

Successful pilot with Senator Lugar gives students an insider's view of today's world issues

In our post-Sept. 11 world, students have many questions about how government works and what goes on in the world. Through videoconferencing, high school students had their questions answered by Senator Richard Lugar – direct from the Capitol in Washington, D.C. To prepare for the pilot session, students started their day online, reading the same five newspapers Senator Lugar reads daily. Then, armed with questions drawn from their reading, they took part in a meaningful discussion that gave them an insider's look at world issues.

Based on the success of the pilot – and the senator's interest in youth and distance learning – the conversation expanded into a nine-part series. Students from 10 high schools were able to discuss world issues with Senator Lugar. Using a point-to-point connection, a different high school served as host each month. Host site



students interacted directly with the senator, while teams of students at other schools watched via the network. After each videoconference, each team wrote an essay about a world issue. The host site judged the essays, and the teams that produced the best essays met face to face at a dinner in the spring.



“(The Senator) hopes to inspire kids to serve a cause greater than themselves.”

– Patrick Garvey, Legislative Assistant to Senator Lugar

Impact on Learning

- n This forum encouraged informed and insightful discussions about world issues between students and a national leader.
- n Students learned to think critically about current events and use printed and online media in a meaningful way.
- n Students gained an authentic audience for reading, writing, listening, and speaking about national and global current events.

Event Stats

Total number of students per session.....	1,500
Total number of participating sites per session	20
Number of host schools	10
Presenting site:	U.S. Capitol, Washington D.C.