

# CALIFORNIA

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 California'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.

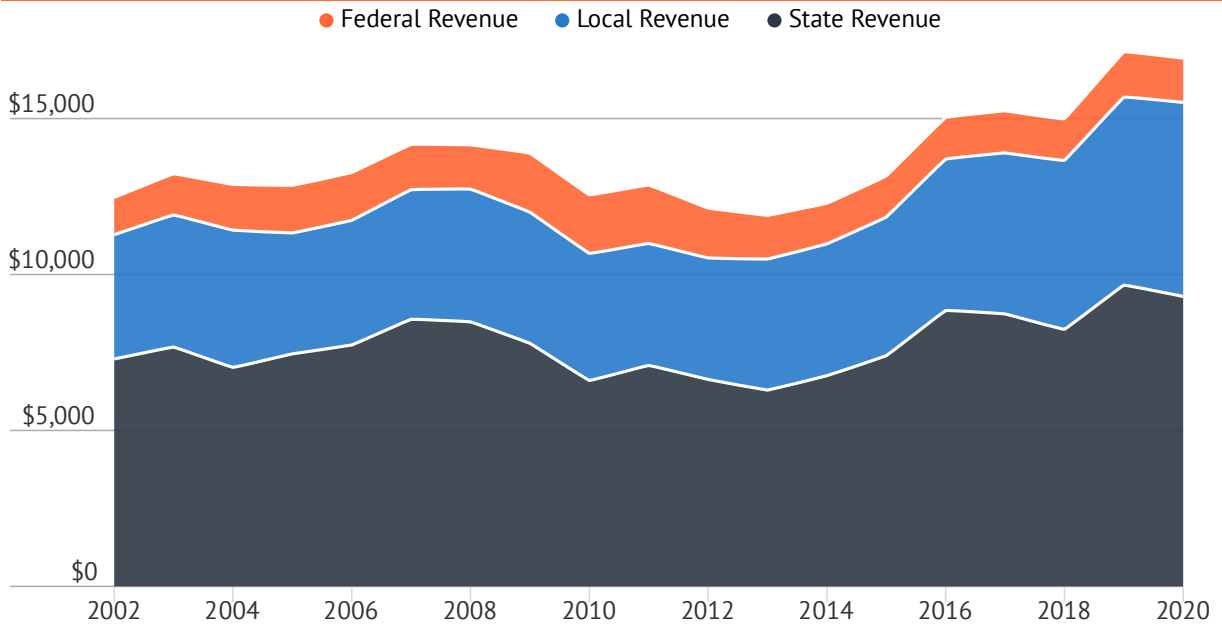
## SPENDING TRENDS

California's inflation-adjusted education revenue grew from \$12,471 per student in 2002 to \$16,934 per student in 2020, a 35.8% growth rate that ranked 9<sup>th</sup> highest in the U.S. During this time, real spending on employee benefits grew by 119.5%—ranking 11<sup>th</sup> in the country—going from \$1,791 per student to \$3,932 per student. In 2020, California had \$88,209,077,000 in total education debt, up \$11,343 per student in real terms since 2002.

