



Guide for Completing Cycle 4 Project Proposal/Plan Template

April 2009

This document is a supplement to the AISI Handbook for Cycle 4 (2009–2012) and the information included on the AISI Project Proposal/Plan on the Extranet.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the *Guide for Completing Cycle 4 Project Proposal/Plan Template* (2009–2012) is to facilitate the process of project planning and to assist in completing the project online submission on the Extranet.

Funding for each project will not commence until the project plan is reviewed and approved by the School Improvement Branch (SIB) of Alberta Education. School authorities are encouraged to consult with their liaison School Improvement Manager for the development of their Cycle 4 AISI project(s).



For more complete information on rationale, criteria, definitions and other details, refer to the relevant sections in the [AISI Handbook for Cycle 4 2009–2012](#).

Section A. PROJECT OVERVIEW

A1. Project Parameters



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a. Project Title
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The project title should be short and relate directly to the planned learning improvement for the targeted students. The limited number of characters is 50.
b. Project Proposal for Which School Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Projects typically will have multi-year timeframes; however, single year projects will be considered. A three-year timeframe is preferable for most projects.Please check off the specific school years that the project is covering.
c. School Authority Name and Code
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Insert school authority name and its Alberta Education four digit code.
d. Actual Number of Schools Involved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify the number of schools directly involved with this project.Use the drop down menu to select the name(s) of the school(s) involved in the project.
e. Students and Grades Involved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Estimate the number of students who will be involved in this project over three years.If the number of students varies significantly, revisions can be made after approval.
f. Project Type
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The drop down menus you will see here are the same as what were used in Cycle 3. We are currently working to revise these lists and invite your assistance. Please contact your SIB manager with choices you would like to see added.In the meantime, we will use these lists. Select from the drop down menu the choices that are appropriate and directly a part of the project in terms of the following areas:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Targeted students (select no more than two)- Subject(s) (unlimited selections)- Themes(s) (select no more than two)- Strategies (select no more than four)The other categories in this section will be completed by SIB.

A2. Project Description

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a. Provide an overview of the project. What do you plan to do and how?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate how you envision this project unfolding over the length of the project cycle.• Specifically indicate a) what you plan to do and b) how you plan to do it? Include how this will impact student learning, engagement and performance.
b. Indicate why the project is needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What information about student learning needs has informed this project proposal?
c. How is this project innovative? What is new and different for your School Authority?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is important that new projects not maintain or be status quo with the previous cycle projects as AISI is about innovation and continuous improvement; however, a previous theme may be taken into greater depth with new research, strategies, measures, and approaches.• Specifically indicate how this project is different from AISI projects carried out by your school authority in the first (2000–2003) second (2003–2006) and third (2006–2009) cycles of AISI. –• School authorities are encouraged to contact SIB at early stages of planning to discuss this criteria as it relates to their Cycle 4 project(s).

A3. School Community Involvement

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Who participated in the consultation process?
As collaboration is an essential element for school improvement, project applications must reflect support of those who will implement the projects and include meaningful involvement of the school community. School authorities are encouraged to involve all stakeholders in some way with the consultation and/or planning process.
a. Describe the above participants' involvement in the consultation and planning process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe how the individuals or groups identified have contributed to setting up the AISI project (e.g. steering committee, interviews, planning meetings, brainstorming ideas, survey input, school council, student assemblies).• If any of these stakeholders are not involved, please write an explanation in the box provided.
b. Describe how the participants will be involved or support the implementation of the project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the support you anticipate having from those implementing this project. This goes beyond simply the awareness stage, in that, participants are an integral part of day-to-day implementation.• If any of these stakeholders are not involved, please write an explanation in the box provided.



a. How does the research/literature base apply to your project? At least three current references (within the last five years) are required.

- AISI projects must be based on system/school needs and use current research as a foundation for project design and direction. Research provides a solid base for what works in a variety of settings and with diverse students.
- The number of research citations/sources you choose to use to inform project selection and design is generally dependent on the size and scope of your projects; the minimum of 3 current sources would be acceptable for small projects.
- Please provide the following information for each referenced source:
 - **Author(s)** with the surname provided first
 - **Title** in full
 - **Year of publication**
 - Name of the **source** (if not a book) i.e. journal, AISI project from earlier cycle, etc.

b. What other AISI projects or promising practices inform this project? Include project numbers and titles.

- Previously completed AISI projects provide rich information and learning that can inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of new AISI projects.
- Project summaries, project synopses, and promising practices are available on the AISI website. Also available on the website are literature synopses related to project themes which Alberta university partners have compiled.
- Please provide the following information for each referenced source:
 - Project **Title**
 - Project **Number**
 - Name of **School Authority**

c. Summarize how your research informs the project design and implementation.

