Summary of AISI Project Implementation, Support and Evaluation

The goal of AISI is to improve student learning and performance by supporting initiatives that address unique needs and circumstances within school authorities.

AISI funding is targeted, which means it is provided to school authorities for specific local initiatives that are focused on improving student learning. This funding is in addition to basic instruction funding.

The Government of Alberta invested <u>$204 million</u> ($68 million for each year of operation) to implement the first cycle of AISI.

All school authorities in Alberta (ECS to grade 12) are eligible to receive AISI funding at the rate of about $120 per registered student in grades 1 to 12 in public school authorities, $72 for private school students (60% of public school funding), and $60 for Early Childhood Services (Kindergarten) students.

The funding entitlement to each school authority for any given school year is based upon the previous September 30th registered student count.

807 AISI projects were developed and implemented during the first cycle (2000-2003): 528 from public school authorities and 279 from private school authorities.

All provincially funded school authorities in Alberta participated in the first cycle of AISI: 74 public school authorities (public, separate and Francophone districts, and charter schools) and 231 private school authorities (115 private schools and 116 ECS private operators).

Today AISI continues to grow in its pursuit of teaching and learning excellence!

Project Requirements

- Project Application
- Each AISI project plan/proposal requires the following:
- Project description
- School community involvement
- Literature and research (citation and application)
- Improvement goal(s)
- Support of implementers
- Measures, baseline(s) and improvement targets
- Strategies
- Evaluation methods and data sources
- Ongoing administrative support
- Staffing requirement
- Project expense percentages
- Certification by project coordinator
- Certification by superintendent
- Budget projections

Evaluating Project Success

- Every project plan required a set of performance measures to evaluate success.
- Measures with numeric data fell under two broad categories:

- Student learning measures directly related to student achievement.
- Qualitative and other measures such as satisfaction and attitudes of students, parents or teachers.
- Measures without numeric data (mostly observations and anecdotes) were reported as descriptions of quality.
- Student learning measures included Provincial Achievement Tests (PAT) and Diploma Examinations (DE), commercially available standardized tests, and locally developed tests/assessments.
- Qualitative measures included satisfaction, attitudes, behaviour, and other program implementation measures such as the number of workshops held and the number of technology outcomes integrated into the curriculum.

Annual Reports & Data Analysis

AISI projects require an annual report that includes a summative evaluation of the AISI cycle. Annual reports include:

- Results achieved in relation to baseline and targets for quantitative and qualitative measures;
- Description of evidence of success achieved or description of quality measures;
- Actual expenditures and expense percentages in relation to the original budget estimates; and
- Responses to open-ended questions. The open-ended questions for the final (summative) report focused on the following areas:
  - Student learning outcomes achieved
  - Other project goals achieved
  - Lessons learned
  - Effective practices (instructional strategies, professional development, project management, parental involvement) that demonstrated the greatest impact on student learning and educational practices
  - Sustainability and integration
  - Summary statement of project results including conclusions and implications for continued improvement in student learning

Four analyses were performed on project data to determine success:

1. Results that met or exceeded annual targets.
2. Results that improved over the baseline.
3. Magnitude of improvement through effect size analysis.
4. Relative effects of various project categories through meta-analysis (refer to the first and second year annual reports for detailed information on effect sizes and meta-analysis).

Support for Implementation

School Improvement Branch (SIB): The School Improvement Branch is responsible for AISI and provides the main support to school authorities. Staff members work directly with local AISI coordinators to meet project requirements and to continually improve upon their projects. The branch generates a variety of reports including the annual provincial AISI reports.

University Support: Four Faculties of Education (University of Alberta, Faculté Saint-Jean, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge) work closely with AISI to provide direct assistance and information to school authorities requesting advice on related AISI literature, improvement strategies, measures and evaluation, and other areas of local need.

Annotated Bibliography: An online annotated bibliography on topics related to school improvement is available on the Alberta Learning AISI website to help school jurisdictions. This online resource is fully searchable by author, title, key word, descriptor, and source.

Ongoing Professional Development: Annual AISI conferences, visitations and regional and provincial professional development workshops are examples of the formal support provided

Electronic Management System: The online AISI management system is used for the submission, review and approval of project proposals and reports. The system enables school authorities to review and update their project plans and share information.

Technical Assistance: Alberta Learning's Help Desk Team assists AISI project coordinators in accessing the Extranet (a secure site for school authority data). SIB staff provide ongoing assistance to school authorities in working through the AISI online application and report forms.

AISI Clearinghouse: An internet-based clearinghouse has been developed to share promising practices, products and tools. The clearinghouse is accessible to teachers, educational stakeholders and the general public. About 45 promising practices from AISI projects have been posted to date.

Annual Reports: Annual reports summarize AISI outcomes and lessons learned.

The AISI Education Partners Steering Committee (EPSC)

The AISI partnership has resulted in the building of trust, collaboration, and teamwork among the seven education partners who represent diverse interests in providing education for children. This partnership was a major contributing factor in the successful design and development of an exemplary school improvement model. We can take pride in the fact that Albertans developed AISI in the Alberta context. AISI represents the collective wisdom of the partners and other stakeholders, whose strong commitment contributes to meaningful improvement in student learning and performance. EPSC consists of:

- Alberta Home & School Councils' Association (AHSCA)
- Alberta Learning
- Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)
- Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA)
- Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)
- College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS)
- University Faculties of Education (University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge, Faculté Saint-Jean)