



# NEWS RELEASE

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## *Why Small Schools Work: Ten Reasons Small Schools Positively Impact Students and their Learning*

Washington, DC—While numerous studies have documented that small schools effectively boost student achievement, especially among at-risk students, a new report now summarizes the vast research literature that explains just *why* small works in schooling.

The report, *The Hobbit Effect: Why Small Works in Public Schools* from the Rural School and Community Trust, identifies ten research-based attributes of small schools that are proven to have a positive impact on kids and their learning. These elements are either normally found in most small schools or are more common in smaller schools than in larger schools. In the report, author Lorna Jimerson explores the evidence of each element's impact and why it confers advantages on children. Among the attributes identified are: greater participation in extra-curricular activities, increased school safety, smaller class size, and wider grade-span configurations.

Jimerson found that small schools intrinsically foster close relationships that not only help children feel connected to the school community and reduce alienation, especially among older students, but also lead to increased student learning. The close relationships inherent in small schools also have a positive impact on educators. For example, teachers in small schools tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, have less absenteeism, and take more responsibility for ensuring that their students are successful in school.

Jimerson says the research evidence clearly documents that efforts underway in some states to consolidate small schools (and small districts) are unnecessary, irrational, and imprudent. Far from improving student learning, these actions will divert energy and focus from effective school reform and will wrench children from community-centered schools that have the most likelihood of meeting their needs. "Rather than eradicating small schools, policymakers would be wise to invest in small schools and elements that make them effective and recognize that smallness is not a curse, but a blessing," says Jimerson.

This report is available online as [www.ruraledu.org/hobbiteffect](http://www.ruraledu.org/hobbiteffect).

*The Rural School and Community Trust is the leading national organization addressing the crucial relationship between good schools and thriving rural communities by involving young people in learning linked to their communities, improving the quality of rural teaching and school leadership, and advocating for appropriate state policies that address the needs of rural schools. Contact Alison Yaunches, Communications Manager at (703) 243-1487, ext. 114 for more information.*