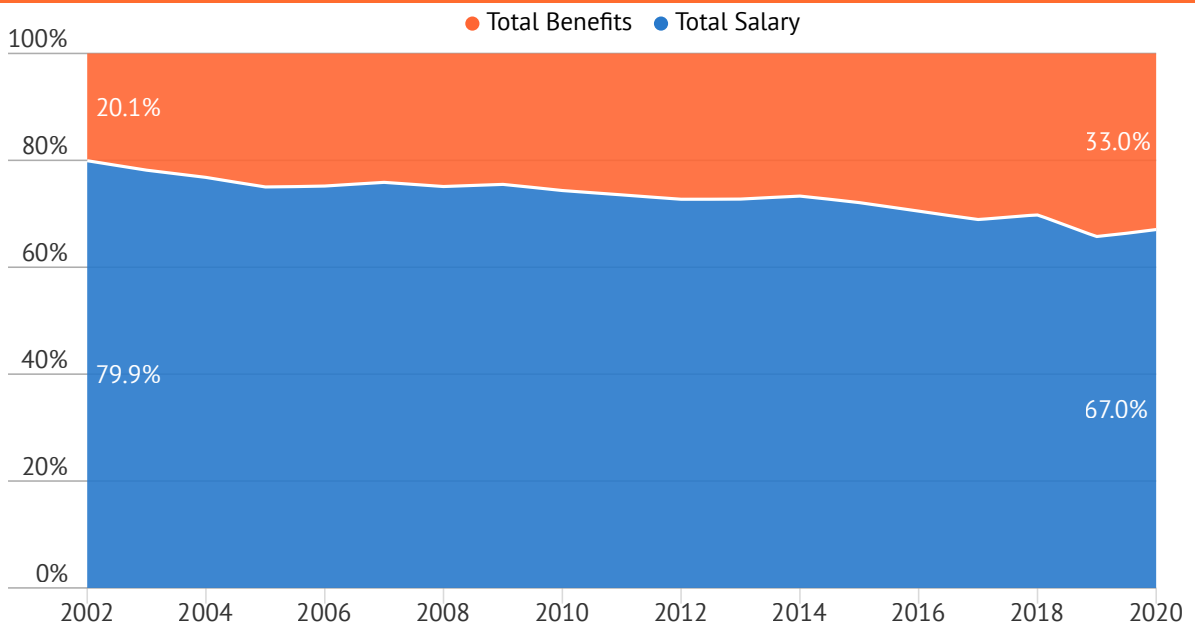
**TABLE 1: SPENDING TRENDS (2002-2020)**

Category (Per Student)	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Revenue	\$12,471	\$16,934	35.8%	9	17
Support Services	\$3,753	\$5,190	38.3%	15	17
Instruction	\$6,683	\$8,316	24.4%	16	19
Benefits	\$1,791	\$3,932	119.5%	11	17
Capital	\$1,646	\$1,994	21.2%	21	11
Total Debt	\$4,293	\$15,636	264.3%	4	5

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



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



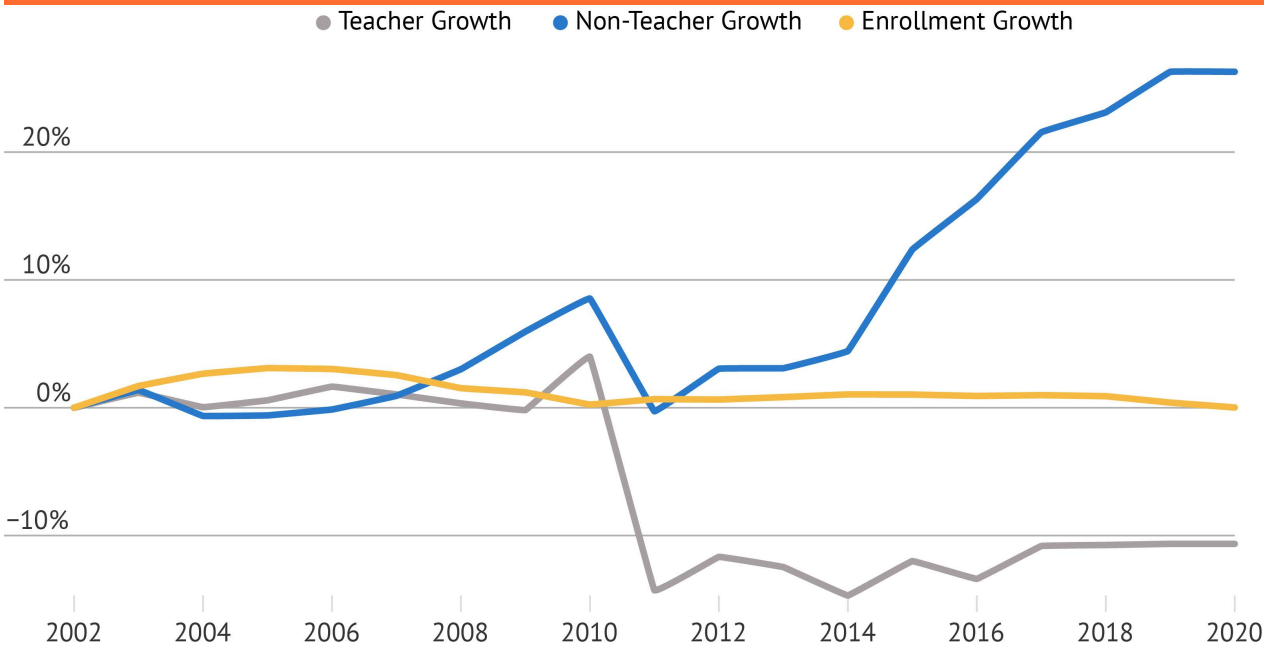
## ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS

