

SOUTH DAKOTA

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 South Dakota'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

South Dakota's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$10,533 per student in 2002 to \$12,410 per student in 2020, a 17.8% growth rate that ranked 31st in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 30.7%—ranking 44th in the country—going from \$1,389 per student to \$1,815 per student. In 2020, South Dakota had \$1,231,906,000 in total education debt, up \$3,629 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	\$10,533	\$12,410	17.8%	31	38
Support Services	\$3,170	\$3,637	14.7%	41	42
Instruction	\$5,518	\$6,031	9.3%	34	41
Benefits	\$1,389	\$1,815	30.7%	44	45
Capital	\$1,697	\$1,786	5.3%	27	17
Total Debt	\$5,190	\$8,819	69.9%	18	21

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

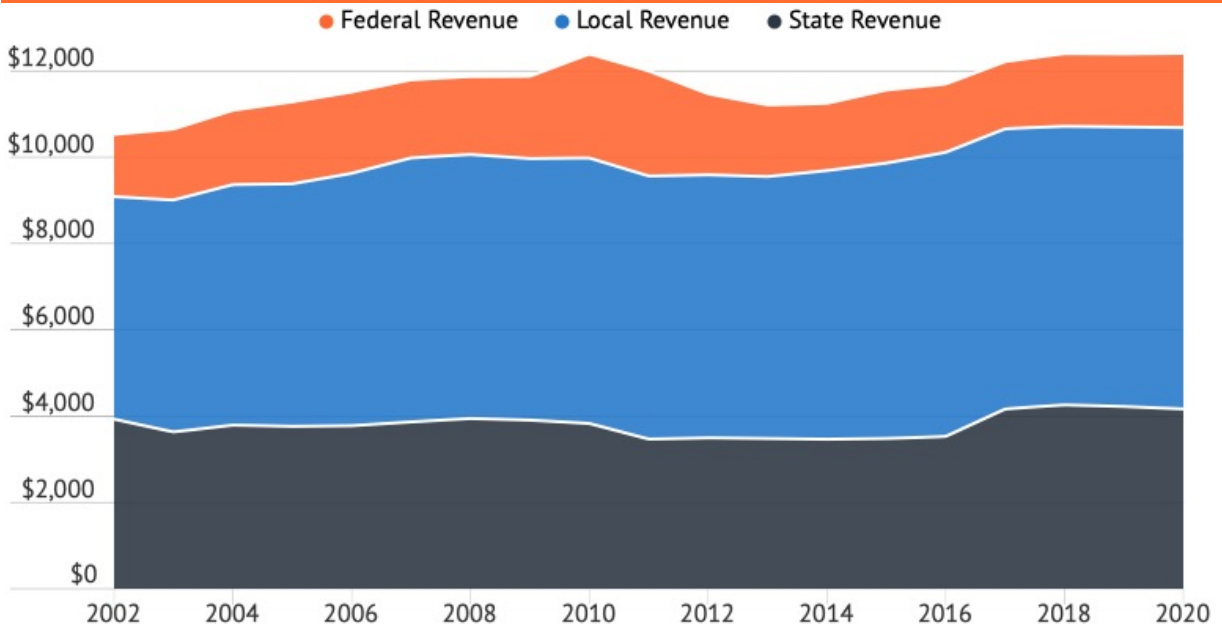
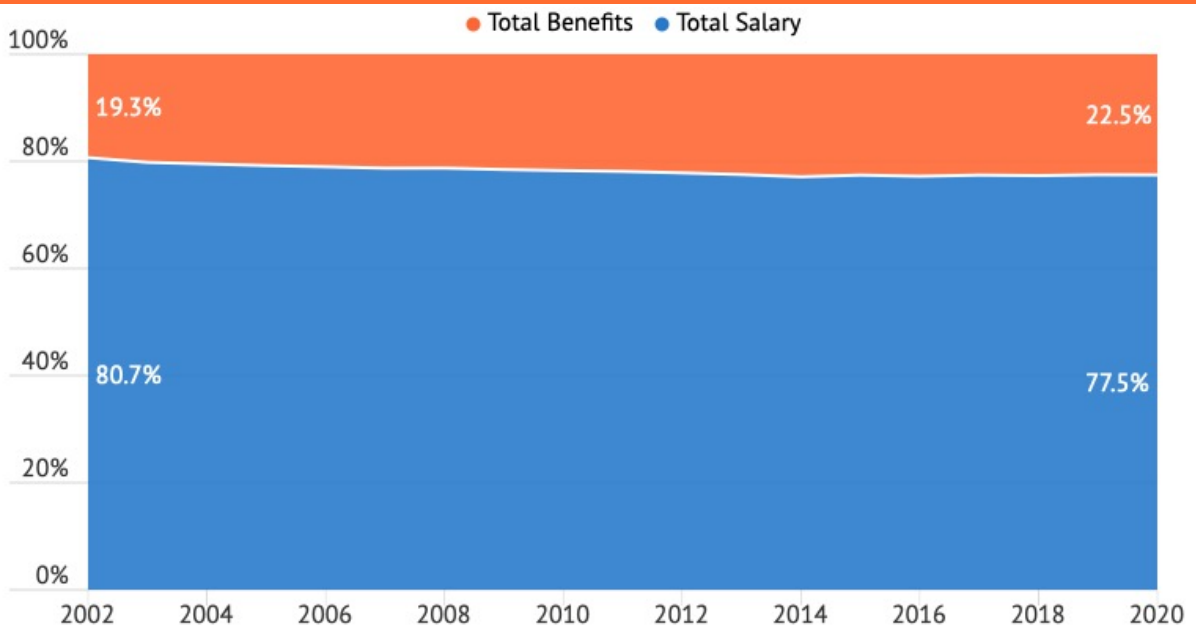


