	\$10,411	\$13,753	32.1%	12	33
Support Services	\$3,060	\$4,555	48.8%	12	26
Instruction	\$5,741	\$6,626	15.4%	28	32
Benefits	\$1,634	\$3,243	98.4%	15	25
Capital	\$882	\$829	-6.0%	30	46
Total Debt	\$4,441	\$5,126	15.4%	34	41

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

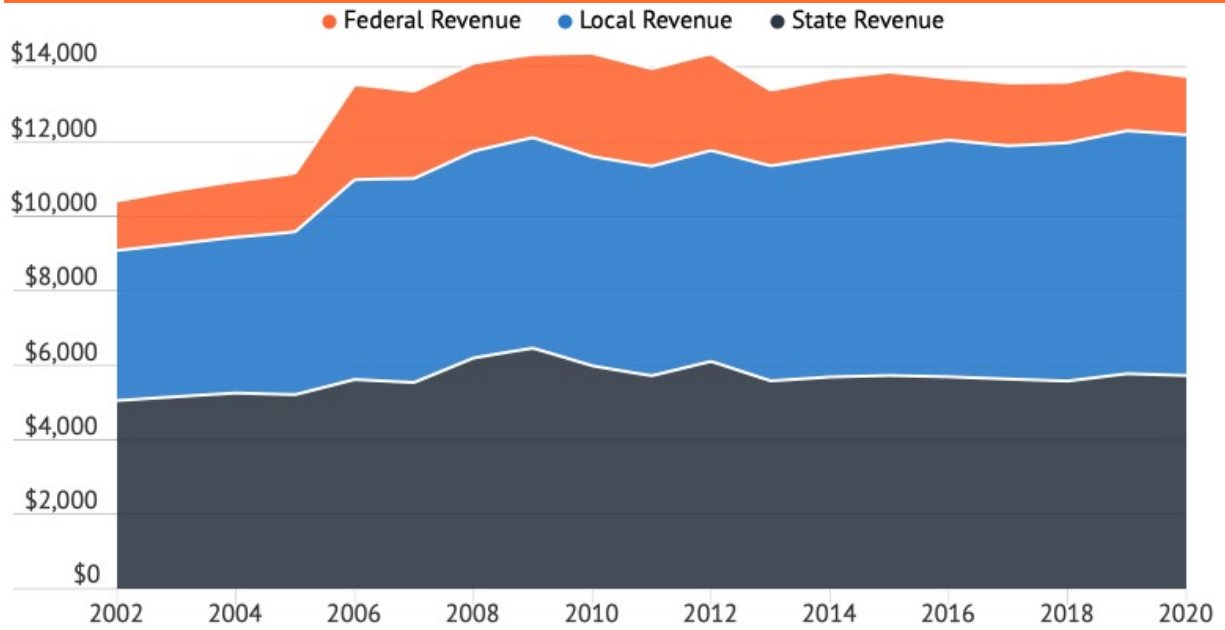
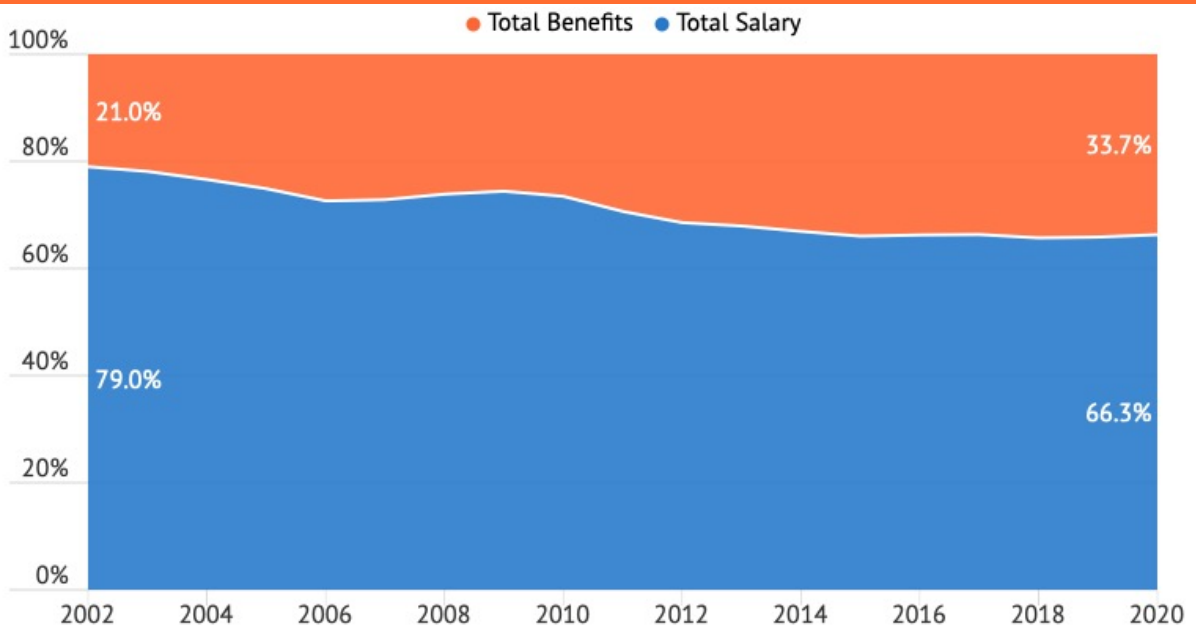


