



2 below zero

Conversation Starter

Flatlined: How Illinois Shortchanges Rural Students

1. Do you believe that every American child is entitled to a high-quality education, no matter where he or she lives?
2. American public schools have traditionally been funded by local property tax revenue. That's meant that wealthier cities and suburbs have had better schools. Is this fair?
3. To achieve a high-quality education for all, should wealthier school districts share some of their revenue with poor school districts?
4. If so, and if you live in a wealthier area, what are you willing to give up to achieve parity with inner-city and rural districts?
5. If you live in a small town and the only way to achieve a higher quality education for your children is to consolidate schools, are you willing to do that? Even it means losing the school in your town?
6. How important is it that schools reflect the values of their local populations?
7. Should public school students have to pay fees to participate in after-school activities, such as music, drama and sports?
8. Some rural districts rely on the Internet to provide specialized classes (foreign language, advanced math) to their students. Is that a reasonable solution? Do you think online education is as good as that in the classroom?
9. In what ways has the nature and quality of American education changed in the past century? For the better? Worse? Why?
10. What is the most important challenge facing U.S. schools?