



Volume 17, Issue 8

*Where Tomorrow's Public  
Policy Begins Today*

March 22, 2011

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- **Part One: Of Interest – Putting Students First and Fixing Our Schools**
- **Part Two: AIMS Annual Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools**
- **Part Three: Unneeded Secrecy**
- **Part Four: A Disgrace**
- **Part Five: AIMS in the Media**



## Part One: AIMS Event - Putting Students First and Fixing Our Schools

How can our school system change for the better? How can we put students first? AIMS welcomes you to a public forum featuring distinguished speakers in the field of education. Please join the discussion about how we can be partners in reforming our school system to include the changes needed to put students back at the forefront of education.

### Featured Speaker

Michael Zwaagstra  
*Author, What's Wrong with Our Schools (2010)*



### Reaction Panel

Doretta Wilson  
*Society for Quality Education*

Charles Cirtwill  
*Atlantic Institute for Market Studies*

Denise Delorey  
*Save Community Schools*

Monday March 28, 2011  
6:30pm - 10:00pm  
Maritime Conservatory of Performing Arts  
Lilian Piercey Concert Hall, 6199 Chebucto Road  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Tickets: \$10 / \$15 at door

[Click here](#) for more information.  
[Click here](#) to register for this event.



## Part Two: AIMS Annual Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools

The Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS) and the Frontier Centre for Public Policy are pleased to release the first ever Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools. The report card ranks high schools from Manitoba and Saskatchewan based on the AIMS model, which has been used in Atlantic Canada for almost a decade.

The Report looks at school performance in the 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08 school years. Every school community faces unique challenges. The AIMS model adjusts the performance reports to incorporate these challenges, levelling the playing field. Success comes in many shapes and sizes – AIMS/FCPP Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools reflects this.

[Click here](#) for more information, and to view the Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools – Manitoba and Saskatchewan sections.

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## Part Three: Unneeded Secrecy

While researching for AIMS Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools, we ran into accessibility problems with the Manitoba Department of Education. Writer Tom Brodbeck sheds light on the importance of transparency with government agencies, especially concerning education. The AIMS Report Card, he explains, was designed to give the public and parents some insight into how well their schools were measuring up against each other and to provincial standards.

This editorial, originally published in the *Winnipeg Sun*, clarifies that school ranking is not intended to act as an overall assessment of school performance, but rather to provide the public with information on the services they pay for. The province still refused to publish average marks of individual schools, and Education Minister Nancy Allan refused to provide AIMS with basic data – despite the fact that Saskatchewan was happy to provide the information.

If the province was truly committed to openness and transparency, Brodbeck writes, they would release as much information as possible about schools, their operations and their outcomes. If the public isn't aware of shortcomings in the system, how are they supposed to address them?

The AIMS study is actually a pretty good one because it covers a lot of areas of school operations, not just grades, Brodbeck says. It's a shame the Selinger government doesn't want kids, parents and taxpayers to benefit from that. They prefer secrecy over accountability. It's easier that way.

[Click here](#) to read the full editorial.

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## Part Four: A Disgrace

The AIMS Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools calls for honesty, integrity and leadership in our education systems. Unfortunately, as this commentary highlights, it isn't just in education where our political and public service "leaders" have been falling down."

In this commentary, AIMS Board Chair John Risley discusses why government at all levels has been acting irresponsibly concerning the economy – and how they can fix it by demonstrating leadership. In [A Disgrace](#), Risley explains that what astounds him is the lack of leadership currently on display by most of the western world's political elite.

The retribution game arising out of the financial crisis brought on by the collapse of the U.S. housing market has to some degree justifiably focused on Wall Street. But what about the politicians who urged on Fannie and Freddie to aid and abet the American dream of home ownership, apparently without regard to the ability to actually pay? And what about the regulators who witnessed the explosive growth of AAA rated mortgage backed securities?

This is the same thing the market has just "noticed" in Europe. It is irresponsible behaviour practiced not just by Wall Street banks but by governments at all levels. And it's a big problem. But it's a solvable problem. Leadership got us into the problem and leadership will get us out of it. Hopefully. Honesty and transparency are great places to start.

[Click here](#) to read the full commentary.

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## Part Five: AIMS in the Media

### **AIMS and FCPP in the Media: Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools**

[School division taking provincial rankings with grain of salt](#) – AIMS Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools seeks to reflect schools' overall performances and inform debate at the local level about how different schools are doing.

[Discussing AIMS Report Card on Western High Schools: Improve education through informed conversation](#) – Audio: AIMS Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools is discussed. David Seymour, Senior Policy Analyst with the Frontier Centre for Public Policy was interviewed by Rob Carnie on 800CHAB's The Heartland at Noon.

[Discussing Western High School Report Card](#) - Audio: AIMS Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools is discussed. David Seymour, Senior Policy Analyst with the Frontier Centre for Public Policy was interviewed by Garth Materie on CBC Saskatchewan's Blue Sky.

[Discussing Manitoba's missing education data](#) - Audio: AIMS Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools is discussed. David Seymour, Senior Policy Analyst with the Frontier Centre for Public Policy was interviewed by Marilyn Maki of CBC Winnipeg on Noon Hour.

[AIMS and FCPP Grade SK High Schools](#) - Rural schools seem to be faring better than city schools in a report from the Frontier Centre for Public Policy and the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies.

[Regina high schools rank mid-pack and lower based on new ranking system](#) – Regina's high schools ranked mid-pack and lower based AIMS' new marking system that evaluates how such institutions in Saskatchewan are performing.

[Regina schools falling behind others in Saskatchewan; Success comes in all shapes and sizes](#) – A new AIMS study on how well Saskatchewan students are performing in the classroom shows rural communities are leading the way.

**Where does your school rank?** – A ranked list of Saskatchewan schools is provided, as well as a link to the full AIMS Report Card on Western Canadian High Schools.

**NDP rapped for hiding exam data** – The Atlantic Institute for Market Studies and the Frontier Centre for Public Policy say the Manitoba government is doing its citizens a disservice by refusing to publicly release exam results and other academic data.

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