

5 Reasons to Go Back to One-Room Schools

A number of years ago when I first started college, I sheepishly broached my English professor with a thesis for my freshman research paper: the revival of one-room schools in America. Her wholehearted approval and my subsequent research brought the realization that such an idea wasn't as far-fetched as I'd first thought.

Apparently, others in the education world are arriving at the same conclusion, as a recent article in [Education Week](#) demonstrates:

"The one-room schoolhouse, that symbol of rural American education that dates back to the earliest days of the Colonial era, might be on the verge of making a comeback.

In recent years, a smattering of 'micro schools' have popped up in places such as California's Silicon Valley; Austin, Texas; and New Orleans, offering parents a drastically different version of K-12 education than traditional public and private schools. These are tiny schools—sometimes with as few as half a dozen students—that put a heavy emphasis on technology and pushing instructional boundaries in a mash-up of lab schools and home school co-ops.

And with a boutique offering at a lower price point than many independent schools, micro schools have the potential to shake up the private school world, say the few experts who have been studying the new trend."

According to *Education Week*, these micro schools are able to curb costs because they have less overhead due to small buildings and minimal staff. Their emphasis on the basics is also believed to save money. So if these new micro schools

have the potential to give private schools a run for their money, is it possible that such a model could reduce costs if employed in the public education sector as well?

Costs aside, there are a number of other potential benefits to reviving the one-room school, including the following four:

- **Multi-age classrooms:** Rather than sticking to graded classrooms, micro schools often mix ages, a practice which provides built-in tutorial opportunities for young students, automatic review for older students, and greater role-model relationships for all.
- **Community friendly:** The micro school can pull students back into their own neighborhood and create a hub for young and old around which to bond. Belonging to a community can in turn reduce discipline issues which may otherwise crop up out of a student's desire for attention.
- **Better instruction:** Because of the small, community nature of micro schools, teachers have the potential to know their students better and craft learning to meet their individual needs. Smaller class sizes and more attention never hurt a child, either!
- **Separation of School and Sports:** The rise of mega-schools has driven the rise in mega-school sports teams and facilities. These in turn instigate higher costs and often distract from the academic nature of school. Micro schools might separate the two and pursue club sports, a trend popular with [European nations](#) in recent years.

It's highly likely that American education will ever be repaired unless we think outside of the box. Is the creation of more micro schools one way to do that?