In Chapter 14 “As Though They Owned the Place”, what is Deborah Meier saying is the major advantage for students and teachers in a small school setting? (500 words, three references please)

Deborah Meier says that we are “challenging the educational status quo” (Meier, 94). There are many advantages of having a small school compared to larger school, although larger schools have their advantages too. Deborah Meier says that smaller schools were once the norm where communities knew their schools and school board members well. “In small schools, however, people know one another and in turn, are known. There is an environment of personal accountability and a shared sense of ownership. This places all demands on all concerned, but the benefits are looking increasingly attractive” (Meier, 94). In smaller schools, even colleges, people are known. I can relate to this in that while I attended a larger university, University of Oregon, I felt like I wasn’t connected, and wasn’t known. However at a smaller university, Northwest Christian University, I felt connected, and was known. Smaller schools do make a difference, and allow people to feel connected, feel like they belong, and are known. Also in smaller schools, stronger relationships can be built and established. (Meier, 90). Smaller schools also allow more choices. Choices and allowing students to have a choice often is more motivating than giving them only one option. “What matters most?” (Meier, 90). Assessing students on what they can do, on real-life projects, portfolios, auditions, exhibitions, and others show us what they know and can do. Although there does need to be some kind of balance between these kinds of assessments and standardized tests, that we are now accustomed to. (Meier, 90). Another major factor is the importance of continuity. “It’s in knowing the kids year after year, and gaining in the process the trust of families and the understanding in the larger community, that big changes become possible – and successful.” (Meier, 91). Knowing the kids, year after year brings builds relationship, and allows an even deeper connection to be established. At church, in our AWANA program, in which I am co-director for the K-2 age group, having the same kids in the group for 3 years, builds a relationship, and a connection, and I have kids who are now in 6th grade coming by to say hi and let me know how they are doing. It is all because of the small group size where a relationship was able to be built.
You will report on someone who is at the forefront of this issue and what they are currently undertaking (500 words please three references.)

OR

If you HAD to advocate for either school A or school B (in the article “A tale of two schools” which school’s instructional creed/practices would you advocate for?

I feel that both schools have their positives and negatives, however I would advocate for school B. I believe that allowing “students and teachers to pursue their interests” (Cuban, 85) is a good thing. Allowing choice and students to choose something they are interesting in, allows them to be more motivated and engaged. The same thing goes for teachers, by allowing them to choose something that they are interested in, and have a passion for, their teaching and lessons will be much more engaging and motivating for the students compared to if the teacher is being ‘forced’ to teach something, that is covered in the curriculum. Student initiated projects are encouraged by the teachers. (Cuban, 85). In school B, students are encouraged and allowed to work at their own pace, to create and diverge from the group (Cuban, 87). Students are allowed to be an individual, and not have their creativity stifled by a teacher or other students. Students, like in other schools, respect teachers’ authority, but they also ask why things must be done. School B teachers sometimes negotiate over what will be done, and how it will be done. “School B’s teachers and parents believe that students’ self-discipline, regard for authority, and future civic responsibility evolve out of an extended, but not total, freedom (Cuban, 87). So, by giving the students some freedom allows them to grow and learn to be a better citizen. “School B scores well on standardized tests, parents and teachers are less interested in test results” (Cuban 87). I feel that this is important because standardized testing takes time away from real learning by taking time ‘teaching to the test’ and by taking class time to take the test. Students are encouraged and expected to think on their own, and work together in groups with others who are different from themselves.