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The Haves

Penbrook is a lovely town nestled along the Rich Rock River. It is a community steeped in tradition, with a growing population of young, white-collar professionals who have career positions with companies in the nearby high tech corridor. There is high community interest and parent involvement in the schools. Their school referenda are passed eagerly in support of quality teachers, cutting edge technology, and the latest and greatest in student materials, staff, building supplies, and needed resources for extracurricular opportunities. Leadership positions are coveted for the prestige and generous compensation packages. Confidence reigns supreme.

The Have Nots

Penbroke is a large urban center located along the Bed Rock River. Its abandoned Main Street storefronts tell the story of a city deserted as residents follow their work to the suburbs. City service jobs are the mainstay of those who have not left. There is little parent contact with the schools, and materials and equipment are in short supply. An after-school program provides an assortment of activities for the latchkey kids. The staff feels burdened with concerns that center on truancy, tardiness, disciplinary action, school violence, and student apathy. Frequent staff changes, replacement principals, and a transient student population are the norm. Chaos reigns supreme.

Not all schools fall into these dramatically distinct categories of the “The Haves” and “The Have Nots.” These are simply caricatures of the two extremes as depicted by the contrasting portraits of Penbrook and Penbroke. Most schools probably lie on an imaginary continuum somewhere between the two. Yet, in all schools, whether they are among the lucky ones or among the not so fortunate in terms of available resources, there is a need to keep teaching fresh. There is a need to renew the skills and the spirit of teachers, regardless of the plight or promise of their school scenario.