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, Louisiana’s student population declined by 2.9%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff decreased by 22.0%, with teachers decreasing by 22.8% and non-teachers decreasing by 21.1%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$52,458 in 2002 to \$51,566 in 2020, a -1.7% growth rate that ranked 27th in the U.S.

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

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	731,328	710,439	-2.9%	38	25
Total Staff	101,552	79,255	-22.0%	50	27
Teachers	49,980	38,589	-22.8%	50	29
Non-Teachers	51,572	40,666	-21.1%	48	28
Average Teacher Salary	\$52,458	\$51,566	-1.7%	27	42

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

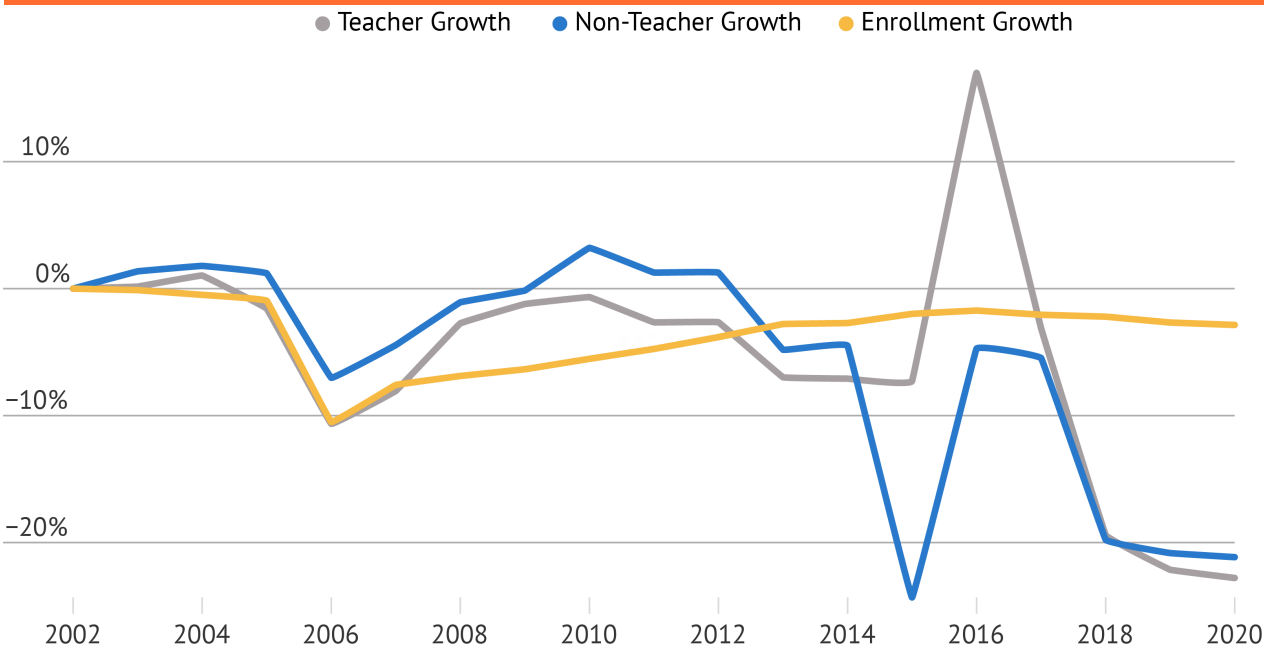
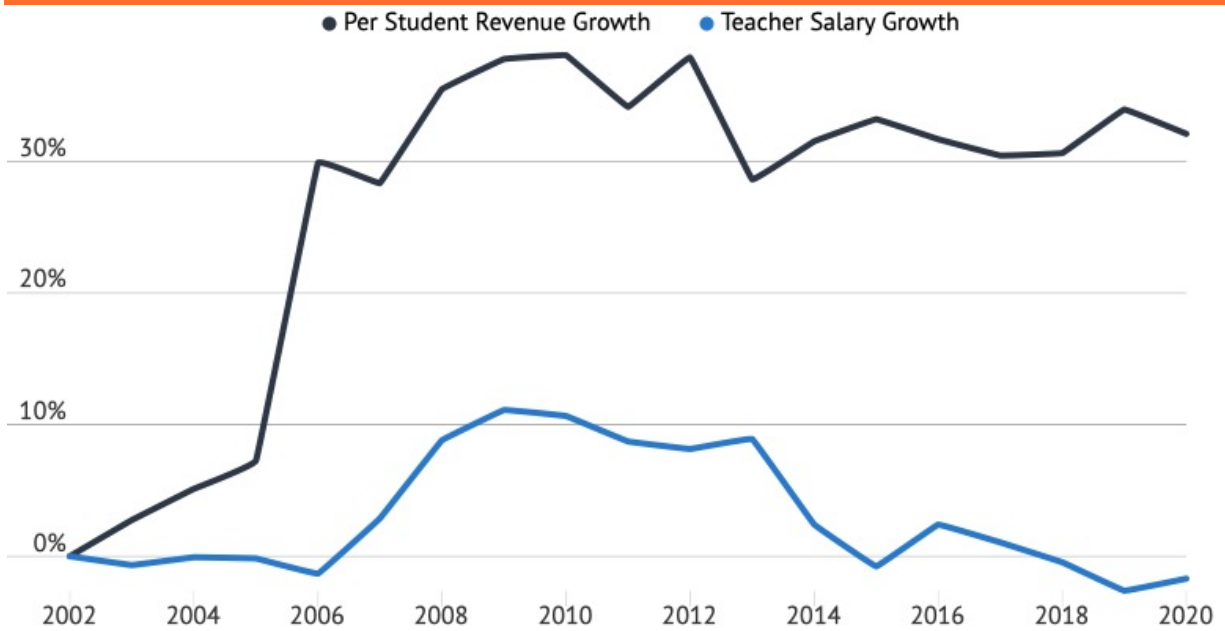


