

## Transitions, Trends, and Leadership

The transition from Cycle 3 to Cycle 4 brings with it anticipation for the new and reflection on the old. As project teams begin implementing new strategies in their instruction, they are incorporating lessons from the previous cycle – what worked, what didn't work, and unintended consequences. The Cycle 3 AISI Project Final Reports provide evidence of impact and interpretation of results. Once the reports are approved they are online. Visit the website and see what has been learned.

The current school year is also one of celebrating a decade of learning. In honor of AISI's tenth anniversary, three celebratory activities are planned. These include a student art contest, an anthology of stories, and a video collection, which will be featured at AISI Conference 2010. Schools and districts are encouraged to submit ideas to Dianna Millard, who is spearheading the celebration.

This issue also features a synopsis of the Multiple Perspectives Review of AISI, information on teen use of media, educators' perceptions on social networking and digital tools, and system leadership.

An interdisciplinary team of seven renowned researchers conducted an independent review of AISI to examine the design, impact, and future of AISI. Review components included both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The final report, *The Learning Mosaic* (Hargreaves *et al.*), was released in October.

Nielsen released a report on how teens use media on a typical day based on a range of sources from 2008 and 2009. The report also addresses some myths and realities of teen media trends. Complementing the youth findings is a survey of educators on use of social networking and digital tools. Based on more than 1,200 online responses, educators see value in social networking for a wide range of applications.

Finally, the College of Alberta School Superintendents released a framework for building system leadership capacity. The framework references a number of AISI documents attesting to the impact our initiative has at the provincial level.

Visit our website for recent reports and enjoy the issue!

### In this Issue

Transitions, Trends, and Leadership.....	1
Celebrating a Decade of AISI .....	2
Multiple Perspectives Review of AISI.....	3
How Teens Use Media .....	4
A Survey of K-12 Educators on Social Networking and Content Sharing Tools .....	5
System Leadership.....	6
The MILE Guide.....	6
Recommended Reading .....	6
Conferences .....	7
Next Issue .....	7



## Celebrating a Decade of AISI

For the past decade, AISI has supported and encouraged innovative strategies focused on student engagement, learning, and performance. In celebration of this achievement, students and teachers are invited to share their ideas in three ways.

### *AISI Student Art Contest*

Students are invited to exercise their creativity and submit artwork celebrating the milestone or related to AISI themes. There are four categories:

- Primary – grades 1, 2, and 3
- Junior – grades 4, 5, and 6
- Intermediate – grades 7, 8, and 9
- Senior – grades 10, 11, and 12

Entries from all four categories will be displayed at AISI Conference 2010 in Edmonton, Alberta. Selected entries will be framed and presented to dignitaries. Copies of selected entries may be included in an anthology of AISI, as well as featured on the AISI website.

### *AISI Stories*

School authorities and AISI partners are invited to identify stories about AISI. Dr. Jim Parsons, University of Alberta, is collecting stories for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Some of these will be selected for an anthology of AISI stories.

### *AISI Videos*

As well, school authorities and AISI partners are invited to identify stories about AISI that have been or can be made into videos. Joanne Steinmann, University of Calgary, will be putting these together for the AISI Conference and for sharing on the AISI website.

For all three areas, submit your entries to [Dianna.Millard@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Dianna.Millard@gov.ab.ca) by January 8, 2010. They will then be featured at AISI Conference 2010.





For further information, go to our website at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi>.

*Finding and developing our creative strengths is an essential part of becoming who we really are.*

Sir Ken Robinson

## AISI Conference 2010

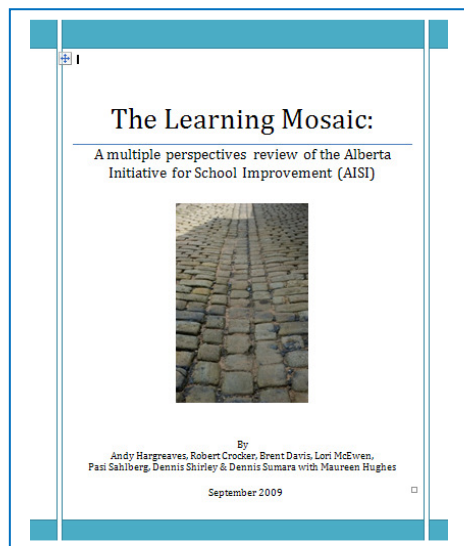
### *Engaging Minds: Celebrating a Decade of AISI*



