



Civitas Mock Legislature Background Paper

**School Equity**

1. The school district in the United States that spends the greatest amount per student is Scarsdale Union Free School District, located less than fifteen miles north of the Bronx borough of New York City. Here are some key economic facts about that district:
  - a. Median household income in district: \$238,467
  - b. Student enrollment: 4, 721
  - c. State per pupil spending: \$19,818
  - d. District per pupil spending: \$25,831
  
2. The district with the lowest amount per student is in San Perlita, Texas at the southern tip of the state, less than 50 miles from Mexico. Key economic facts about the district:
  - a. Median household income in district: \$16,384
  - b. Student enrollment: 291
  - c. State per pupil spending: \$8,299
  - d. District per pupil spending: \$11,124
  
3. Before we address the question of whether efforts should be made to equalize the funding among school districts, let's ask some questions.
  - a. Scarsdale Union spends \$14,707 more per student than San Perlita. What are some of the ways in which that makes differences to:

i. Students

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

ii. Teachers

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

b. Can you make an argument that it is wiser for our society to invest in schools than it is to:

- i. Invest in infrastructures
- ii. Protect the environment
- iii. Keep taxes low for the wealthy

c. How are school districts in the United States funded?

d. What do you think would be more fair:

- i. Fund schools on an equal basis within a state.
- ii. Fund schools on an equal basis across the United States.

e. What do you think are the biggest obstacles to having wealthy people agree to share some of their wealth with others who are struggling economically?