

School District No. 62 (Sooke)



Optimal School Size

**Educational
& Financial
Considerations**



Middle and Secondary Schools

Research and Practice Supports Optimal Size for Educational Opportunities and for a Cohesive School Community:

- ✚ **Middle:** 450 – 600 students
- ✚ **Secondary:** 900 -1200 students



Optimal Elementary School

Research and Practice supports
“Small” Elementary Schools and
“Small” is defined as:

- ✚ BC Rural Education Task Force -
250 students or less
- ✚ Research - Generally considered
to be 300 or fewer students



Between “Very Small” and “Large” is an Optimal Size for an Elementary School

- ✚ **Research** indicates 300 to 400 students.
- ✚ In **B.C.** average size is 254 students.
- ✚ In **SD 62** average size is 214 students.
- ✚ The **Campbell River** Elementary School Task Force (February 2001) and **Saanich** Study (August 2003) recommended that elementary schools have 250-400 students.
- ✚ **Nanaimo-Ladysmith** Study (January 2004) recommends Optimal Size for elementary schools is 250-300 students
- ✚ The **USA Urban School Reform** Report set the upper limit for small schools at 350 students.



Advantages Related to Very Small Schools

- Better understanding and knowledge of student needs.
- Fewer student discipline problems.
- More parental involvement in their child's learning and the school.
- School scheduling and management is more flexible than larger schools.
- Students have a greater sense of “belonging”.
- Student participation in extracurricular activities is greater in small schools.
- Better school attendance.



Challenges Related to Very Small Schools

- ✚ Multi-aged, multi-grade classrooms
- ✚ Less variety of teaching expertise
- ✚ Limited options for student peer group associations
- ✚ Demands on staff
- ✚ Fewer extra-curricular offerings
- ✚ Limited equipment
- ✚ Fewer program choices
- ✚ Challenge meeting individual student needs
- ✚ Limited operational funding
- ✚ Safety issues & Supervision costs

Comparative Staffing Costs vs. Ministry per Student Funding

	Enrolment	Classroom Teachers	Literacy Support	Integration Support	Library	Clerical	Principal	Total Staffing	Ministry Funding	Net*
Very Small	110	5.4	0.200	0.730	0.265	1	1	\$667,612	\$638,000	-\$29,612
Small	225	9.6	0.200	0.689	0.644	1	1	\$1,030,635	\$1,305,000	\$274,365
Medium	310	12.8	0.300	1.352	0.644	1	1.2	\$1,367,675	\$1,798,000	\$430,325

Efficiencies Created by Consolidation of 110 student school Into a 250 Student School

Description	FTE	Rate	Efficiencies
Teaching staff (class size efficiencies)	2.13	\$ 80,000	\$170,720
Principals and Vice-Principals	1.00	\$ 100,000	\$100,000
Clerical	1.00	\$40,000	\$40,000
Supervision	2.00	\$12,000	\$24,000
Total Reductions*			\$334,720

* These tables do not include operating costs such as heat, light, gas, custodial, etc.

*Based on 2005-2006 costs

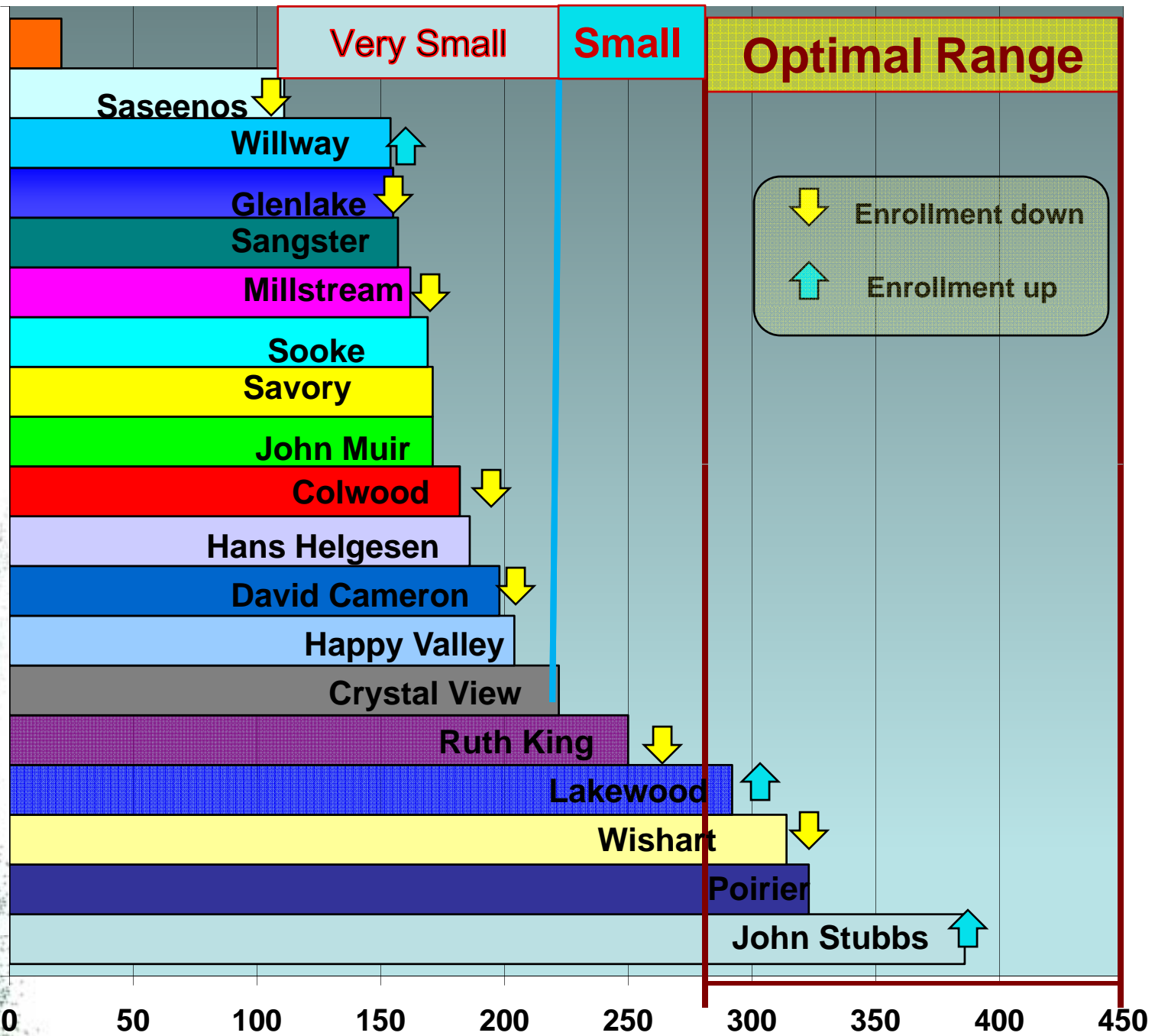
Very Small Grade Configuration

Div.	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
1							29
2						13	15
3					14	14	
4				11	11		
5			16	8			
6		17	7				
7	20						

Div	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
1							30
2						6	24
3						30	
4					21	8	
5					28		
6				18			
7				20			
8			19				
9			21				
10		20					
11		20					
12	22						
13	22						

Small Grade Configuration







Summary:

- ✚ **Optimal Size** for elementary schools is 250-400 students
- ✚ **“Very small”** schools have major challenges for students and staff associated with their school size
- ✚ **SD 62** has a majority of its schools in the “very small” category