FIGURE 2: K-12 TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS (2002-2020)



ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, South Dakota’s student population grew by 9.7%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 8.9%, with teachers increasing by 6.0% and non-teachers increasing by 12.0%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$45,190 in 2002 to \$48,984 in 2020, an 8.4% growth rate that ranked 6th in the U.S.

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

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	127,542	139,949	9.7%	18	45
Total Staff	18,512	20,168	8.9%	34	45
Teachers	9,370	9,930	6.0%	25	45
Non-Teachers	9,142	10,238	12.0%	35	45
Average Teacher Salary	\$45,190	\$48,984	8.4%	6	49

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

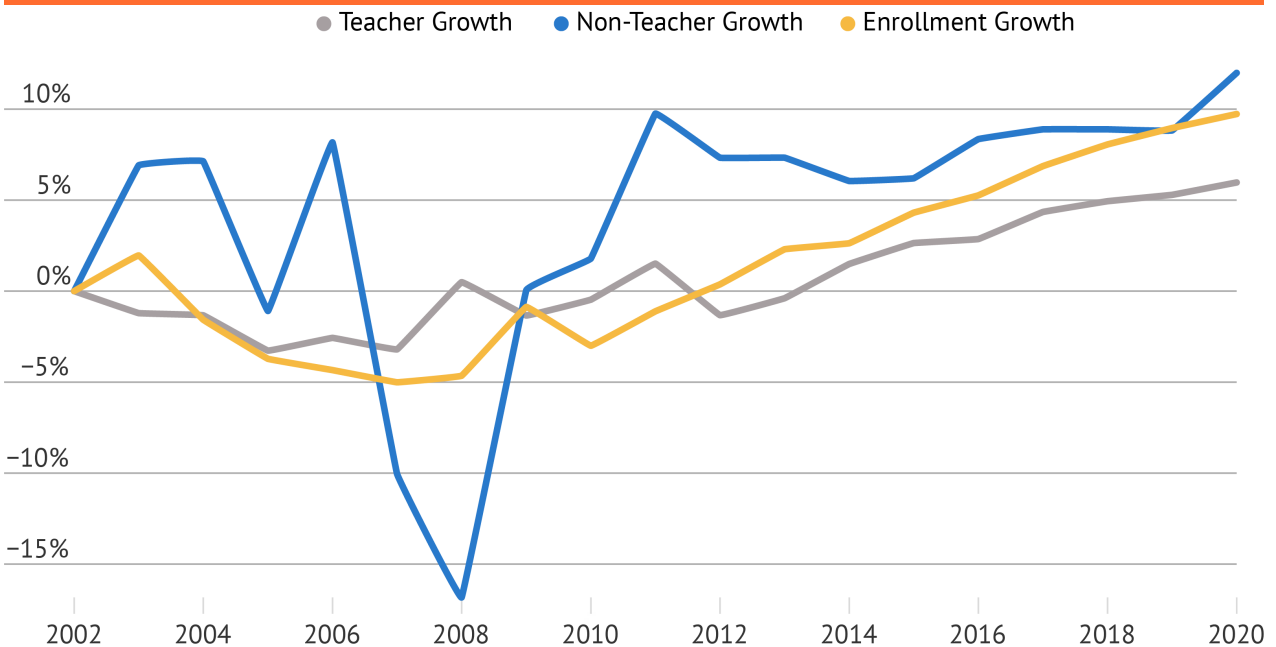
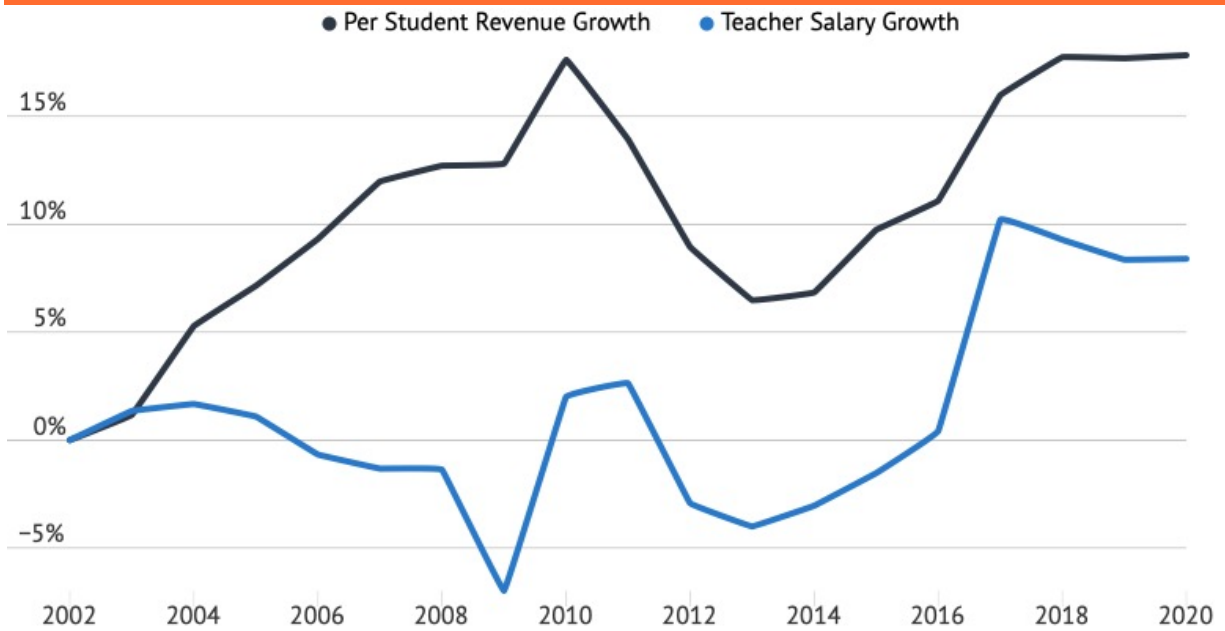


