Guiding principle:
“Networks that contribute to the goal of AISI will be created and/or enhanced for knowledge dissemination and the exchange of information, ideas and resources.” (The Framework for AISI Cycle 5: 2012 – 2015, p. 3).

The rationale:
AISI Cycle 5 represents a move from disconnected or loosely connected projects to a province-wide network of research, improvement and innovation. The renewed emphasis on networks is the Education Partners Steering Committee’s (EPSC) response to The Learning Mosaic’s recommendation in the Summary Report, "to invest in province-wide networks that cut across districts, that reach beyond annual conferences and that incorporate proven design principles of effective network architectures that have clear, positive impacts on system-wide outcomes for students” (Page 15).

Success Indicator(s):
Participants, system leaders and perhaps future external reviewers report the AISI network supports and enhances the exchange of information, ideas and resources as well as communication, knowledge dissemination and knowledge mobilization.

What do we know about effective networks?
The Learning Mosaic articulated four key features which will be foundational to the creation and growth of the AISI Network(s) throughout Cycle 5 (p. 70). The AISI Network(s) will: 1) be guided by a common, clear purpose, 2) foster collegial, trust-based relationships, 3) stimulate frequent interactions (formal and informal) and 4) actively promote and celebrate participation and results.

What will the AISI Network(s) look like?
Davis and Sumara (2009) describe four theoretical conceptions of networks: centralized, decentralized, fragmented and distributed (The Learning Mosaic, p. 35). Given the purpose of the AISI Network(s), we will create the structures and supports necessary to generate a decentralized model. “A decentralized network comprises many centers. Nodes in such networks tend to be decentralized networks themselves. This structure combines reasonably efficient communication with a reasonably robust structure, enabling considerable flexibility and high adaptability” (p. 35).

Alberta Education, in concert with EPSC and AISI partners, will provide the resources, structure and leadership for the formation and growth of a thriving community of AISI leaders throughout the province. The structure of the AISI Network(s) will be flexible and responsive to the needs and interests of the members while at the same time providing dedicated resources to maintain engagement of the participants.

During the next few months as we invite participation and establish some of the parameters of the AISI Network(s), we will actively involve all potential participants in guiding the work and provide resources for individuals in various areas of the province to serve as facilitators. These individuals will be essential to building lateral capacity across the AISI community, ensuring a measure of equity of opportunity and sharing expertise.
Where will the AISI Network live?
The network will live through ‘in person’ interactions and virtual spaces. The first meetings will occur in the fall of 2012. Participants have been surveyed to inform the agenda for the meeting and establish the needs and interests (i.e. social media). During the year, participants will have opportunities to engage in synchronous (e.g. webinars) or asynchronous communication online (e.g. discussion boards). The AISI website will be the primary point of contact for information related to the AISI Network(s) activities.

Who will be invited to participate?
School authorities will be asked to share the invitation to participate with AISI teams. Ideally, the project leaders, community engagement facilitators, research leaders and cross-school authority leaders should be involved in the network in order to build lateral capacity in these key areas. We recognize in some districts all of these roles may be the responsibility of one individual. We will encourage each school authority to participate in the network to enhance sharing and ensure sustainability.

Key contacts within the AISI Network:
The Network(s) will be supported with expertise in research capacity, data collection and analysis, school community engagement, and collaborative cross-school authority projects. Key contacts will work collaboratively within the AISI community to:

- Initiating and promoting networks
- Acquiring resources for sharing and/or to facilitate networking
- Updating and moderating virtual spaces
- Evaluating and sharing networking activities and impacts
- Organizing gatherings (face-to-face and virtual)

Anticipated first year activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2012</td>
<td>Introductory needs assessment survey to potential participants</td>
<td>Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>Launch workshops, share survey results and generate possible ways of working together</td>
<td>Edmonton and Calgary</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2012 – January 2013</td>
<td>Lateral capacity building opportunities</td>
<td>provincial</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>AISI pre-conference session</td>
<td>Edmonton</td>
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<tr>
<td>March – April 2013</td>
<td>Lateral capacity building opportunities</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2013</td>
<td>Reflect, assess, celebrate and plan for year 2</td>
<td>Edmonton and Calgary</td>
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