



How the State can help School Districts be cost effective

To cope with reduced state aid and to enable funding to be optimally used, school districts need the state government to provide greater flexibility as an antidote to well-intentioned but overly prescriptive laws and regulations. Local districts are in the best position to determine how to meet their students' needs and to identify ways to be efficient.

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| <p>Mandate Relief</p> | <p><u>Eliminate unfunded mandates and do not pass any more!</u> Mandates have been passed without consideration of their impact or cost to a school district's ongoing workload or budget. Mandates affect every area of district operations.</p> <p>Three examples out of hundreds: Academic Intervention Services (AIS, \$33 million a year in Monroe County), this plan to provide academic support to students is unnecessarily prescriptive, making this help more costly than necessary to provide.</p> <p>3020-a legal process to terminate tenured teachers is so time consuming and costly (averaging 520 days and \$216,000), that districts often conclude the expenditure is not justifiable unless a teacher poses a physical threat to children.</p> <p>Pointless reporting, the State Education Department should be allowed to reevaluate what reports are useful and eliminate outdated ones, freeing administrators from wasting their time preparing reports that no longer serve a useful purpose.</p> |
| <p>NYS's IDEA mandates</p> | <p>A 30-page report from the New York State Education Department lists NY's 212 special education rules and regulations that exceed federal requirements. These additional requirements add an estimated <u>\$1.3 billion a year</u> to what New Yorkers would pay if our laws conformed to the national average.</p> <p>One example out of 212: The State Legislature should repeal the Chapter 583 of the Laws of 2007 which shifted the burden of proof for demonstrating the adequacy of special education services from the parent to the district. If a parent challenges a district's special education services, the district must prove their program's adequacy rather than the parent identifying why the services are inadequate. Faced with the threat of costly vaguely defined lawsuits, this new rule has forced districts to provide more services than IEP's identify as appropriate, increasing the costs of special education.</p> |
| <p>Triborough Amendment</p> | <p>Triborough severely limits a school district's ability to negotiate changes to salaries, benefits, and working conditions. Triborough provides that all terms, conditions, and provisions of an expired public employee contract, including automatic increases, remain in effect until a new contract is approved. In difficult economic times, when a new contract would likely offer less attractive salaries and benefits, public employee unions have little or no incentive to agree to new contracts.</p> |
| <p>Flexibility</p> | <p>Legislators cannot envision every situation when writing new laws. When legislation is too specific, the complications of local situations can make compliance ineffective or inefficient.</p> <p>Some examples where greater flexibility would be helpful: Less prescriptive rules for utilizing Universal Pre-Kindergarten funds would allow local districts to better provide Pre-Kindergarten programs.</p> <p>Permit districts to move funds set aside in reserve funds for subsequently disallowed post-retirement benefits so this money can be used for other purposes.</p> |
| <p>Charter Schools</p> | <p>Reduce charter school tuition payments proportionately if districts must cope with funding cuts. Any reduction in school district funding should be passed on to charter schools in the year the reduction occurs.</p> |