- Describe how the research will be applied in project implementation. Your summary should synthesize how the research will influence the AISI project.
- Tie together your school or school authority needs and research findings and offer some propositions or assumptions as to how the literature applications will be integrated or used in your project design, strategies, measures, expectations, processes and direction.

A5. Improvement Goals

a. Describe the project goals and how they align with strategies and measures. Most of the goals are to be student learning goals.

- The purpose of this section is to indicate the specific project goals and provide a general summary of the strategies and measures that align with each goal. You will elaborate in more detail about strategies and measures in Section B.
- There are two types of goals: student learning goals, and other related goals.
- **At least one** student learning goal is required. It is not a requirement that there be other related goals.
- Other related goals might include goals about school climate, staff capacity, parent involvement, and so forth.
- A helpful way to structure a goal statement is to begin with the word “to”. (see example, below)
- There must be a clear alignment amongst goals, strategies and measures.
- You will elaborate in more detail on measures, baselines, and targets in Section B.

b. How do these AISI goals relate to specific aspects or priorities in your Three-Year Education Plan and Annual Education Results Report?

- Describe how the AISI goals for improvement are connected to school authority and / or school goals, outcomes, performance measures, and / or priorities in the Three Year Education Plan.

The following are examples of goals, strategies, and measures that are aligned, clearly.

Student Learning Goals	Strategies	Measures
1. To increase student achievement in mathematics, Grades 1-9 2. To increase student intellectual and academic engagement in all subject areas, Grades 1-9	1. Integrate constructivist teaching paradigms and rich mathematical investigations into daily routines 2. Provide supports for at risk students. 3. Use information and communication technologies to develop learning skills. 4. Use on-going formative assessment and differentiated instruction strategies to enhance student learning 5. Integrate inquiry-based learning into all curricular areas 6. Develop student inquiry skills and strategies	1. PAT Grades 3, 6, 9 Mathematics, Acceptable Standard 2. PAT Grades 3, 6, 9 Mathematics, Standard of Excellence 3. Teacher awarded marks in mathematics, Grades 1-9 4. Accountability Pillar teacher/parent/student survey, At Risk Students 5. Student engagement survey (<i>Learning Bar</i>) 6. Local school records of attendance/lateness 7. Data collected through transcripts from student focus group discussions 8. Accountability Pillar teacher/parent/student survey, School Improvement
Other Related Goals	Strategies	Measures
3. To build teacher capacity in the use of inquiry-based learning.	7. Develop a division-wide plan for developing student inquiry skills and strategies 8. Work collaboratively, in small interdisciplinary, grade level teams, to develop inquiry-based learning units. 9. Provide resources to support inquiry-based learning 10. Provide PD sessions and coaching supports for inquiry-based instruction	9. Locally developed teacher knowledge/skills survey 10. Locally developed teacher attitude survey

Section B – DETAILED PROJECT PLAN

B1. Project Measures



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Project strategies and measures must be aligned with improvement goals. AISI goals should focus on student learning. Therefore, it follows, that there must be a **minimum of one student learning** measure in every project plan. The types of measures used should be determined by the nature of each improvement project, its expected outcome and the need to provide evidence of improvement. In other words, the measures must be appropriate to the nature of the improvement sought and should not “drive” the project design. Projects must have an appropriate balance of local and provincial measures of performance that includes approved quantitative, survey, and/or qualitative measures.

Since each AISI project reflects the unique needs and circumstances within the school authority, there is no minimum or maximum number of measures. The number of measures should be sufficient to demonstrate “evidence of success” in terms of interim (progress) and final outcomes.

A summary and analysis of all student learning measures will be required in Section C (formerly known as Section G) of the AISI Project Annual/Final Report. Student measures may be quantitative, survey, and/or qualitative.

a. Quantitative Measures

Quantitative measures use numeric data. Sources of evidence might include: standardized tests, local assessments (e.g., teacher marks, attendance, program participation, etc.), school records (attendance, student behaviour, credits, course completion, etc.) provincial achievement tests, grade 12 diploma examinations, high school completion rates, drop-out rates, Rutherford scholarship eligibility, transition rates and so forth.