**February 8-9, 2010**

**Shaw Conference Centre  
9797 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta**

Online registration: <http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi/conference.aspx>



In October 2008, the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Education Partners convened a province-wide colloquium to take stock of the progress of AISI to date and to help set directions for the future. The researchers, who participated in the colloquium, were invited to undertake deeper study of the design, impact, and future of AISI, including its sustainability. The report, *The Learning Mosaic: A Multiple Perspectives Review of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI)*, speaks to the capacity of the education system to support innovation and creativity in order to secure the best possible outcomes for Alberta's schools.

The review encompassed five components:

1. A quantitative meta-analysis – Robert Crocker
2. Three contrasting case studies of district implementation – Dennis Sumara and Brent Davis
3. A cross-site case study of 12 varied and geographically dispersed school districts – Dennis Shirley and Lori McEwen
4. The four ways of AISI – Andy Hargreaves
5. Global policy perspectives – Pasi Sahlberg

Excerpts from the overall findings follow:

AISI constitutes a world-class and world-leading example of a system-wide educational strategy. This strategy, designed by Alberta Education and its partners, inspires teachers and administrators. It enhances their professional growth and

enthusiasm. AISI seeds new, research-informed practices within local communities then spreads them across districts and schools; and it diffuses existing knowledge as well as creating new knowledge.

AISI embodies a change process that addresses the complexity and adaptability necessary in a fast-moving, knowledge-driven world. It avoids the excesses of unregulated chaos and permissiveness of uncoordinated innovation on the one hand, and of hierarchical and inflexibly linear systems of top-down or layered implementation on the other. It achieves all this new and ground-breaking work with no discernible negative impact on the exemplary record of student performance as measured by provincial achievement tests for which Alberta has become world-renowned.

AISI has unfolded in a continuous culture of inquiry, openness, reflection and adaptation that is rare among government-sponsored innovations. The School Improvement Branch of Alberta Education does not merely endure critical feedback but actively solicits and then rapidly responds to it. All projects have onerous accountability requirements and have been subject to rigorous evaluation, leading to clear consequences of adaptation, change, and shifts of focus or direction. In the past decade, AISI has transformed and continues to transform

1. *from* a project-driven and initiative-driven approach *to* a more embedded and continuous change process and strategy;
2. *from* a predictable, time-bound planning process of uniform funding cycles, *to* a more flexible process of planning and development;
3. *from* a collection of disconnected or loosely connected projects *to* a province-wide network of improvement and innovation;
4. *from* a change process that has swung between bottom-up and top-down orientations in the first two cycles, *to* a change process that balances and integrates these dynamics and also adds a strong, lateral peer-driven change dynamic in the third and fourth cycles;
5. *from* a strategy to spread and embed existing knowledge in order to enhance improvement and implementation, *to* a strategy that also creates new knowledge in support of increased innovation. (pp. 7-8)

The researchers concluded:

AISI is an impressive change strategy that is perhaps without parallel in the world today. It contributes to teacher development and educational change in a manner that is stable, steady, and credible among the educators it most seeks to impact. AISI leadership is transparent, responsive, and trustworthy.

AISI has built a solid foundation to further evolve and address some of the most tenacious problems in educational change today. In the years ahead, AISI leaders should build upon their many accomplishments and expand the most important themes and strategies of AISI into new arenas. AISI should further promote learning across district lines and should increase parents and community engagement in schools. More concerted efforts and sustained support need to be provided to high schools to engage students and to transform learning. In general, more flexible and also more targeted approaches to funding and funding cycles may help achieve these goals.