Between 2002 and 2020, California’s student population increased by 0.0%. At the same time, the number of total public education staff grew by 6.7%, with teachers decreasing by 10.7% and non-teachers increasing by 26.3%. The average inflation-adjusted teacher salary in the state went from \$78,479 in 2002 to \$84,531 in 2020, a 7.7% growth rate that ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the U.S.

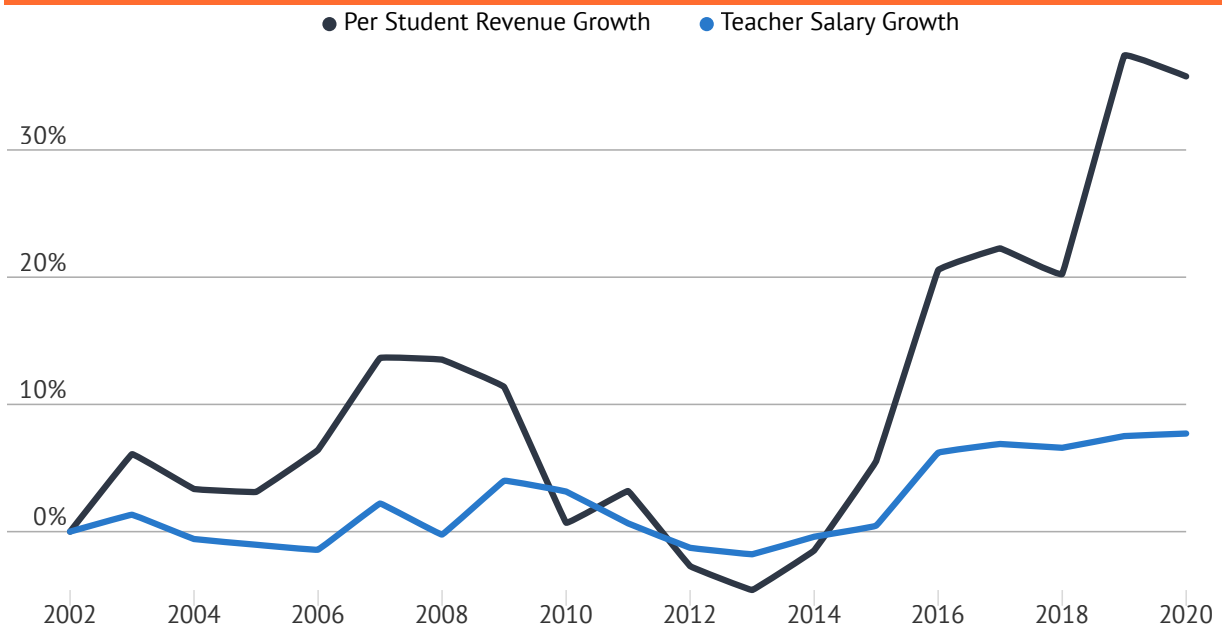
**TABLE 2: ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING TRENDS (2002-2020)**

Category	2002	2020	Growth Rate	Growth Rank	2020 Rank
Enrollment	6,247,726	6,249,005	0.0%	32	1
Total Staff	574,466	613,096	6.7%	36	2
Teachers	304,203	271,805	-10.7%	46	2
Non-Teachers	270,263	341,291	26.3%	18	2
Average Teacher Salary	\$78,479	\$84,531	7.7%	9	2

