

Position Statement: ECIS Intentionally Small Schools Special Interest Group

The ECIS Special Interest Group 'Intentionally Small Schools' seeks to serve and support small schools, celebrating the unique merits of these schools for their students, families and staff, as well as recognising the contributions they make to the educational landscape.

Contributing to this group - whether that be through attending events, signing up to support others, or participating in webinars - is self-selecting and not limited by a strict definition of what 'small' means. We recognise that it is helpful to state that we believe - acknowledging the research in this area - that a small school generally has less than 350 students. We recognise that this can change depending on context, therefore our group is open to anyone who considers their school to be small and wants to network with others!

Our group is aimed at intentionally small schools that recognise the benefits of communities of this size. We seek to elevate the role of small schools, both individually and collectively. We celebrate the positive impact these schools have, and support these schools to come together to help each other continue to thrive.

Intentionally small schools benefit from many positives, including but not limited to:

Interpersonal connections and strong relationships - educators are able to forge deep connections with students and other community members, heightening engagement

Community Bonds - small schools are close-knit communities, which benefit from significant belonging and inclusivity

Innovation and flexibility - small schools are able to be flexible and agile about change, exploring new ideas and making changes which are meaningful for learning

Academic achievement - research shows that student outcomes can be strengthened when part of a smaller community of learners

Positive experiences - according to research, students in small schools experience higher levels of satisfaction, a strong sense of belonging, reduced disciplinary issues and lower dropout rates.

The ECIS special interest group can support intentionally small schools by:

- Recognising and acknowledging the benefits of small schools, and championing them in the educational field
- Providing support and bringing schools together as a network to pool ideas and resources
- Fostering collaboration, the exchange of ideas and best practices between small schools
- Helping to connect similar schools, supporting increased networking

Small schools, with their unique strengths and intimate settings, can help drive the future of education as one that is diverse, inclusive, and innovation-driven. The purpose of our Special Interest Group is to celebrate and champion the significance of small schools, as well as bring together these schools as part of a network which increases sharing and collaboration.