

Dear Editor:

The funding crisis facing the Highland school district and other school districts in the metro east is an issue that I have found troubling for a while, and the recent announcement of a one million dollar cut for the 2006-2007 budget brings me a great deal of sadness as I am a recent graduate of Highland High School (class of 2004).

In education there are no Chevy's or Cadillac's. A car is simply a means of transportation for which many alternatives exist. There is no alternative to an education. A solid liberal arts education through the 12th grade is the foundation upon which competency and ability necessary for success, whether in higher education or the workforce, is set.

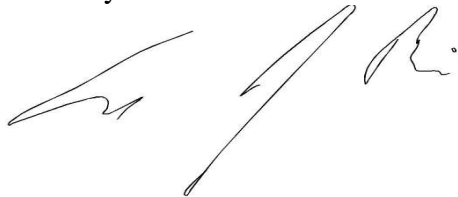
Reading is one of many key skills developed in primary and secondary education that is necessary for growth and continued education later in life. In addition to learning how to read, students develop important analytical, quantitative and critical thinking skills. These are skills that allow students to function independently in society, making decisions for themselves, balancing their checkbooks, and contributing productively to the economy.

The best defense in the battle for control in a global economy is education to build a competent workforce. Policy makers in Washington and Springfield seem to believe that by lowering the value of the American workforce we can win. The unfunded mandates of the No Child Left behind program drain more and more money every year through ever increasing special education quotas that wreak havoc on the entire budget of school districts across the country. While this is happening, the Illinois General assembly turns an unsympathetic ear to the funding plight of local schools.

While the education crisis, a problem that exists in the now, threatens the future of potentially every student in an Illinois public school; they do nothing. A more popular debate in Springfield concerns the responsibility of members of a profession licensed by the state to dispense a certain controversial emergency medication to women with a medical need for it as directed by the state. The emergency contraception debate lacks both the immediacy and the sheer size of the impact possessed by the education debacle.

Ask your representatives where their real priorities are. The culture squabble will be around a while; quality public education in Illinois may not. Letting education in Illinois suffer for even one or two years under the conditions that the Highland school district will enter next year has the potential for repercussions that could haunt us for decades to come.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron J. Rogier', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Aaron J. Rogier