

# K-12 Mandates

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LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented To:  
Assembly Budget Committee  
Subcommittee No. 2 on Education





## **K-12 Education Mandate Block Grant**

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- Problems with the mandate process include:
  - Mandates are often not the most effective way to pay for programs.
  - The process for identifying new mandates is lengthy and legalistic.
  - The claiming process requires significant state and local administrative effort.
  - State audits have increased friction between districts and the state.
  
- LAO recommendations:
  - Fund mandates through a block grant that provides \$27 per students for all existing K-12 mandates in 2006-07.
  - Districts choosing funding through the block grant would not have to submit detailed claims for each mandate and would not be audited.
  - Require the Department of Finance to submit a budget change proposal that would establish a per-pupil “unit cost” reimbursement for new mandates.



## Settle the STAR Mandate

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- As directed by the Legislature, the Commission on State Mandates reviewed its decision on the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) mandate. The commission found:
  - Only the norm-referenced tests constitute a reimbursable mandate.
  - Districts never submitted a mandate test claim for the standards tests.
  - The Legislature’s directive did not authorize the commission to review STAR claims before 2004-05.
- LAO recommendation:
  - Settle the STAR mandate issue by reimbursing districts for the *share* of local STAR costs that is required only under state law.
  - For past costs through 2004-05, we recommend \$104.5 million, slightly less than one-half the \$220 million in claims.
  - For 2006-07 and beyond, we recommend adding \$11.2 million to the STAR item.



## Create a New Truancy Program

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- Two state-mandated programs focused on truancy:
  - Parental notification mandate—\$9.8 million to notify parents of initial truancy.
  - Habitual truant mandate—\$7.2 million to notify and meet with parents of habitually truant students.
- Problems with the truancy mandates:
  - District implementation is uneven.
  - Funds are not necessarily targeted to districts with the biggest problem.
  - Parent notification is only one step in addressing truancy and dropouts.
- LAO recommendation:
  - Eliminate the two mandates and create a categorical program targeted at reducing truancy and dropouts.
  - Allow districts to create a truancy reduction program aimed at resolving issues that cause students to skip school and drop out.
  - Allocate funds based on the number of school dropouts.