



OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

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Unfunded Mandate Costs School Districts \$11.3 Million Statewide

Auditor Bump recommends lawmakers make an appropriation to refund towns

BOSTON, MA — State Auditor Suzanne Bump announced today the results of a statewide survey which found that school districts are projected to spend close to \$11.3 million this fiscal year as a result of an unfunded state mandate.

Due to the state's participation in a federal program, cities and towns are required to provide transportation and education of some homeless children after they are placed in a different municipality for temporary housing. In two separate analyses conducted last year, Auditor Bump determined the requirement to be an unfunded mandate.

"I do not question the wisdom or validity of the Commonwealth's decision to enable homeless parents to choose whether to enroll their children in schools of their temporary host community or keep them in their original school," said Auditor Bump. "Its embrace of a federal program, however, does require the affected school systems to incur new costs."

The state's application of the federal McKinney-Vento program requires both the community hosting homeless students and the community from which students originate to share the cost of the students' transportation. Today's survey shows that 33 communities are projected to spend over \$100,000 to meet this requirement.

The top ten school districts most affected by the mandate include;

<u>School District</u>	<u>Projected Transportation Cost for FY2012</u>
Boston	\$760,949
Springfield	\$562,650
Chicopee	\$431,333
Worcester	\$425,000
Malden	\$396,831
Holyoke	\$311,050
New Bedford	\$310,000
Brockton	\$285,000
Framingham	\$225,000
Weymouth	\$217,893

Along with the results of this survey, Auditor Bump has sent a letter to Governor Patrick and members of the legislature in which she recommends lawmakers to consider fully funding this mandated cost for FY2012 in a supplemental budget appropriation, and provide ongoing reimbursements in future budgets.

“For the cities and towns of the Commonwealth, this plan cuts into their school districts’ overall ability to provide quality education,” said Auditor Bump. “The costs incurred have the potential of forcing schools to cut teachers, enlarge class sizes, and make other expenditures in tight budget conditions.”

The Local Mandate Law, M.G.L c.29, § 27C, provides that any post-1980 state law or regulation that imposes additional costs upon any municipality must either be fully funded by the Commonwealth or be subject to local acceptance. Auditor Bump’s Division of Local Mandates is responsible for determining the local financial impact of proposed or existing state mandates.

While the Local Mandate Law does not apply to federal laws and programs, the McKinney-Vento is a program that the state entered voluntarily, inviting the regulations and financial obligations on local school departments.

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