

The state of the economy represents a challenge to our ability to continue to increase overall student achievement. It is critical to call upon the Governor and Legislators – both Republicans and Democrats – to come together and take unprecedented steps to meet these extraordinary challenges. **The following represents a list of concerns that the state superintendents have put together reflecting our need for increased support:**

- Any reduction in **ECS funding** will impact the ability of 169 communities to fund education. We ask that the ECS formula continue to make progress toward funding closer to the 50% goal of the original funding statute;
- It is time to **review all mandates** for their relationship to the central mission of our schools and the feasibility of implementation. **We call on the Governor and Legislative leaders to rigorously examine the value of mandates to the central mission of providing a quality education for all children ;**
- We ask that the director of the Sheff office, created by the Legislature, develop **strategies for magnets and school choice that:**
  - Accurately project the costs of such programs;
  - Demonstrate an awareness of the impact of budgets and policy on the entire state, as the Sheff decision rests on a state obligation to provide an adequate public education;
  - Provide funding statewide that is appropriate to meeting the needs of students who choose to attend different districts. Models with guidelines for determining and providing the average per pupil costs in a region should be explored.

**\* No new initiatives should be mandated without the funding to support them, specifically:**

1. **In school suspension requirements** : CAPSS recommends that the implementation of the guidelines, which will create additional resource demands on local districts, be postponed until at least 2010;
2. **Secondary school reform** : There are some good ideas included in this report. We propose that without resources available to districts the initiative be postponed.
3. **Special education funding should be removed from the ECS formula and a separate reimbursement formula for the day-to-day operating costs of special education be reinstated ;**
4. **Local district costs for an individual special education student should be funded at three and one half times the per pupil expenditure and existing caps should be removed;**
5. **Strengthening statutory language to assure that all special education excess cost reimbursements are received directly by school districts.**