FIGURE 4: TEACHER SALARY GROWTH VS. REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH (2002-2020)



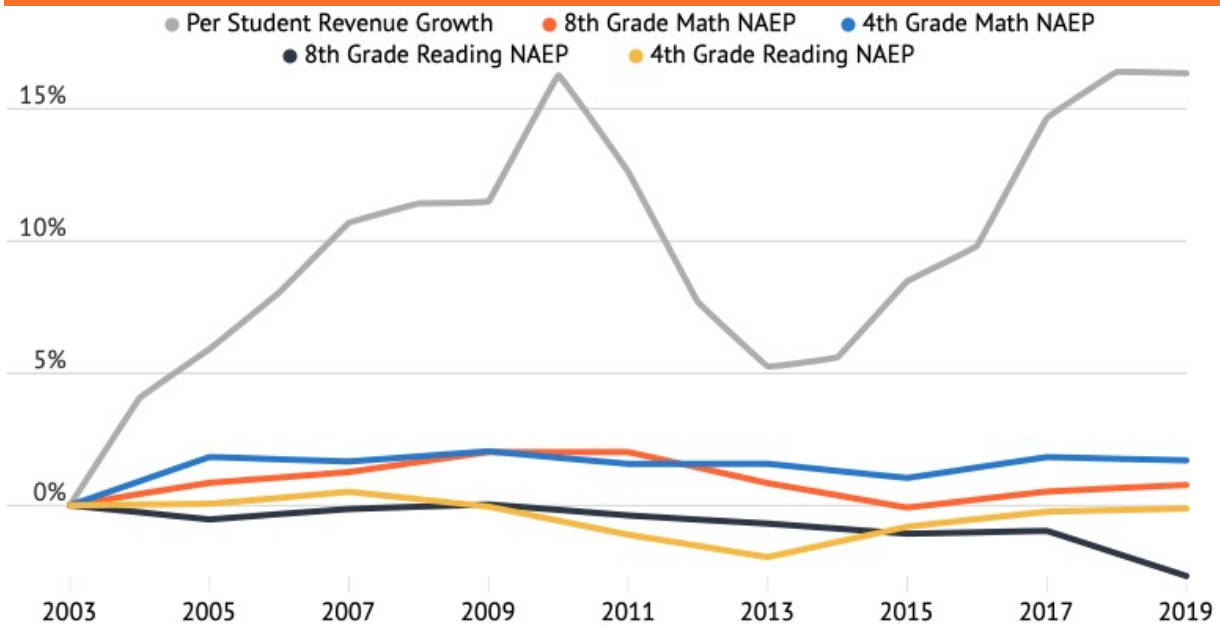
NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, South Dakota's 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by zero points (-0.1%), ranking 34th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores grew by four points (+1.7%), ranking 33rd. During this time, the state's 8th grade reading scores decreased by seven points (-2.7%), ranking 50th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores grew by two points (+0.8%), ranking 34th.

TABLE 3: NAEP SCORES (2003-2019)

Subject	4th Grade			8th Grade		
	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank
Reading	0	34	14	-7	50	27
Math	4	33	19	2	34	6

FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH¹



LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, South Dakota’s low-income 4th grade NAEP reading scores decreased by two points (-0.9%), ranking 45th in the U.S., while its 4th grade math scores fell by one point (-0.4%), ranking 48th. During this time, the state’s 8th grade reading scores decreased by 13 points (-4.9%), ranking 50th in the U.S., while its 8th grade math scores fell by one point (-0.5%), ranking 47th.

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	-2	45	20	-13	50	36
Math	-1	48	37	-1	47	6

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

