

MISSISSIPPI

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 Mississippi'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

Mississippi's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$8,878 per student in 2002 to \$10,774 per student in 2020, a 21.3% growth rate that ranked 27th in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 53.6%—ranking 31st in the country—going from \$1,315 per student to \$2,020 per student. In 2020, Mississippi had \$2,063,518,000 in total education debt, up \$442 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	\$8,878	\$10,774	21.3%	27	48
Support Services	\$2,569	\$3,547	38.1%	16	44
Instruction	\$4,655	\$5,546	19.1%	21	46
Benefits	\$1,315	\$2,020	53.6%	31	42
Capital	\$879	\$1,170	33.2%	16	37
Total Debt	\$4,012	\$4,454	11.0%	35	43

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

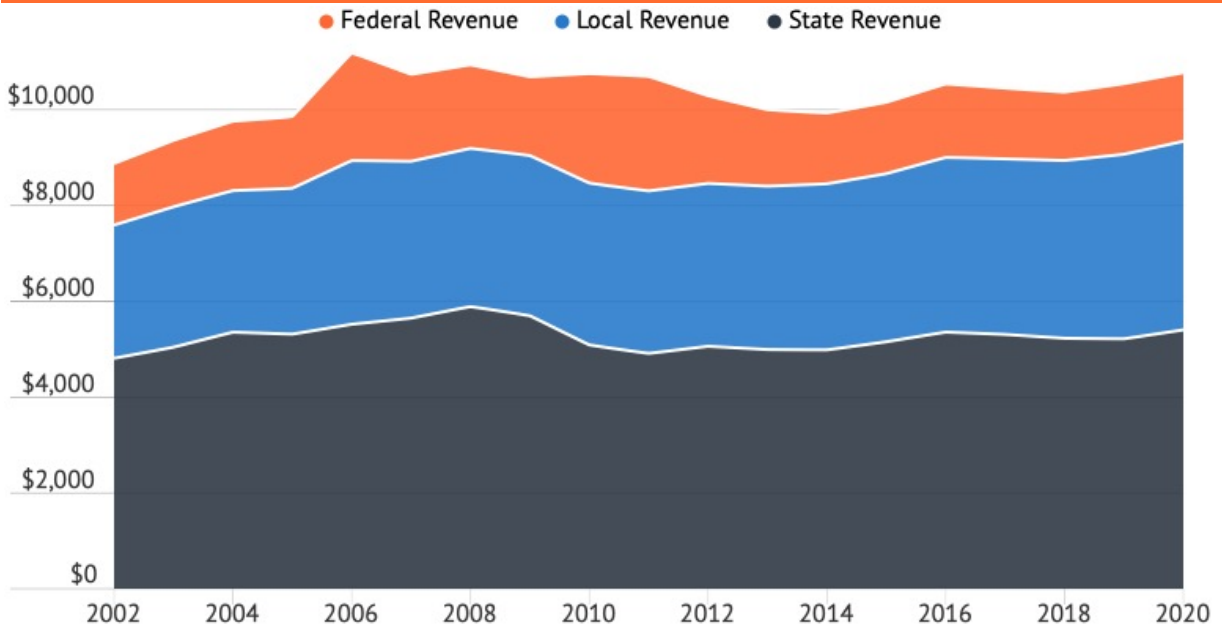
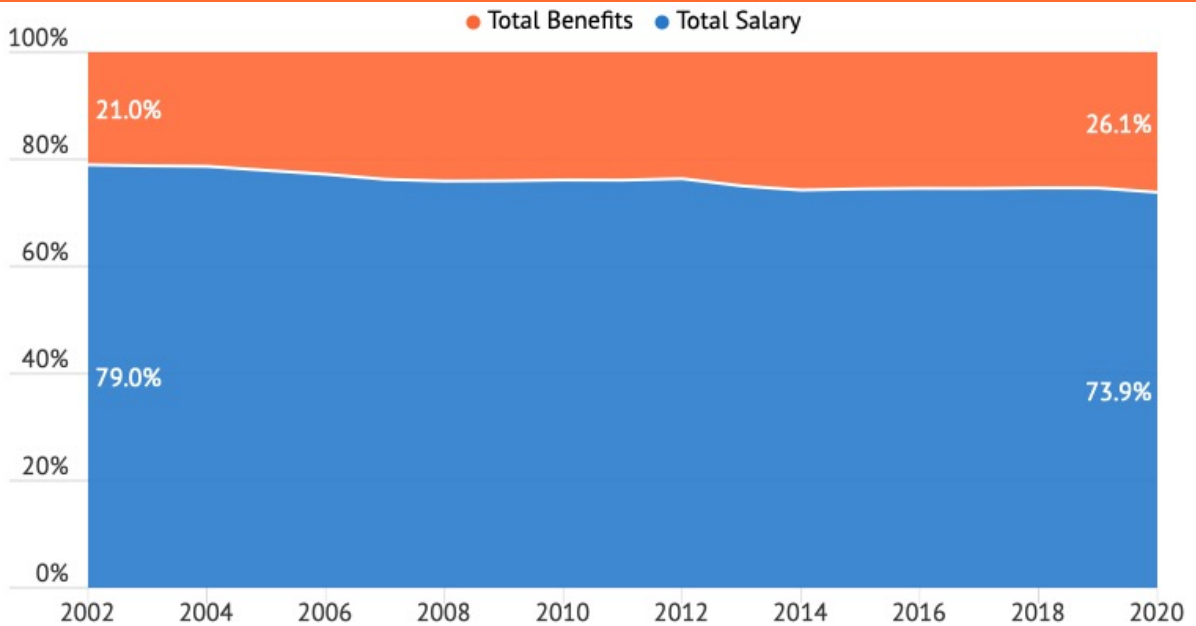


