

Did You Know?

Mandates

- A mandate is a required policy, procedure or action.
- Most mandates come from state or federal laws, and many require school districts to spend additional time and/or money to meet those obligations.
- Mandates that come from state or federal laws that do not provide school districts enough money to cover the program requirements are called unfunded or underfunded mandates. They have a significant and direct effect on school district funding.
- To pay for these requirements, districts must reduce or eliminate academic and student programs or, as a last resort, raise local property taxes to pay for the new mandate.
- Examples of unfunded or underfunded mandates include:
 - Special education: School districts must provide the needed accommodations to students with disabilities, regardless of the cost.
 - Cyber-charter schools: Each school district must pay a certain amount per student for every district resident who attends a cyber-charter school.
 - Pension contributions: School districts anticipate major increases in the employer contribution rate for the Public School Employees' Retirement System.
 - Prevailing wage: This law requires school boards to pay state-mandated wages for workers of construction or renovation projects that exceed \$25,000. The cost of school construction projects is typically 30% higher due to this mandate.
- State and federal governments' funding typically does not keep pace with increasing costs. School districts then must assume more of the cost, which means that they often must raise local property taxes to make up the difference.

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