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



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



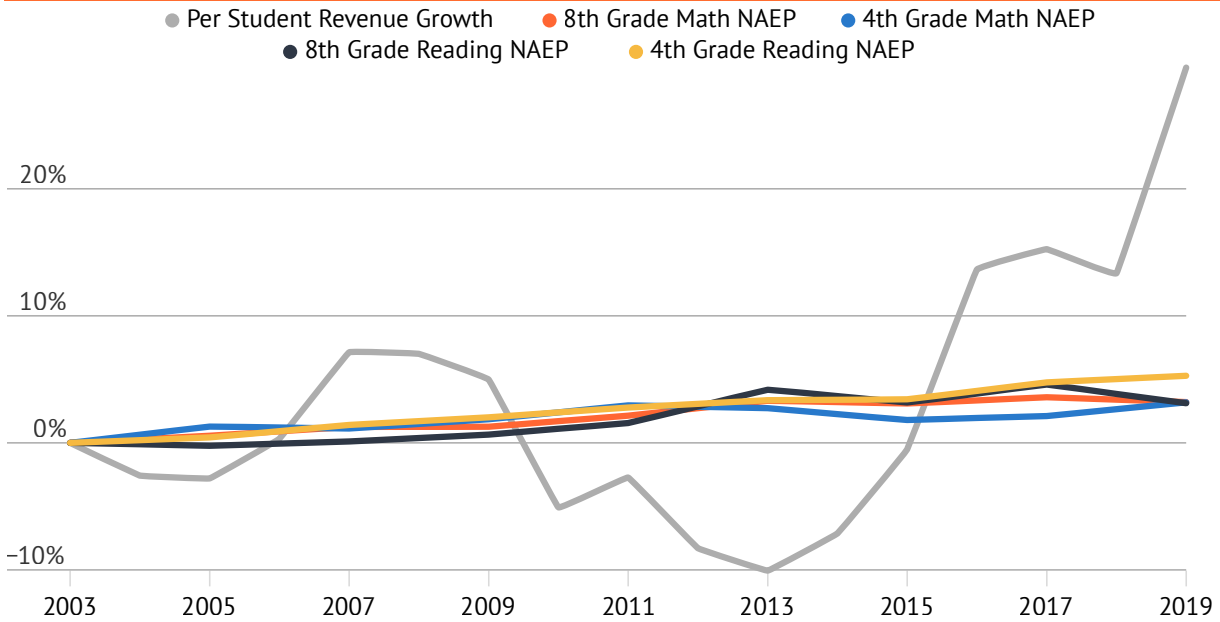
## NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, California's 4<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP reading scores increased by 11 points (+5.3%), ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> in the U.S., while its 4<sup>th</sup> grade math scores grew by seven points (+3.2%), ranking 16<sup>th</sup>. During this time, the state's 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores increased by eight points (+3.1%), ranking 1<sup>st</sup> in the U.S., while its 8<sup>th</sup> grade math scores grew by nine points (+3.2%), ranking 8<sup>th</sup>.

**TABLE 3: NAEP SCORES (2003-2019)**

Subject	4th Grade			8th Grade		
	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank	Score Growth	Growth Rank	2019 Rank
Reading	11	2	40	8	1	39
Math	7	16	44	9	8	41

**FIGURE 5: NAEP SCORE GROWTH VS REVENUE PER STUDENT GROWTH<sup>1</sup>**



## LOW-INCOME NAEP TRENDS

Between 2003 and 2019, California's low-income 4<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP reading scores increased by 14 points (+7.2%), ranking 3<sup>rd</sup> in the U.S., while its 4<sup>th</sup> grade math scores grew by seven points (+3.4%), ranking 19<sup>th</sup>. During this time, the state's 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores increased by 10 points (+4.3%), ranking 1<sup>st</sup> in the U.S., while its 8<sup>th</sup> grade math scores grew by 12 points (+4.6%), ranking 7<sup>th</sup>.

**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	14	3	38	10	1	39
Math	7	19	47	12	7	41

<sup>1</sup> 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)<sup>1</sup>**