- Measures should be expressed as percentages where possible.
- It is expected that measures will have a baseline before the proposal is submitted. If baselines are not available at the time of project submission, please confer with SIB.
- It is recommended that baselines be determined using a three-year average from the targeted population or a comparable group with similar characteristics. See the definitions of baselines and targets for project measures on page 7 of the AISI Handbook for Cycle 4: 2009-2012.
- Targets should be realistic and attainable, based on prior performance. Revisions to targets are discouraged.
- Actual results will be entered annually, as part of the Annual /Final Report.
- Baseline comments must clearly describe the (a) data used, (b) time frame, and (c) method for calculation.
- Actual result comments are optional.

b. Survey Measures

Survey measures are both quantitative and qualitative. Sources of evidence might include: locally developed student/parent/teacher surveys or Provincial Accountability Pillar surveys.

- Use the drop-down menus to indicate the type of survey.
- Accountability Pillar results are available for students, parents and teachers in your jurisdictional report.
- If you are using results for students/parents/teachers from the Accountability Pillar, you will need to calculate your own response rate. For example, if you have 75 grade 7 students and 66 student surveys were reported in the Accountability Pillar results, your response rate would be 88%.
- It is **not** a requirement that survey measures be used.

c. Qualitative Measures

Qualitative data provide rich, transferable descriptions of individuals' experiences of educational phenomena, with a focus on process, meaning, and human behaviours as they occur in context. Sources of evidence might include: interview transcripts, written reports (e.g., policy documents; observation field notes), focus group transcripts, video/audio recordings (e.g., documenting classroom activities), artefacts/documents/portfolios (e.g., personal/professional journals; artwork).

- The following must be completed for each description of quality measure used:
 1. **Current Situation** – Describe the current circumstances / situation in the area of specific need. This provides a baseline. Use narrative form.
 2. **Desired Change** – What is the “end state or goal” (change and improvement phenomena) you want to achieve through the AISI project?
 3. **Success Indicators** – Describe how will you know success has been attained for each of the changes indicated? You should also clearly indicate “how” the success indicators will be measured and reported upon. There may be more than one indicator for a given measure. List these indicators using bullet form.
- When reporting on these success indicators in the Annual/Final Report, a summary of evidence-based themes from a data analysis of the raw data will be required. For example, rather than including all the interview transcripts from the in-depth qualitative interviews conducted, include a summary of evidence-based themes from the data analysis.

The following are some examples of qualitative measures. More examples are available on the AISI website.

Current Situation	Desired Change	Success Indicators
Students are passive learners who feel that schooling is done to them.	Students have a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning. Students shift from being passive learners to being actively involved in their own learning.	1) Data collected through transcripts from focus group discussions with students will indicate that students are satisfied with the opportunities provided to be involved in their own assessment (i.e. co-design assessment criteria, self assess using performance criteria and descriptive feedback) and with opportunities to provide input into types of assessment tasks. 2) Samples of student self-reflections will indicate growth in students' ability to set goals and self-assess.
Students are not challenged in school.	Students are challenged in their learning and supported through relationships that encourage them to take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, and discuss how they feel about learning. An intellectually rich, supportive, risk taking, student-directed climate pervades classrooms.	Data collected through student surveys and transcripts from student interviews will indicate that students feel challenged and supported in their learning.
Learning and assessment tasks require only low level thinking skills. Students do not deeply engage with the concepts they study in school.	Learning and assessment tasks require students to construct knowledge, solve problems, inquire into meaningful issues, engage in reflection, and build a repertoire of effective learning strategies.	Data will be collected by Learning Coaches and will consist of artefacts of learning and assessment tasks, and anecdotal notes in Learning Coaches Critical Evidence Journals. Analysis will indicate that students are engaged in inquiry based learning.

B2. Key Strategies and Processes



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The strategies listed in the Project Overview of this proposal, and in particular, the items in Section A.5, are to be elaborated on in this section. It is intended that strategies and processes for this project be indicated clearly in this section.

For the project proposal, only the first column (Planned Strategies/Processes) needs to be completed. The second column (Refinements/Changes) may be used, where appropriate, after project approval.