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, Mississippi’s student population declined by 5.6%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 3.2%, with teachers increasing by 1.2% and non-teachers increasing by 5.0%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$48,078 in 2002 to \$46,843 in 2020, a -2.6% growth rate that ranked 30th in the U.S.

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

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	493,507	466,002	-5.6%	40	35
Total Staff	65,155	67,226	3.2%	39	33
Teachers	31,214	31,578	1.2%	36	32
Non-Teachers	33,941	35,648	5.0%	39	32
Average Teacher Salary	\$48,078	\$46,843	-2.6%	30	50

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

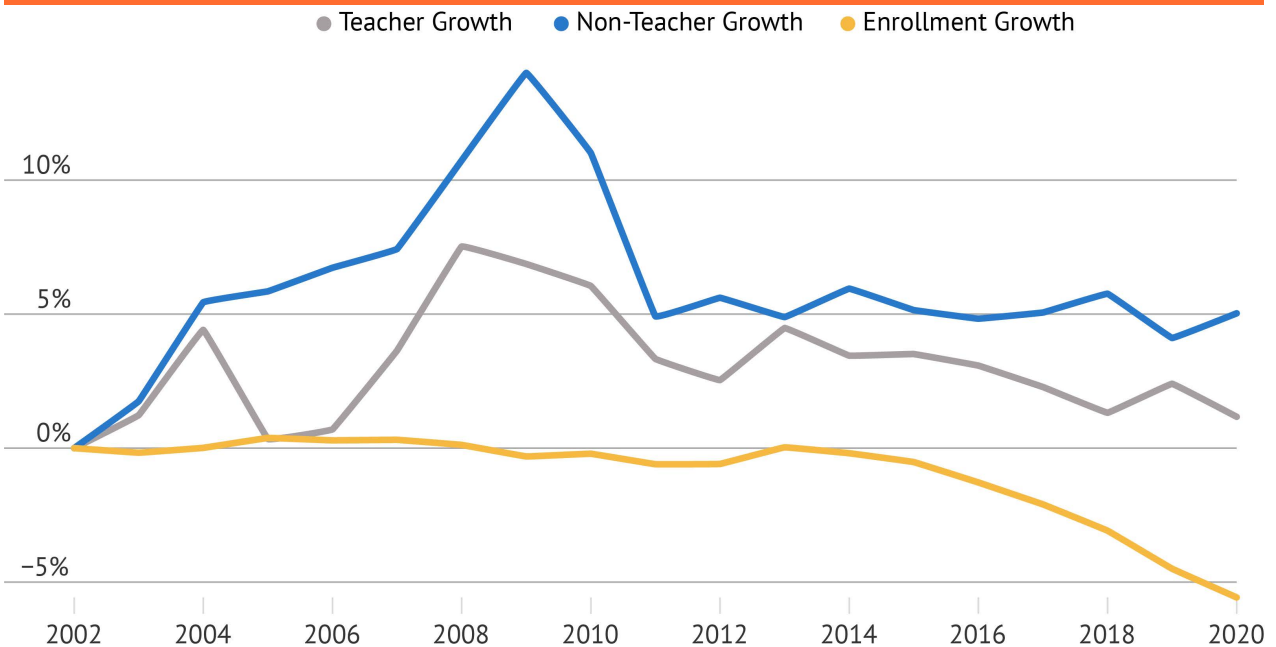
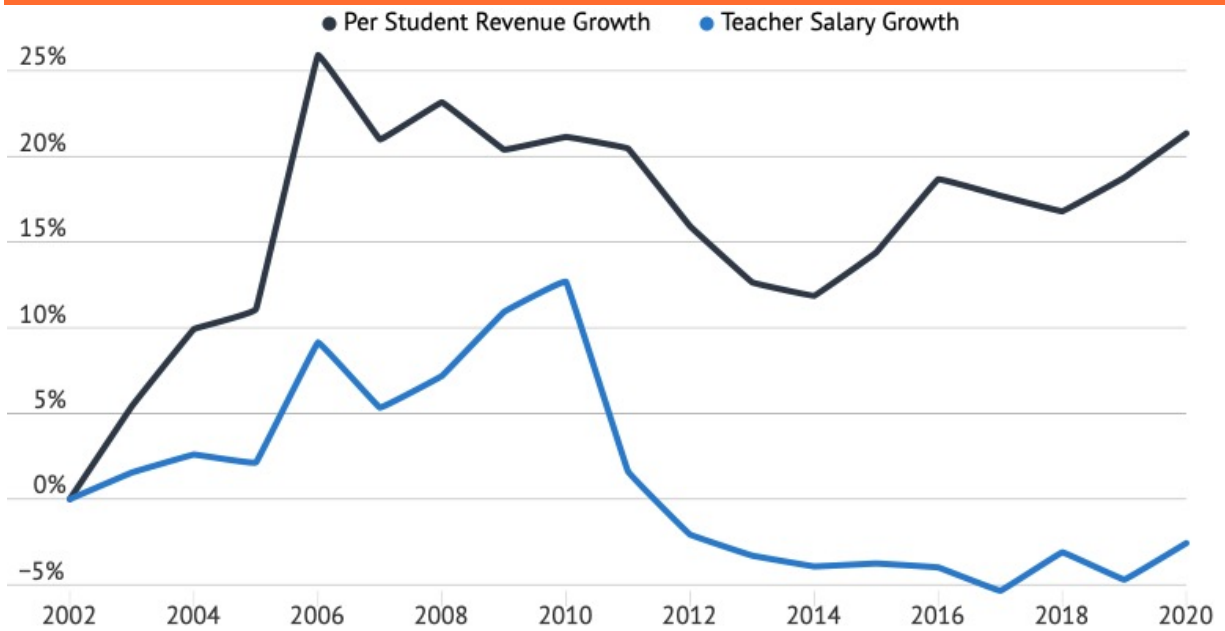


