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*Where Tomorrow's Public
Policy Begins Today*

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Part One: To know or not to know, that is the question: AIMS 6th Annual Report Card on Atlantic Canadian High Schools has the answer

With apologies to Hamlet, AIMS again took “arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing” came near to ending them.

While the release of the 6th Annual Report Card on Atlantic Canadian High Schools was greeted with outrage in some educational quarters, many more picked up AIMS' call for the public release of school by school performance grades. From New Brunswick's education minister to editorials in regional newspapers, there was a clear message; the public needs more information on its schools.

“We have said from day one, that the more the public knows, the better the schools will get,” explains AIMS Executive Vice President Charles Cirtwill. “An indepth study in 2007 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and development (OECD) found a direct link between a country's achievement on the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) and the publication of results at the school level. The improvement in the performance of students in a school was significant even when social and economic factors were considered.”

For more information on the AIMS 6th Annual Report Card on Atlantic Canadian High Schools, [click here](#).

Follow [this link](#) for results from New Brunswick schools.

Follow [this link](#) for results from Nova Scotia schools.

Follow [this link](#) for results from Prince Edward Island schools.

Follow [this link](#) for results from Newfoundland and Labrador schools.

For the sixth year, Progress magazine published the AIMS Annual Report Card on Atlantic Canadian High Schools. Again it carried a feature on education, this year highlighting a programme in Saint John, NB that has enticed businesspeople back to the classroom.

To read the special education section in Progress, [click here](#).

Part Two: 'Good enough', but not much more: AIMS' review of provincial finances shows more strikeouts than homeruns.

Ah, the rites of spring; professional baseball, the Stanley Cup playoffs, and for those real fanatics, the budget circuit. In its annual review of provincial finances, AIMS finds that no province stands out as a World Series or Stanley Cup winner. *[Good Enough for Government Work: Grading Canada's 2007/08 Provincial Finances](#)* finds stellar performance severely lacking across the country..

This year's highest overall grade is a solid but unspectacular B+, shared by Alberta and Ontario, and the lowest is not that far away at C-, the mark received by Manitoba and Nova Scotia.

The overall mark is calculated from three subgrades: fiscal health, a measure of the state of the province's finances for fiscal year 2006/07, prior to the tabling of the spring 2007 budget; fiscal accuracy, which assesses 2007/08 budget figures against both the estimates made in the prior year's budget document and independent third party figures; and budget impact, which focuses on the direction of the 2007/08 budget.

Powerhouses like Alberta still record very low grades, including F marks, on some indicators. Similarly, traditionally poorer provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador are able to score highly on many measures.

In between the bookends of Alberta and Ontario at the top and Manitoba and Nova Scotia at the bottom, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia manage average C+ grades, and Prince Edward Island and Quebec are slightly below with C marks.

The overall results in *[Good Enough for Government Work](#)*, are based on the 2007/08 budgets presented in the spring of 2007 (except for Prince Edward Island's October budget).

To read the complete paper, [click here](#).

Part Three: Getting a handle: The changing world of LNG

The global market for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) these days is much like Atlantic Canadian weather – if you don't like what you see, wait five minutes.

In *The LNG Window of Opportunity: Opened or Closed?*, author Angela Tu Weissenberger explains that the global market for LNG is changing rapidly as more new players enter the market. Once called a golden opportunity, staying on top of the evolving market has become critical to the success of any project.

The LNG Window of Opportunity examines global demand and supply for LNG and the changing market dynamics in North America. It considers the implications for the LNG facilities in Atlantic Canada and those proposed for the Atlantica region.

Two years ago, Weissenberger wrote *LNG in Atlantic Canada: Opportunity for Regional Development*, and concluded that first mover advantage was critical to the success of any of the three projects then in the works in the region.

In this latest Commentary, Weissenberger says first mover advantage is still important. However, she says there are additional complications for the economics for many terminal projects in North America.

Open [this link](#) to *The LNG Window of Opportunity*.

Part Four: Fixing the roof with crumpled twenties: Tips to government on what to do when it finds extra cash in its pocket.

In this op/ed in the Chronicle-Herald, AIMS Director of Research Ian Munro takes a look at how provincial governments spend unexpected revenues. He argues that relying on windfall revenues is the wrong way for governments to fund the maintenance and replacement of key infrastructure like bridges, roads, and sewers. Ensuring the safety and quality of infrastructure should indeed be a high priority, says Munro, but the process of choosing high priorities for funding also entails determining which lower priorities should see funding reductions.

To read the complete article, [click here](#).

Part Five: AIMS founding President returns to the think tank world on both sides of the border.

A year and a half ago, AIMS founding President Brian Lee Crowley was appointed to the prestigious post of Clifford Clark Visiting Economist in the federal finance department. In short order his presence was felt in Ottawa, where he was named one of the most influential people on Parliament Hill.

Crowley survived his stint with the federal bureaucracy and returned to AIMS mid-March. Follow [this link](#) to read more.

Crowley didn't only return to AIMS, he's also lending his hand and expertise to one of the most influential think tanks in the United States, the Galen Institute in Washington, D.C. Early in April it appointed Crowley a senior fellow. To read more, [click here](#).

Part Six: You are invited to an AIMS Breakfast Briefing: For the Record – the challenges of electronic health records in Canada.

Every minute, some 2,000 health care transactions take place in Canada – still largely recorded and stored on pieces of paper. Is it time for Canada's health care system to get with the 21st century? Hear what Richard Alvarez, chairman and CEO of Canada Health Infoway, has to say about electronic health records and discuss whether we should be doing more with the records we have to better manage our health care system.

The Breakfast Briefing is at the Halifax Marriott Harbourfront on Wednesday, 16 April 2008 from 8:00 to 10:00. For more information [click here](#).

To read more about the speaker, Richard Alvarez, [click here](#).

To register for the event, [click here](#).

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