



# Mandates

State leaders can no longer ignore the impact and cost of state requirements imposed on local school districts. Even the most sincerely motivated origin does not mean a mandate achieves the intended purpose or that it cannot be improved by redesign.

With schools districts facing grave revenue shortfalls from serial reductions in state aid and the cap on local property tax levies, it is imperative that mandates are reconsidered for their cost/benefit.

State leaders also must stop passing unfunded and underfunded laws that force new costs onto local communities.

## Major state mandates that drive up operating costs in local school districts

MANDATE	ISSUES	SOLUTION
<b>State mandated contributions to state pension funds</b>	All pension fund rules, investments, and fiscal decisions are made in Albany yet all funding comes from local school districts.	The state should review the formula for adjusting to changing market conditions to protect districts against spiking contribution rates. The state should review the legalities of reinstating employee contributions for people who have worked longer than 10 years.
<b>Employee share of health insurance costs</b>	The rules which govern health insurance availability and the portion of the cost borne by employees are subject to Taylor Law negotiations, so districts cannot unilaterally alter the employee contribution.	Require a minimum rate of 15% for individual policies and 25% for family policies for employee contributions toward health insurance.
<b>Expansive special education laws and regulations</b>	NYS has over 200 laws and regulations beyond federal special education mandates. NYS spends more than \$2 billion more per year than if it conformed to the average spending of other states. Special education advocates fight fiercely to protect their programs. There is no productive informed dialogue about how to make special education programs more effective and efficient.	Establish a statewide committee with both educators and special education parents that will examine each law and regulation that is in addition to those mandated by the federal government for its actual value and usefulness to the education of children.
<b>Streamline the teacher disciplinary (3020-a) process.</b>	The 3020-a process is too time-consuming and costly. Its cost and complexity is a deterrent to removing sub-standard employees.	The NYSED should appoint 3020-a hearing officers- Staff members facing charges should be required to share evidence prior to hearings. There should be a time limit on how long an employee can be suspended with pay prior to a hearing. The NYSED should have authority to automatically remove teachers who have been convicted of child abuse or certain felonies, and to revoke their licenses.
<b>Calculate the cost of new programs and ensure funding for their implementation</b>	Districts need to prepare and implement several costly new programs, each requiring significant staff time, training, and materials. These include APPR, AIS, RTI, Common Core curriculum, new state assessments, and the Dignity for All Students law.	NYS government needs to determine the true costs of complying with all new laws and regulations, and take action to ensure that districts have adequate resources to complete the necessary tasks for the betterment of our schools.
<b>Eliminate outdated reports and initiatives</b>	Numerous initiatives are introduced, each with its own reporting requirements, but state programs never sunset even as they are supplanted by other priorities.	All state laws should have a sunset date and a schedule for the review and reconsideration of existing outdated programs should be established.