

Complete a workbook before Dec. 6, 2002

The deadline for completing the Learning Commission workbook is December 6, 2002. As of November 28, the Learning Commission had received 5,700 online responses to the workbook and 1,500 hard copies of the workbook had been completed and returned. The workbook is available at <http://www.learningcommission.gov.ab.ca/commission.asp?lid=56>.

What's new online?

- ◆ **Premier's Award slide show**
The slide show featuring the winner and finalists for the Premier's Award for School Board Innovation and Excellence is available in a downloadable format on the ASBA website at <http://www.asba.ab.ca>. Click on Grasslands wins \$5,000 Premier's Award. A summary of the 19 entries for the award is also posted.
- ◆ **Excellence in Teaching Award**
Nomination forms are online at <http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/teaching>. The nomination deadline is February 3, 2003.

Research paper looks at rural-urban reading gap

A Statistics Canada research paper, *Understanding the rural-urban reading gap* reveals students from urban schools in Canada performed significantly better in reading than students from rural schools.

How about Alberta?

According to the Stats Can report:

- ◆ the difference between urban and rural students' reading scores was 21 points
- ◆ rural students in Alberta exceeded the national average and did better than urban students in some other provinces
- ◆ urban students in Alberta scored far higher than the national average for urban schools.

Why the difference?

According to a synopsis of the report posted on the Stats Can web site, "the difference between rural and urban reading performance is most strongly related to rural-urban differences at the community level.

Although rural students were more likely than urban students to come from families with lower socio-economic backgrounds, the difference does not explain the difference in performance between rural and urban students.

Moreover the rural-urban difference cannot be attributed to differences in rural and urban schools because, for the most part, rural and urban schools are much the same."

The synopsis goes on to say, "Broadly speaking, this model covers family, school and community characteristics. Community characteristics are based on both the education and job level of the parents of all of the school's 15-year-olds, and on the educational and occupational characteristics of the adult population of the school's municipality."

The study used data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) to measure the difference in reading performance

between students in rural and urban schools in each province.

The complete report, *Understanding the rural-urban reading gap* is posted on the Statistics Canada website <http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/81-595-MIE.htm>.

Poll says Canadians want history lessons

A recent poll indicates that what happens in schools is not congruent with public opinion when it comes to history lessons. The survey found that:

- ◆ 87 per cent of those surveyed (1,679 adult Canadians) believe Canadian history should be a required course for graduation from high school
- ◆ Science and Mathematics were the only subjects rated higher than history for requiring mandatory courses for graduation.

For more information see http://www.pollara.ca/new/POLLARA_NET.html (*From Edutrends, November 2002*)

9/10 young Canadians have home computer

Nearly nine out of ten young Canadians has a computer at home and seven out of ten have home access to the Internet. See the October, 2002 edition of the Education Quarterly Review, Statistics Canada for more information. It's available online at: www.statcan.ca/english/indepth/81-003/feature/eqar2002008004s0a01.pdf