J. Douglas Willms holds the Tier I Canada Research Chair in Literacy and Human Development. He is Professor and Director of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy at the University of New Brunswick (UNB). He is a Fellow and President-Elect of the International Academy of Education, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and a Member of the US National Academy of Education. He is President and CEO of The Learning Bar Inc. and KSI Research International Inc.

Dr. Willms has published over 200 research articles and monographs on the family, school and community factors that contribute to the health and well-being of children and adolescents. He led the teams that developed the background questionnaires for the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Canada's *National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth*. He and his colleagues designed *Tell Them From Me (TTFM)*, an evaluation system for the continuous monitoring of school climate and student engagement and wellness (www.thelearningbar.com) and the *Early Years Evaluation (EYE)*, an instrument for the assessment of children's developmental skills at ages 3 to 6 (www.earlyyearsevaluation.com).

Talk Title: **Reversing the Trend in Japanese and Canadian Schools**

Results from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicate that Japan and Canada are among the top-performing countries in literacy skills in the world. However, they may be losing their competitive advantage: in both countries PISA results have declined slightly over the past decade and the percentage of students with low levels of literacy skills has increased. In 2009, about 31% of Canadian students and 32% of Japanese students scored at level 2 or lower on the six-point PISA scale. Although Japan has much lower levels of truancy than Canada, both countries have a high prevalence of students that lack a "sense of belonging" at school.

Professor J. Douglas Willms played a key role in the design of PISA and Canada's National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY). This research underpins a large longitudinal study on the progress of Canadian children as they make their way through school. It also led to the design of the Early Years Evaluation (EYE), an instrument for the direct assessment of children's developmental skills at ages 3 to 6, and Tell Them From Me, an evaluation system for the continuous monitoring of school climate and student engagement and wellness. Professor Willms will examine the PISA findings from Japan and Canada with attention to the school factors that affect student outcomes. He will also discuss two large Canadian initiatives aimed at reversing the downward trend in student outcomes. His work suggests that improving school performance and reducing inequalities will require reforms that involve altering some of the core structural features of schools.