AISI is already promoting some of these changes in its new cycle of projects. It is imperative that AISI act decisively and boldly in leading the changes. AISI has a unique change architecture. It treats the learning of students, teachers and organizations not as a line, or even a circle, but as a complex, interlocking mosaic. AISI is a complex model of improvement and innovation and also a transparent and participatory one. This is why it enjoys increasing visibility not only in Alberta or Canada but also among policy makers in other nations. AISI's continued progress within one of the world's very highest performing systems will be keenly observed by scholars of educational change and policy makers focused on improving student learning from around the globe. (pp. 17-18)

Both the full and summary reports are at [www.education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi/aisidocs.aspx](http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi/aisidocs.aspx).

## How Teens Use Media

Nielsen<sup>1</sup>

This June 2009 report provides findings about American teenage use of media. Data and insights are compiled from a range of Nielsen resources from 2008 and 2009.

Daily media consumption of a typical American teenager includes:

- Television – 3 hours and 20 minutes
- Personal computer – 52 minutes including applications
- Internet – 23 minutes
- Text messages – 96 sent or received
- Console gaming – 25 minutes
- PC games – 1 in 10 played today

Some other findings:

- Teens are more likely than adults to use their media one at a time
- They make up 20% of the mobile video audience and watch more than the average user
- They browse the internet less than half as much as the typical user
- They go to many of the same categories and sites as adults
- Teens are early adopters of all mobile media
- They account for 23% of the console audience and less than 10% of PC game minutes
- More than a quarter of teens say they read a daily newspaper and more than a third say they read on Sunday
- Advertisers are more likely to target teens with messages about health and beauty

[http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/reports/nielsen\\_howteensusemedia\\_june09.pdf](http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/reports/nielsen_howteensusemedia_june09.pdf)

---

<sup>1</sup> The Nielsen Company is a global information and media company in marketing and consumer information, television and other media measurement, online intelligence, mobile measurement, trade shows, and business publications. [www.nielsen.com](http://www.nielsen.com)

[edWeb.net](http://edWeb.net)<sup>2</sup>

This American survey, conducted by edWeb.net, MCH Inc. and MMS Education, explored the attitudes, perceptions and utilization of social networking websites and content-sharing tools by teachers, principals and school librarians. Respondents<sup>3</sup> included 601 teachers, 381 principals, and 262 librarians. The findings can be accessed at <http://www.edweb.net/fimages/op/K12Survey.pdf>

Selected findings follow:

- 61% of the educators surveyed have joined a social networking website. Facebook is the site most educators have joined (85%). MySpace is a distant second (20%). LinkedIn, a popular site for the business community, is third (14%).
- Although 85% of all participants have joined Facebook, 76% state that their usage is “seldom or never.” In comparison, My Space, LinkedIn, Ning and the education social networks reported higher usage.
- Respondents are using social networking sites primarily to connect with family and friends, although many are also using sites to connect with colleagues and to stay current with Web 2.0 technology.
- Overall, educators see a high value for social networking in education for a wide range of applications.

- Social networks dedicated to education (Classroom 2.0, edWeb.net, LearnCentral, Tapped In, TeachAde, WeAre Teachers, WetheTeachers) have low penetration thus far, but there is growing awareness.
- Although educators are joining social networks, they express a need for guidance, training, and professional development.
- Concerns about joining social networking sites include privacy, time, and too much e-mail. Schools and districts often block access to sites, and many educators are frustrated by this.
- Librarians were the most likely to join a social network (70%), followed by teachers (62%), and then principals (54%).
- 25% of respondents provided detailed comments on this emerging technology. A few quotations follow.

This kind of tool is not an option in education anymore. As teachers and practitioners preparing 21<sup>st</sup> century learners we MUST better educate and inform ourselves about how to take the best benefit out of them. The most important reason for this is: THIS IS THE WAY IN WHICH OUR STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TODAY! (Teacher)

The wave of the future. Educators must learn to infuse these technologies into lesson planning and curriculum development. (Principal)

It all takes so much time!! The volume of information is overwhelming ... the amount of time SITTING in front of a screen seems excessive if you utilize all this technology. (Librarian)

---

<sup>2</sup> [edWeb.net](http://edWeb.net) is a professional social networking website for the education community. [MCH Inc.](http://mchinc.com) is a source of compiled data on education, health, and government institutions in the United States. MCH is a privately owned company that has been in the education market for over 80 years. It is a strategic partner of edWeb.net and is helping to spread the word about the edWeb to the preK-12 education community. [MMS Education](http://mmseducation.com) is a national market research, consulting, and marketing company specializing exclusively in the education market.