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



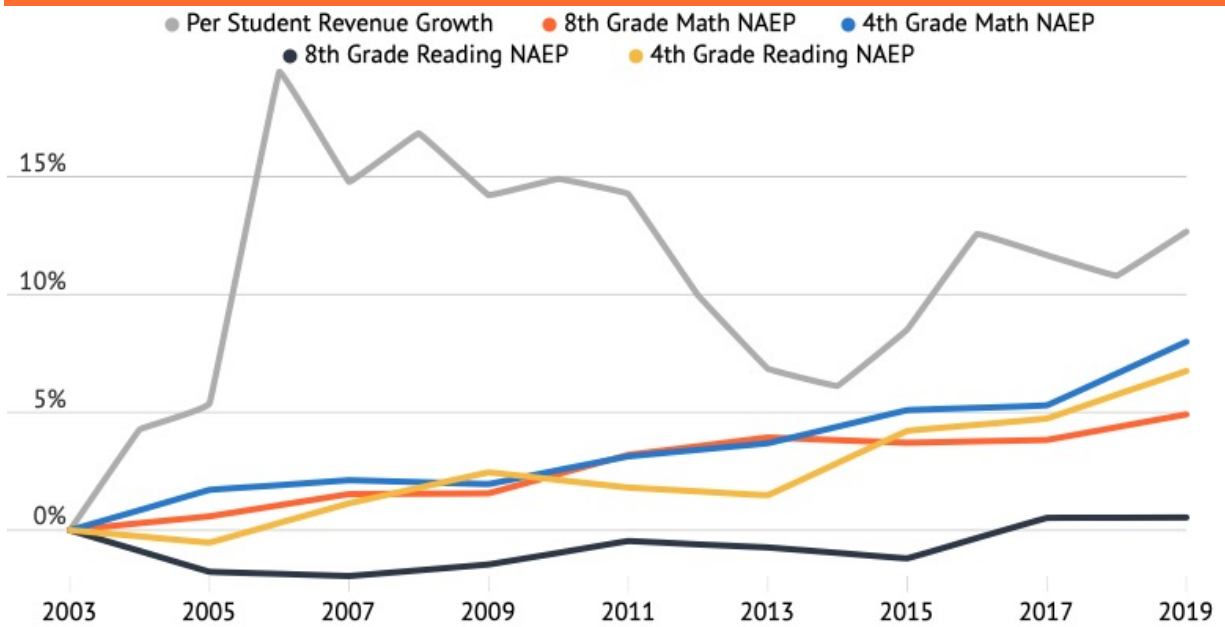
NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Mississippi's 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by 14 points (+6.8%), ranking 1st in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by 18 points (+8.0%), ranking 1st. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores increased by one point (+0.5%), ranking 15th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by 13 points (+4.9%), ranking 1st.

TABLE 3: NAEP SCORES (2003-2019)

Subject	4th Grade			8th Grade		
	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank
Reading	14	1	29	1	15	45
Math	18	1	23	13	1	46

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH¹



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, Mississippi's low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores increased by 18 points (+9.1%), ranking 2nd in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by 20 points (+9.3%), ranking 1st. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores increased by four points (+1.7%), ranking 13th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by 16 points (+6.4%), ranking 1st.

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	18	2	3	4	13	19
Math	20	1	2	16	1	28

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

