

## AIMS 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REPORT CARD ON ATLANTIC CANADIAN HIGH SCHOOLS GRAPPED THE HEADLINES ACROSS THE REGION

The following are a small sampling of the more than 100 news stories written.

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### Times & Transcript

Friday, March 10, 2006 – page A1

#### **N.B. fails grade over provincial exams**

The Atlantic Institute of Markets Studies released their fourth annual report card on Atlantic Canadian schools yesterday, and for the most part, local schools, both French and English, have maintained status quo. Regarding the current situation of area high schools, AIMS criticizes the province for phasing out provincial high school exams in the English sector and cutting back on the number of provincial exams in the French sector. QUOTED: Charles Cirtwill, vice-president, AIMS; Jason Humphrey, spokesman, Department of Education; Kelly MacKinnon; chairwoman; District 2 Education Council.

### The Chronicle Herald

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#### **N.S. schools' grades falling, think-tank says**

High schools in Atlantic Canada are dropping back to the pack, according to an annual report card released Thursday by Halifax think-tank, Atlantic Institute for Market Studies.

#### **How Nova Scotia schools stack up – page A2**

Here's how the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies ranked Nova Scotia high schools in its fourth annual report released Thursday.

#### **Three-peat as head of the class – page B5**

The Islands Consolidated School best in region for third year in row. The province's best-kept secret is out.

### The Evening News

Serving Pictou County, Nova Scotia

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#### **Leaders of the pack, at least in language arts**

AIMS releases fourth High School Report Card showing what we should know but still don't.



**CBAT-TV New Brunswick News at Six 18:00:30 – duration 02:30  
LINEUP/POSITION: 1 of 16**

Students are on March Break this week but their schools are being graded today. The Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, a think tank, has released its fourth annual ranking of the province’s high schools based on student performance. QUOTED: Charles Cirtwill, vice-president, AIMS; Norval McConnell, School District 2; Ashley White, McNaughton High School student.

**CJON NTV Evening News 18:06:45 – duration 01:30  
LINEUP/POSITION: 5 of 26**

High Schools Rating Improvement: The Atlantic Institute for Market Studies’ annual report card was released today.



**CJON NTV Evening News 18:33:00 – duration 05:30  
LINEUP/POSITION: 18 of 26**

Carter File – Schools Pass the Test: There is some good news to report this evening on the education front. A Halifax-based policy think-tank is saying some very nice things tonight about this province’s education system. [“Glen Carter”, reporter; “Rick Audas”, Atlantic Institute for Market Studies]



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**High schools average C plus in annual ranking of performance**

New Brunswick high schools have seen their grades slip in the latest report card on school performance released by the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies. Provincial high schools averaged a C+ in the fourth annual ranking of Atlantic high schools authored by the Halifax-based researchers. Anglophone high schools in the province saw their scores drop by two per cent compared to last year’s ranking, while francophone high schools dropped by six per cent. The fourth annual school ranking assigns overall grades based on an individual high school’s academic test scores, graduation levels, and how many students move on to post-secondary studies. QUOTED: Charles Cirtwill, vice-president of the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies.



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**School Stats elusive**

**Hard to rank N.S. performance, think-tank complains.**

AIMS handed out grades to high schools yesterday, but gave Nova Scotia a big fat F for delivering statistics. The Atlantic Institute for Market Studies released its annual High School Report Cards yesterday and complained Nova Scotia was the worst province in the region for releasing student data.

**CBCT-TV PEI CBC News at Six 18:12:00 – duration 01:00**  
**LINEUP/POSITION: 7 of 11**

A public policy group based in Halifax has put out a report card on Maritime high schools. Here on the Island, six of the ten schools measured got a B. The others got a C plus. [AIMS vice president, Charles Cirtwill]



**VOCM Regional News 13:09:10 – duration 01:00**  
**LINEUP/POSITION: 10 of 15**

AIMS REPORT CARD ON HIGH SCHOOLS:  
Newfoundland and Labrador high schools are leading the way in Atlantic Canada. ["Charles Cirtwill", Co-Author]

## CAPE BRETON POST

Our Island's Tradition since 1901

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### Cape Breton schools register top grades

Four Cape Breton high schools cracked the top 10 of an annual report card which continues to be met with skepticism by some local school officials. The Atlantic Institute for Market Studies released the report yesterday calling it a guide to what's happening in our schools.