<sup>3</sup> This online survey was conducted blind and deployed by MMS Education to 82,900 randomly selected educators, e-mails provided by MCH. There is some inherent bias since the study was conducted only with educators with e-mail addresses.

## System Leadership

In July 2009 the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) released *Building System Leadership Capacity: A Framework for School System Success*. The framework, a product of the Moving and Improving initiative, contains 11 dimensions organized into five categories:

Vision and direction setting

1. Jurisdiction-wide focus on student achievement
2. Targeted and phased focuses for school improvement
3. Strategic engagement with the government's agenda for change and associated resources

Organization design and alignment

4. Infrastructure alignment

Capacity development

5. Jurisdiction-wide sense of efficacy
6. Investing in instructional leadership
7. Jurisdiction-wide, job-embedded professional development for leaders and teachers

Relationship building

8. Building and maintaining good relations
9. Engaging parents

The primacy of curriculum and instruction

10. Approaches to curriculum and instruction
11. Use of evidence for planning, organizational learning and accountability.

For further information, contact [jim.brandon@cass.ab.ca](mailto:jim.brandon@cass.ab.ca).



## The MILE Guide

*Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills*

The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (P21) recently released an updated version of its Milestones for Improving Learning and Education (MILE) guide. It reflects the most recent P21 framework around 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The guide is a practical, hands-on tool designed to help districts and schools evaluate their integration of 21st century skills into current and future policies and practices. It includes a self-assessment tool and recommendations for assessment, professional development, curriculum and instruction, learning environments, and standards.

Preparing students for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills calls for collective action on many fronts. To build momentum, consider the following steps:

1. Get buy-in
2. Prioritize and teach skills through core subjects and themes
3. Raise the bar: focus on critical thinking and problem solving
4. Assess current status
5. Develop implementation plans
6. Collaborate for the future (p. 7)

The guide is available at [www.21stcenturyskills.org](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org).

## Recommended Reading

Hague, C., & Williamson, B. (2009). *Digital participation, digital literacy, and school subjects: A review of the policies, literature, and evidence*. Bristol, UK: Futurelab. [http://www.futurelab.org.uk/resources/documents/lit\\_reviews/DigitalParticipation.pdf](http://www.futurelab.org.uk/resources/documents/lit_reviews/DigitalParticipation.pdf)

National Association of State Boards of Education. (2009). *Reform at a crossroads: A call for balanced systems of assessment and accountability*. Arlington, VA: Author. [http://www.nasbe.org/bookstore/product/product\\_id/66](http://www.nasbe.org/bookstore/product/product_id/66)

Webber, C. F., Aitken, N., Lupart, J., & Scott, S. (2009). *The Alberta student assessment study: Final report*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education. <http://education.alberta.ca/departement/ipr.aspx>.

## Conferences

Dec 2-4, 2009 Alberta Technology Leaders in Education (ATLE). *Digital Citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Red Deer, AB. <http://atle.adeta.org>

Dec 5 – 9, 2009 NSDC. *Standards and Strategic Priorities*. St. Louis, MO. <http://www.nsd.org/conference09/>

February 10, 2010 AISI. *International Symposium on School and System Improvement*. Edmonton, AB. <http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi/symposium.aspx>

April 30 – May 4, 2010 AERA. *Understanding Complex Ecologies in a Changing World*. Denver, CO. <http://www.aera.net/>

May 29– June 1, 2010 CSSE. *Connected Understanding*. Montreal, PQ. <http://www.csse.ca/home.shtml>

## Next Issue

The *Scoop* is the official newsletter of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement. Share your AISI stories with our readers!

The next issue will feature AISI Conference 2010. Please submit contributions to me no later than December 31, 2009.

Nelly McEwen, Editor

*The School Improvement SCOOP*

ISSN 1916-2898

For information or submissions contact the  
School Improvement Branch  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard  
10044 – 108 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 5E6  
Ph: (780) 427-3160; Fax: (780) 415-2481  
<http://education.alberta.ca/aisi>



**Season's Greetings**