

Without question educators are called to one of today's most challenging professions, and Carson City's education community has longstanding traditions of excellence and successful track records on many different levels. The issue of school size and facilities is not something the educational community can address; this is a decision made by the voting community – by Carson City citizens.

NNDA: NorthernNVision (May 2006)

- **#2 top critical issue:**

“place greater emphasis on the value of education and improve the educational resources and support structures across the region.”

-- from the Northern Nevada Visioning Document, August 2006 (p.12)

Smaller Schools Needed: References below*

Suggested School Size

Elementary 300 – 600
Middle School 400 – 500
High School 1,000 – 1,500

Current School Size Carson City 2008 www.nvadareportcard.com

Elementary 552 – 671
Middle School 893 – 1,114
High School 2,503

(Enrollment numbers do *not* include Carson City students in charter schools, home schooled or in private school)

Return on Investment in Smaller Schools:

- **Cost effective:** Though smaller schools have somewhat higher costs per student, their much higher graduation rates and lower drop out rates will produce among the lowest costs per graduate in an entire system
- **Personalization:** Perhaps the most important characteristic of small schools is the personal relationships established between teachers and students
- **Climate:** In small schools, teachers and students know one another personally. Such knowledge fosters a sense of community and promotes a climate of mutual respect. The result is fewer discipline problems and an environment that is tolerant, caring and safe.

When asked what he would do about the scourge of juvenile violence, James Garbarino, director of the Family Life Development Center and professor of human development at Cornell University, answered, "At the adolescent level, if I could do one single thing, it would be to ensure that teenagers are not in a high school bigger than 700 to 900 students" (What can be done, 1994). He and a host of child psychologists and educators have been sounding the alarm: If you want safe schools, get schooling down to size.

- **Student Achievement:** Smaller classes at smaller schools promote improved pupil performance, thru:
 - clear school missions and goals
 - common expectations are clearly communicated
 - home-school relationships are close and supportive
 - students are less likely to drop out and more likely to graduate
- **Morale:** In small schools, both teachers and students often have a more active role in decision-making and, therefore, a greater sense of belonging and community.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities:** Small schools provide students with more incentive to participate in extra-curricular activities and with greater opportunities to develop leadership skills by their participation. Both the number and variety of extracurricular activities in which each student participates are significantly higher.
- **Governance:** Small schools generally require less red tape, establish fewer rules, and allow greater flexibility. They are better able to make changes and to innovate.

Did you know disadvantages ascribed to smaller schools are far more perceived than real?

Due to erroneous perceptions ... between 1940 and 1990 the U.S. population increased by 70% and the total number of public schools declined by 69%, and average school enrollment rose by more than 500%. The number one errant perception is cost.

NOT MORE EXPENSIVE

In New York, schools with fewer than 900 students spent \$7,628 a year for each pupil; about \$1,410 more than schools with 2,000 or more students, at graduation, **due to higher graduation rates in small schools, the increase was only \$25 per student.** *128 New York City high schools, study conducted by the Institute for Education and Social Policy*

In Carson City maybe this too is something to look at that is in the long run a more cost effective approach with a much greater return on investment. Consider last year's senior class from where they started in 2003 and where they ended in 2007:

- 2003 – 2004 CHS Freshman class = 736
- 2006 – 2007 CHS *graduating* Senior class = 419

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