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



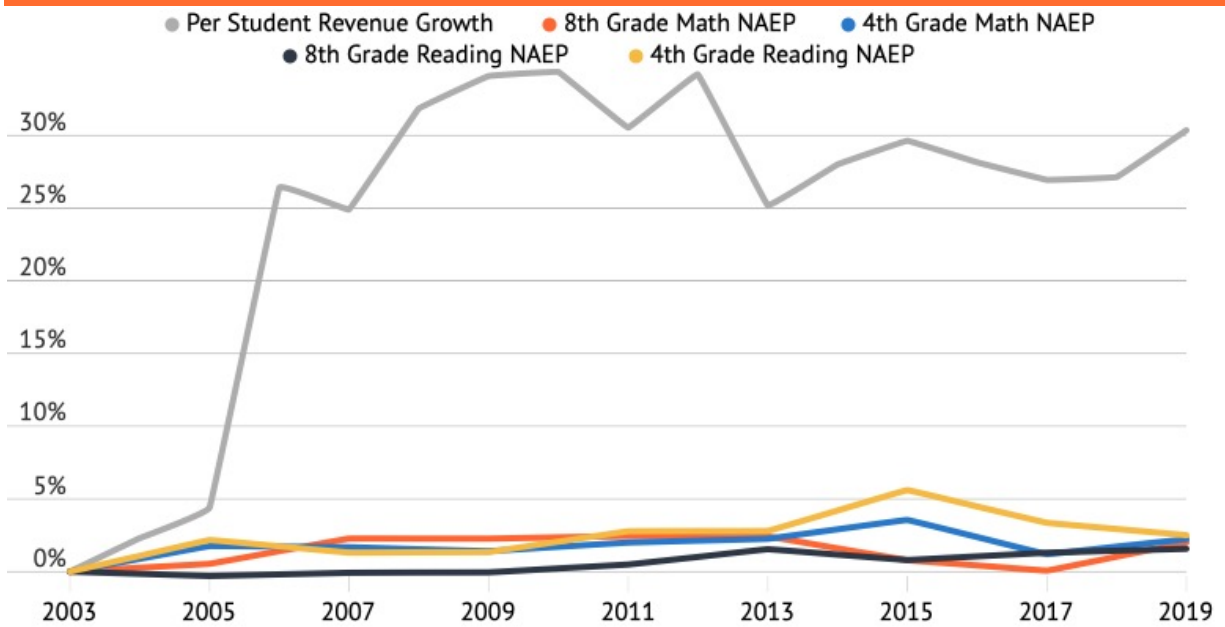
NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Louisiana's 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by five points (+2.5%), ranking 9th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by five points (+2.2%), ranking 28th. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores increased by four points (+1.6%), ranking 8th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by five points (+2.0%), ranking 18th.

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	9	48	4	8	44
Math	5	28	48	5	18	48

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH¹



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Louisiana’s low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by seven points (+3.7%), ranking 9th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by five points (+2.1%), ranking 31st. During this time, the state’s 8th grade reading scores increased by five points (+1.9%), ranking 12th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by six points (+2.3%), ranking 21st.

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	7	9	46	5	12	32
Math	5	31	45	6	21	44

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