**CTV - TV MARITIMES Evening News 18:10:00 – duration 03:00**  
**LINEUP/POSITION: 6 of 36**

When a student's report card is full of C's, it suggests improvement is needed. Well, what does it mean when the school itself gets a low grade. The Atlantic Institute of Market Studies has released its fourth annual report card on high schools. QUOTED: Charles Cirtwill, Atlantic Institute of Market Studies; unidentified speakers; Bill Estabrooks, N.S. NDP education critic.



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### Province improves in school evaluation

The Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS) says 66 per cent of high schools in Newfoundland and Labrador scored a B or better in its annual report released this month.

**GLOBAL-TV Global News at Six 18:03:30 – duration 02:30**  
**LINEUP/POSITION: 3 of 17**

There is a new report on the region's high schools tonight. An independent group graded 134 schools in the region. While no one failed, only one got an A. In all just 52 schools got a B or B+. QUOTED: Brian Lee Crowley, AIMS; Bill Estabrooks, NDP education critic; Rodney MacDonald, N.S. Premier.





**CBH Mainland NS/Maritimes CBC Regional News 15:00:00 – duration 01:10**

**LINEUP/POSITION: 1 of 5**

A regional think tank has issued its annual report card regarding high schools in Atlantic Canada. The Atlantic Institute of Market Studies says the news isn't good that there are fewer schools with top grades and more schools with attendance and academic achievement have slipped.

**CBH Mainland NS/Maritimes Maritime Noon 12:15:30 – duration 08:30**

**LINEUP/POSITION: 3 of 12**

As you may have heard in the news, the report cards are in and the news is not good. Since 2003, the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies has published an annual report card for Atlantic Canadian high schools. Today AIMS released its fourth report card. It finds that the quality of high schools in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia has declined. It also reports that excellent high schools in the region are in short supply. Charles Cirtwill is the vice-president of AIMS, he's dropped by the studio to fill us in on the details.



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**County schools fail to make the grade**

Cumberland County's seven high schools did not fare too well in the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies' fourth report card on high schools.

**RNDH caught in new struggle – page A1**

With his school engaged in the fight of its life, River Hebert District High principal Larry Beardsley hopes people don't read too much into how the school fared in the latest AIMS high school report card.

**What's the AIMS of School Report? – page A5**

Every year the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies releases its report card on high schools in the region and every year parents, students, teachers and community members question what the results mean.



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**County high schools maintain 'solid C+' rating**

Colchester County's three high schools changed little in the latest round of annual report cards issued Thursday by an independent think tank.

## **Schools report card troubling**

### **We Say: The New Brunswick government needs to get its act together on education and ensure its laudable goals are being met**

It is troubling that a private think tank, the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS), is apparently the only agency in the region that is actively attempting to quantify and measure the success (or lack of it) of New Brunswick in meeting its stated goals of improving the education system in this province.

In the fourth annual report on education and schools in Atlantic Canada, AIMS reveals that New Brunswick high schools have stopped standardized testing, so there will be no way at all in future years to compare how the schools are performing from year-to-year; no way to measure if the goals of improving the education of our youths (and they have not fared well in past testing compared to other provinces) are being met; no way of knowing if the system is improving or, indeed, getting worse.

We find it mind-boggling that the Department of Education allowed standard high school tests to be dropped by high schools. How does the department expect to be able to know if and when it is doing something right? Or wrong? How can it even identify areas that need attention without a standard by which to measure its results? The answer is that it cannot - it has by its own actions kept itself in the dark. Is that deliberate; a way to avoid uncomfortable accountability to the public when the results show nothing has changed?

## **School rankings tell only part of story**

### **Think tank looks at various factors to gauge performance of Atlantic high schools**

The Atlantic Institute of Market Studies released its fourth annual ranking of Atlantic Canadian high schools last week.

For the second year in a row, most local schools placed somewhere around the middle of the pack. But the final grades and rankings only tell part of the story.

In order to get to those final numbers the AIMS report looks at a number of different factors, everything from performance on tests to the socio-economic status of the community to post-secondary achievement. Looking a little more closely paints a much better picture of where each school needs work and where it shines.

"Every school does something well and no school is likely to do everything perfectly," says AIMS vice-president Charles Cirtwill. "We need to look at all the data to draw a complete picture of how things are going. We also need to look at performance over time."