a. Instructional Strategies What instructional strategies do you plan to use to meet the student learning improvement and performance goals & targets?
Projects must identify instructional strategies to be used to improve student learning. (i.e., technology integration, clarifying and sharing learning outcomes with students, differentiated instruction, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe the instructional strategies you plan to use to meet the project goals and improvement targets.
b. Student Assessment What student assessment strategies and techniques do you plan to use to meet the student learning & performance improvement goals & targets?
AISI projects must provide annual evidence of student learning and performance. Assessment involves describing, collecting, recording, scoring, and interpreting information about students' learning. Assessment techniques may include tests, exhibits, interviews, surveys, performance rubrics, observation, portfolios, etc. Assessment can be formative or summative. <ul style="list-style-type: none">AISI project plans must identify the appropriate student assessment techniques and strategies to be used as evidence of student learning and performance.
c. Project Management and Coordination How do you plan to manage the project so it operates effectively and enhances the opportunity for meeting the improvement goals and targets?
Project management are the supports required to lead, manage and coordinate the project. AISI coordinators are responsible for providing this support. <ul style="list-style-type: none">In this section, please indicate:<ol style="list-style-type: none">Who (position) will be responsible for leadership and championing of the project,Who (position) will be responsible for project coordination and management.The proportion of his/her time that will be devoted to project management.The specific project management and operations activities to be undertaken for on-going management.Expenses related to project management will be entered in Section B4.Project management expenses include the AISI coordinator, office supplies, and travel expenses for the AISI coordinator.

<p>d. Professional Development What is your PD plan for this project?</p>
<p>Professional development includes resources, materials, external consultants, sub costs, and costs associated with travel, accommodation, meals and facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this section please indicate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. types of PD activities/ programs anticipated (including to whom, when, by whom) 2. how PD learnings will be integrated into instruction • For more information about planning PD, see “A Guide to Comprehensive Professional Development Planning” available on the AISI website. • Expenses related to professional development will be entered in Section B4. Costs incurred by the AISI coordinator are included in Project Management and Coordination.
<p>e. Parental and Community Involvement How do you plan to meaningfully and authentically involve parents in various aspects of the project and inform them during the cycle?</p>
<p>There must be meaningful involvement of parents in planning the proposal as well as the implementation and evaluation of projects. Business, community agencies and other groups can also play an important role in contributing to a project’s success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how parents and community will be involved or participate in the AISI project.
<p>f. Knowledge Dissemination, Sharing, and Communication: How do you plan to disseminate what you learn from your project both within and beyond your school jurisdiction?</p>
<p>Communication is sharing widely what is happening in AISI projects and what impact there has been on student learning. Potential audiences include parents, community members, school boards, media, and school staff within and beyond school authorities. Ways to disseminate new knowledge and practices include project documentation, workshops, events, conferences, promising practices for the AISI website, monographs, research briefs, articles for the School Improvement Scoop, the ATA News or professional magazines, journals, school bulletin boards, and newsletters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how your students, parents, other teachers and outside educators will be made aware of your initiative? • Describe components of your plan for disseminating and sharing what you learn from this initiative. Make reference to such things as timelines, audience, purpose and form. • Consider various ways you anticipate sharing within the school, in the school authority, and possibly province-wide or beyond. • For more information about ways to disseminate new knowledge and practices, see the AISI Communications Toolkit on the AISI website for communicating.
<p>g. Networking: How will you use networks for knowledge dissemination and the exchange or creation of information, ideas, and resources?</p>
<p>Networking may include face-to-face and digital communication around shared issues/educational practices of specific interest to the individual(s) or group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how you will use networking in this project.

h. Integration and Sustainability:

What is your plan for (a) integrating what is learned in order to impact students and (b) for sustaining effective practices beyond the AISI cycle?

Integration refers to educators incorporating new practices, strategies, learnings, and key findings into their instructional repertoires. Ideally there will be transferability of educational practice and student learning to other classrooms / situations and school staff beyond the initial project participants.

- Describe briefly how you plan to incorporate project learnings and key findings into instructional strategies used by teachers in your school authority.
- What mechanisms or methods will be in place in the school or school authority to ensure that new learnings and aspects of this initiative are transferred beyond the initial staff and student project participants?

Sustainability involves institutionalization of transferred practices as part of the culture of a school and/or school authority. All or part of what is learned through research and project implementation could be systematically incorporated into schools and system-wide practices and eventually be institutionalized in the classrooms, schools and school authorities. Ideally, AISI projects should be designed to have some lasting impact on educational practices in schools.

- Describe briefly how your school authority plans to continue the project learnings to benefit students and influence effective teacher practices in future years (beyond the AISI project when funding ends); both within the schools involved in this project and the other schools in the district that did not participate in this AISI project (if applicable).

i. Project Evaluation Process:

How do you plan to evaluate the ongoing and overall effectiveness and success of this project?

Evidence is more compelling if it is corroborated through multiple sources. Projects will describe the evaluation methods and data sources they will use to determine the success of their project. Multiple methods (e.g., student assessment, surveys), data sources (students, parents, teachers), and levels (e.g., grades 1, 2, 3, etc.) are recommended.


