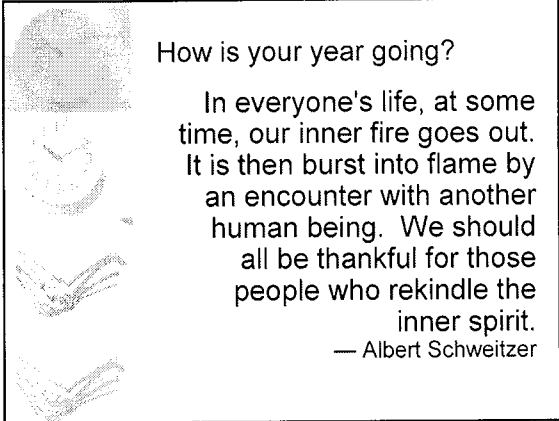




Effectively Leading a Small School

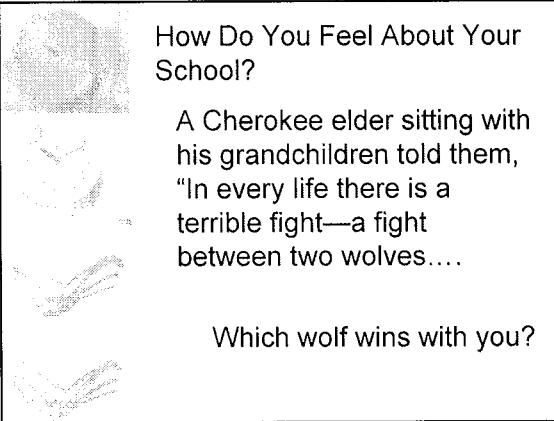
Jennifer Feenstra
CSC Conference
Victoria, BC
September 2008



How is your year going?

In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.

— Albert Schweitzer



How Do You Feel About Your School?

A Cherokee elder sitting with his grandchildren told them, "In every life there is a terrible fight—a fight between two wolves....

Which wolf wins with you?



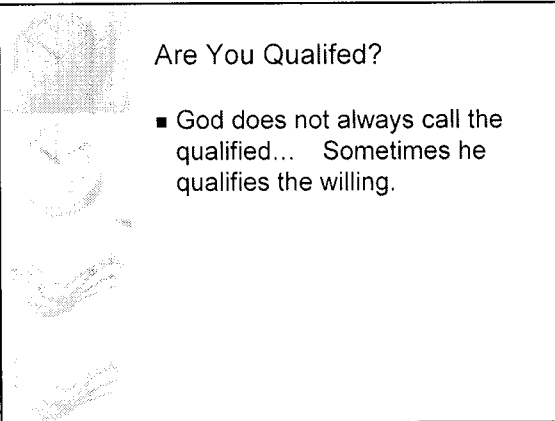
Be A Champion for Your Small School

Abraham Pleaded for Ten

Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?"

He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it."

Genesis 18: 32



Are You Qualified?

- God does not always call the qualified... Sometimes he qualifies the willing.



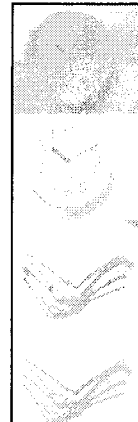
Whatever it Takes

I'm finished and done with low living, and sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tame visions, mundane talking, cinchy giving and dwarfed goals. I'm a part of the fellowship committed to doing whatever it takes...




Treasures in Education

We need to treasure our small schools


Characteristics

- **They are small.** Studies most effective small schools serve no more than 200 students.
- **They are distinctive and focused** rather than comprehensive. They do not try to be all things to all people.
- **They are personal.** Every student is known.
- **They view parents as critical allies** and find significant ways to include them in the life of the school community.
- **They are schools of choice** for both students and teachers, except in some rural areas.



Studies Confirm the Benefits

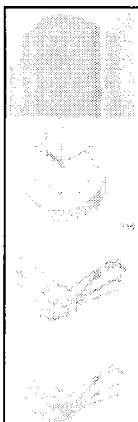
- higher academic achievement
- increased student satisfaction
- fewer dropouts and behavior problems
- small schools are particularly beneficial for disadvantaged students.
- intimate environment encouraged
 - learning and increased parent participation and satisfaction and teacher collegiality and job satisfaction



Dollars & Sense Study of Small Schools

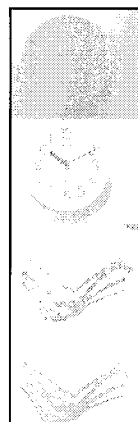
- It takes more paid professionals per student to deal with the negative effects of alienation in a large school than in a small one, where people know each other better.

Dollars & Sense:
The Cost Effectiveness of Small Schools p.13




Challenges for Principals of Small Schools

- Time Constraints
- Heavy Committee Load
- Board Demands
- Strategic Planning
- Marketing
- Programming




Challenges for Principals of Small Schools

- Finances
- Student Enrollment
- Marketing
- Staffing
- Lack of Support Staff
- Facilities




Characteristics of a Leader

- bold
- risk-takers
- planners
- inspiring
- courageous
- listeners
- decisive
- visionaries
- passionate
- motivators
- organizers
- critical thinkers




Board and Committee Leadership

"Leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate toward some goal which they come to find desirable."
— Ordway Tead




Flourishing Schools

- High quality classroom teachers
- Principal with good leadership schools
- Administrative team that works in harmony
- Parent communication and involvement
- A caring, respectful, orderly, secure school environment




Flourishing Schools

- Broader community involvement in school
- High student expectations (academic and ethics)
- Student engagement in learning and leadership
- Recognition of academic and professional excellence
- Innovative non-core programs (extra curricular)




Looking After the Students

If you don't get this right then nothing else will matter....




How Can You Make Their Day?

- Summer Postcards
- Welcome Cards in June
- Kindergarten Invites
- Great 7/8 School Trips
- Movie Afternoons
- Skating/Swimming/Sledding
- Poetry/Journals
- Other:




Don't Waste Time On

- Mail
- Business Staff Meetings
- Some Committee Meetings
- Weekly Newsletters
- Fundraising
- Discipline Problems
- Yard Duties
- Being Upset About Being Small




Focus On

- Students
- Current Parents
- Program Improvements
- Recruitment
- Some Staff & Board Needs
- Front Door Appeal




Things We Don't Spend Enough Time On:

- Packaging our schools as exciting places to be
- Promoting and getting the word out
- Planning and improving our program
- Prayer



How Is Your School Doing?

- In which areas does your school excel?
- Where does your school need to improve?



Before You Leave

Begin to weave and God will give you the thread.

— German proverb