

Helping Small Rural Schools Thrive

- Insights from Saskatchewan & Nova Scotia
- Churchill Fellowship Report by Howard Nelson



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fellowship

My Fellowship...

- Exploring ways small rural schools can thrive by learning from Canadian models.
- Key question: How can rural schools become sustainable?



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Key Themes



1. Entrepreneurial
Mindset



2. Collaboration



3. Community
Integration



4. Technology

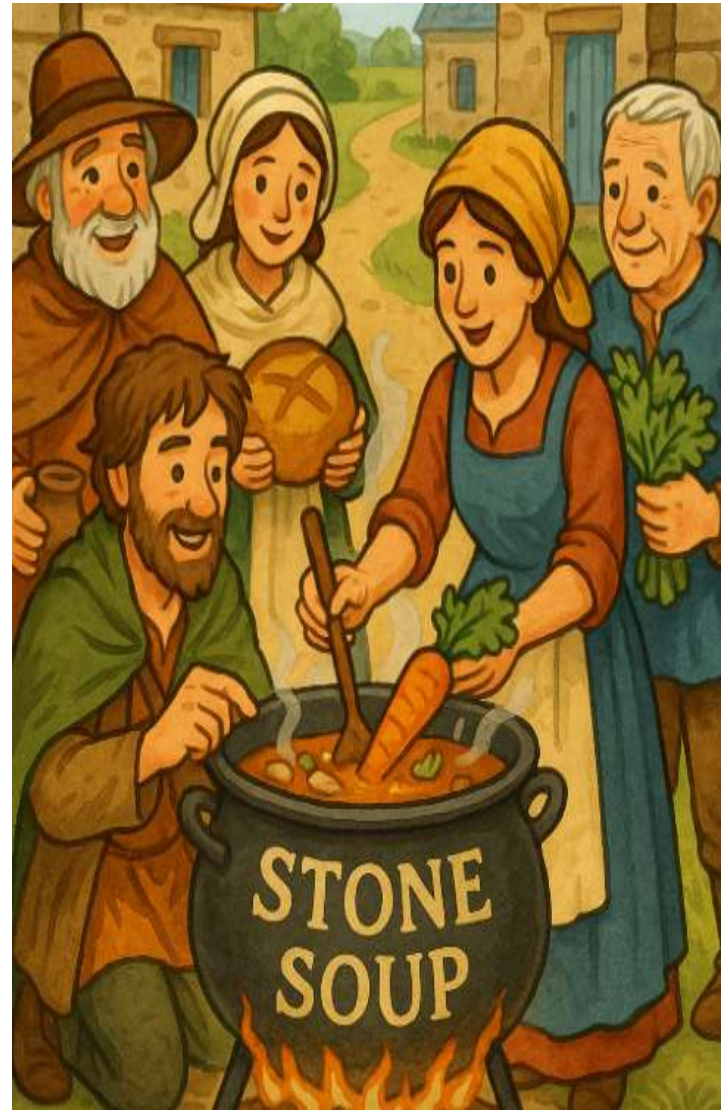
Entrepreneurial Mindset

- “Can do” approach - encourages students to stay rooted and start local businesses
- Greater success seen in schools integrating entrepreneurship
- Builds resilience



Collaboration

- Prevents isolation of rural schools
- Sharing resources, staff, and services
- Creating a teacher pipeline
- Parable of the Stone Soup



Community Integration


- Schools thrive as part of community and meeting needs
- Engagement provides opportunities for students & staff
- Examples: kihiw waciston school (Cree Nation), GEO NOVA SCOTIA



Community Engagement

Nova Scotia's School Free Stores:


- Addresses food insecurity
- Linked to improved academic performance
- Reduce demand on mental health and social services




DAVE GUNNING
ZERO HUNGER

RAISING FUNDS FOR FOOD TO STOCK
SCHOOL FREE STORES IN RURAL NS

OR MORE INFORMATION AND TO DONATE VISIT RCFOFNS.COM



RCFNS
RURAL COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION OF NOVA SCOTIA



Technology

- Crucial for sustaining rural schools and life
- Rural connectivity is key
- Distributed learning expands opportunities
- Examples: Nova Scotia Virtual School (NSVS), GEO NOVA SCOTIA



NOVA SCOTIA
VirtualSchool

École virtuelle de la Nouvelle-Écosse



ENROL NOW! 2025-2026

through your school counsellor
or school registrar

<https://nsvs.ednet.ns.ca>

NOVA SCOTIA

Lessons for the UK

- Entrepreneurship fosters resilience
- Collaboration ensures sustainability
- Community engagement strengthens support
- Technology enables equity of access

Conclusion

Adopting Canadian practices can:

- Help rural schools thrive
- Strengthen community ties
- Enhance long-term sustainability

- ‘The only way to go from here, is together.’

Parable of the Stone Soup

Thank You

Howard Nelson

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Sustainability

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