- Describe briefly the steps/tasks/actions that will be taken on an on-going basis to evaluate and monitor the AISI project in order to determine the ongoing and overall effectiveness or success of the entire project. **(This part is not intended to repeat the student outcome measures and evaluation activities used to determine success of quantitative or qualitative measures).**
- What project-end evaluations and/or activities do you anticipate using to determine the successes and challenges of the entire project?

B3. Staffing Requirements

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Planned FTE's per school year	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please estimate the number of staff / people (positions) who will be involved, stated in FTE's (Full Time Equivalents) for each project year.• Staff can include teachers and AISI coordinators, other professionals, teaching assistants, administrative and support staff.• The "Total \$ Amount Allotted for Staffing & Benefits" will be automatically transferred from the "Staffing and Benefits" expense line in Section B4a.

B4. Budget and Financial Report

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Note: Schools authorities should update their project budgets on the online Extranet system annually (1) to reflect the new level of provincial funding each year, (2) to consider any possible reallocation of provincial funding within projects, and (3) to reflect new costs and price increases.

a. Estimated Project Budget	
Unexpended Funds at the beginning of year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unexpended funds from year one of Cycle 4 will automatically be carried forward to year two.• Unexpended funds from year two of Cycle 4 will be automatically carried forward to year three.
AISI Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enter the amount of AISI provincially allocated funds here.
Funding from other sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If your school authority decides to fund a project beyond the provincial AISI funding level, then enters the amount here.
Approved AISI Funding transferred to/from other AISI projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following approval from SIB, enter amounts of funds transferred here.
Total Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This represents the total estimated revenue available for each year.• This amount will automatically be calculated by the system when you complete the above boxes.

Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please enter all salaries in the <i>Staffing and Benefits</i> section. • Staffing costs related to project management are not included here. • Project management costs include office supplies, travel expenses and other business costs incurred by the project manager. • Check boxes where appropriate.
Salaries and Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staffing costs related to project management and professional development is included here. • Check boxes where appropriate.
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please enter all salaries in the <i>Staffing and Benefits</i> section. • Staffing costs related to professional development are not included here. • Professional development costs include professional resource materials, external consultant/presenter fees, substitute costs for teachers to attend PD, travel/accommodation/meals/facility costs related to PD, and other related costs associated with professional development. • Check boxes where appropriate.
Instructional Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional materials and resources that are not related to professional development may be entered here.
Equipment Other Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is expected that equipment and other capital costs together will not exceed 10% of project expenses.
Total Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This represents the total estimated expenses for each year. • This amount will automatically be calculated by the system when you complete the above boxes.
Unexpended Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All designated provincial AISI funds must be expended on AISI projects; unused allocations may be refunded to the Government of Alberta at the end of Cycle 4.

b. Estimated project budget – comments.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide comments about estimated budgeted amounts to clarify or explain as needed. 	

B5. Attachments (Optional)



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Inclusion of relevant supplementary documents

- School Authorities may include relevant supplementary documents (i.e. reports, survey documents, needs assessments, links to videos) that would be helpful in understanding and reviewing the project. Links to websites may be included in Word or PDF documents.
- Attached documents are to be on a Word, Excel, or PDF format.
- Names of people should not be included in the attached documents unless the school authority has the written release from the person(s) as the proposal/plan will become public on the AISI Clearinghouse. It is the responsibility of the school authority to ensure the attachments comply with Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection (FOIP) guidelines.

B6. Project Contacts



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Identifying the main contact person(s) and their addresses

- The proposal must identify the main contact person (e.g., project coordinator, leader, or supervisor) who will be the main contact with SIB in the review of the proposal / plan.
- If the main contact person is also the project coordinator, please enter the name twice, with both positions indicated.
- Provision is made for listing additional contacts, as necessary.
- Please note that the person(s) listed here will be added to the email communication list from SIB and Extranet system. Each contact will receive all emails related to the APAR and project reviews.
- It is important to keep this information current.

B7. Superintendent / CEO Certification



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Certification of the Superintendent that the proposed project plan meets key criteria form online

- Upon completion of the project proposal (by the coordinator or person completing the form), it should be forwarded to the Superintendent/CEO via the online Extranet. Select “Submit to Superintendent” in the project status menu box).
- The Superintendent/CEO must check off each criteria, certifying that this project meets each criterion, prior to submission of the project plan to Alberta Education.
- When the Superintendent/CEO has certified the above criteria, he / she then forwards it to Alberta Education (SIB), via the Extranet, by selecting “Submit to AE” in the project status menu box. No signature is required.
- For further assistance on Extranet submissions, you may call the Helpdesk @ (780) 427-5318 or the School Improvement Branch @ (780) 427-3160.