



# Monroe County School Boards Association

## Position Paper: Mandates

The 2% property tax cap coupled with ongoing unfunded state mandates, has created a financial crisis for our school districts. Districts have no flexibility to absorb new costs (e.g., electric buses and heat mitigation) or cover mandated expenses (e.g., pensions and special education).

**MCSBA requests:** Our membership urges lawmakers to fulfill its decade-old promise of mandate relief.

- **Fund What You Mandate:** Fully fund all new and existing mandates.
- **Provide Flexibility:** Offer tax cap exclusions for costs beyond our control.
- **Reform the Tax Cap:** Eliminate the 60% super-majority override and adopt a School CPI.

MANDATE	ISSUES	SOLUTION
<b>Tax Cap</b>	Annual cost increases consistently exceed the Consumer Price Index (CPI), but the tax cap prevents districts from managing these costs. The 60% super-majority override is an unrealistic and undemocratic threshold.	→ Develop a " <b>School CPI</b> " that reflects the actual, labor-driven costs districts face.  → <b>Eliminate</b> the 60% super-majority override. A simple majority should be all that is needed to support a local school budget.
<b>State-mandated contributions to state pension funds</b>	All fiscal decisions for state pension funds are made in Albany, yet 100% of the funding comes from local school districts. These unpredictable, mandated costs are difficult to budget for under the cap.	→ Provide a <b>full exemption</b> under the tax cap for state-mandated pension contributions.
<b>Expansive special education laws and regulations</b>	New York State has over 200 regulations beyond federal special education mandates. These unfunded requirements strain district budgets and prevent boards from fulfilling obligations to all students.	→ Provide <b>full, dedicated funding</b> commensurate with the state's mandated regulations.  → Establish a <b>statewide stakeholder committee</b> (including parents and district staff) to review and streamline regulations for effectiveness



MANDATE	ISSUES	SOLUTION
<p><b>Electric Buses</b></p>	<p>This mandate creates massive new costs with no new funding stream. Monroe County alone will need over 2,000 electric buses. The costs include infrastructure, grid upgrades, and vehicles that are 3-3.5x more expensive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Provide a new, <b>dedicated funding stream</b> for bus and infrastructure purchases.</li> <li>→ Create a clear <b>implementation plan</b> that addresses infrastructure and provider challenges.</li> <li>→ Change <b>reimbursement</b> aid, as the current 13-year cycle does not match the 8-10 year lifespan of a bus.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Heat Mitigation Law</b></p>	<p>Retrofitting old buildings with air conditioning carries a significant cost that districts cannot absorb. This mandate is in direct conflict with the 180-day instructional requirement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Provide new <b>funding streams</b> or grant opportunities for A/C conversion.</li> <li>→ Offer <b>exclusions</b> to the tax cap for these conversion costs.</li> <li>→ Grant <b>local control and exceptions</b> to the 180-day requirement to accommodate weather.</li> </ul>
<p><b>New Unfunded Programs</b></p> <p><i>Most were added since the tax cap was enacted.</i></p>	<p>Districts are constantly required to implement costly new programs (e.g., new curriculum, NYS Ed Law 2-D privacy, CDL licensing) with no funding or time to do so.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ New curriculum (civics, mental health, suicide prevention)</li> <li>★ State school by school reporting of per pupil costs which duplicates that required under ESSA under a different format</li> <li>★ Human Rights Law changes to Title IX, 2-D Privacy legislation</li> <li>★ AIS, RTI, expanded English as a new language (ENL) regulation</li> <li>★ Increased CDL licensing requirements</li> <li>★ Blue Ribbon Commission pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Obtain financial impact statements from constituent districts before voting on any education bill.</li> <li>→ Ensure new mandates are fully funded and include adequate time for implementation.</li> </ul>