

Here's the rhetorical situation:

You are a student at Anytown, USA High School. Maybe you participate in sports on campus; maybe you're part of a club team. Maybe you play an instrument, or sing in the choir, maybe you dance. Basically, you're you, but you attend this fictional school and not SAMOHI (the 400-something best school in the universe).

Right now Anytown's school district is in financial trouble. The school board is going to vote on what programming to cut, and they are holding a special meeting to hear student input. They read an article by Amanda Ripley in *The Atlantic* and are intrigued by the success of districts like Premont Independent in Texas and are leaning towards cutting funding to school sports in order to keep the district open. However, they might be persuaded to cut funding to other programs like music or art if you can persuade them that this would be the best course of action. Other solutions range from furlough days (shutting the school down without paying teachers or staff) to firing teachers and raising the student to teacher ratio. Keep in mind that if the board doesn't make cuts, Anytown, USA High School might be forced to shut its doors for good. On the other hand, if they make cuts that affect student learning or test scores they run the risk of angering their voter base and losing their seat in the next election, not to mention that cuts to education are antithetical to the purpose of high school in the first place.

With your group, prepare for a discussion in front of the Anytown School Board using the Ripley article as a springboard for your argument. Include specific evidence from Ripley's piece and from one of the other pieces that we have explored (Bowen, Schwartz, Roosevelt, *Boys in the Boat*) Should the school board cut funding to school sports? If not, what program should be cut? Tough choices are ahead and even though this is a hypothetical world, money doesn't grow on trees! Fundraising is out of the question because it isn't a sustainable form of revenue generation; it would only be a stopgap.