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Montessori curriculum being correlated to standards by AIMS in Illinois

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By **Jocelyn Scotty**, Chicago Montessori Learning Examiner

When a school attempts to receive an accreditation, public fundi administration is required to have documented evidence that its' the state or national educational core standards. For Montessor receive accreditation from a traditionally non-Montessori organiz establish a publicly funded program requires the alignment of the required state and national standards. This process is a huge ur school.

Stacey Edwards, along with the [Association of Illinois Montesso](#) to streamline the process by correlating and compiling state and established Montessori curriculum and publishing them online, fi administrators to resource at will. I recently had the opportunity t regarding this groundbreaking cooperative effort within the Mont



Q: Can you tell me a little bit about your background and yo

A: In the summer of 2002, a serendipitous event brought Montessori into my life and I continue to be very passionate about this philosophy to this day. I received my AMS 3-6 credential from [Seton Montessori Institute](#) (formally MECA-Seton) in 2003. I have had opportunities to teach in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Warsaw, Poland and then back in Chicago. In 2008, I enrolled in a graduate program at the [Erikson Institute](#) in order to further develop myself professionally. I expect to receive my Masters Degree in Child Development with a specialization in Administration in May of 2011.

Currently, I am the Educational Coordinator at the [Montessori Academy of Chicago](#), a new urban Montessori school that includes 230 students in 13 classrooms, from infants through elementary. I learned about the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools (AIMS) through the Head of School when I joined her at one of their meetings. I have been attending meetings since. In my internship for AIMS, I am working towards achieving some of their research and advocacy goals.

Q: Why is there a need to correlate national and state standards with the Montessori curriculum?

A: Nationally, the need to correlate standards has been an ongoing issue. Montessori programs are primarily in private school settings, but the number of publicly funded Montessori programs has been growing. Currently, there are over 5,000 identified Montessori schools in the United States, with more than 500 of those being publicly funded programs. Any public Montessori project must create correlations to state, and now national, standards in order to achieve approval. Most have undertaken this complex process individually, reinventing the proverbial wheel each time. Private schools are being asked more frequently now, in our 'standards based' world to show how they are meeting, and hopefully exceeding, published public school standards.

AIMS has recognized this need from both its private school and public school communities, as well as the national need for a publicly accessible resource demonstrating the correlation of Montessori curriculum with state and Core Standards. For my internship, AIMS has asked me to collect information from sources around the country, and especially in Illinois, and organize these into documents that clearly demonstrate how Montessori curriculum, when done authentically, clearly not only meets these requirements, but also often exceeds them.

The impetus for this project began when AIMS invited Ginny Riga, Montessori representative in the South Carolina State Department of Education and AMS Board Member, to speak to our group on the success of the [South Carolina Montessori Alliance](#). Their group has recently succeeded in advocating for a Full Montessori Credential to be recognized as the equivalent to their state's Teaching Credential, among other things.

Q: What specific information are you seeking from the Montessori community?

A: I am seeking documents that schools have created that demonstrate how the Montessori educational philosophy and curriculum not only meets our state and national standards but also how we exceed them; for infant programs through high school. For example, we know our math curriculum is quite strong, but as a community have found it hard to articulate these strengths without demonstrating the materials within our own classrooms. Other formalized "marketed curricula" have these correlations to the standards well documented.

In order to create a cohesive correlation, I am collecting information from all Montessori programs that have gone through this process. The point of this project is not to reinvent the wheel like so many have done, but to work as a community to create an authoritative document that is accessible to everyone. I can accept documents via email at s.edwards@erikson.edu, by fax at 312.264.2336 or directly by mail at: Montessori Academy of Chicago Attn: Stacey Edwards 1335 W. Randolph Street Chicago, IL 60607 until December 1, 2010.

Q: Will the completed compiled standards be provided only to member schools of AIMS?

A: Absolutely not. The idea is to get Illinois working together as one collaborative Montessori voice. I would like to see this work serve the greater Montessori community.

Q: Have you received standards from a wide variety of Montessori schools?

A: There is a wide interest in this correlation project and I have talked with many supporters, but I am still in need of more documentation. The other research that I am working on for my internship is to create a survey to collect demographic information in order to be more informed advocates for Montessori within our State. Many schools that I have talked with do not realize that there are over 230 Montessori schools in Illinois. Now we need to be able to share how many teachers work within those schools, as well as how many children and families are being served in Montessori settings in our state.

For more information: [Association of Illinois Montessori Schools](#)

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