



# Creating Our National Grassroots Network for Montessori Advocacy



## Introduction

**Why does Montessori need advocacy?** Supporters of Montessori education need a venue for collective advocacy efforts. Currently, movements for advocacy may exist in local pockets, but we would like to see this shifted to national scale so individuals can collectively address national public policy issues facing Montessori education. The current project represents a joint effort between AMS and AMI to promote Montessori advocacy.

**What is advocacy?** Advocacy refers to systematic efforts made by an organization or group of people towards changing or implementing a policy goal (Prakash & Gugerty, 2007). Collective action is often necessary to create a voice for under-represented groups. Advocacy groups, like the one supported by this research, function to connect individuals to groups in an effort to promote national change.

**Why do advocacy groups fail?** Advocacy groups fail for a number of reasons beyond the obvious. Our research was designed to overcome the most common source of advocacy group failure: lack of information about policy issues serving as a rallying call for the group. By creating and supporting a national database of state coalitions, we hope to identify and promote specific policy issues facing the Montessori community.

## Objectives

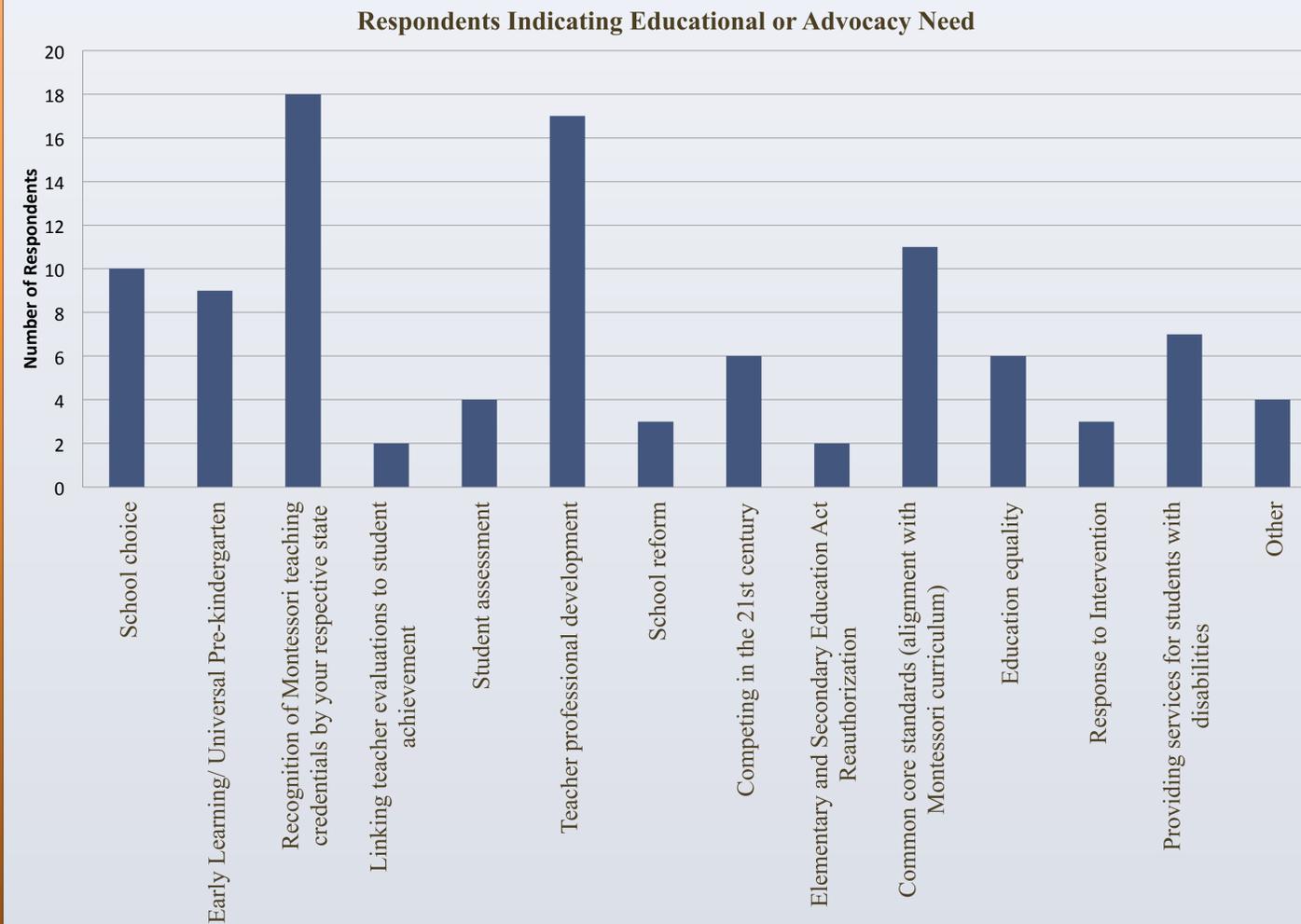
1. The Database will contain a listing of local, regional, and state organizations and coalition leaders nationwide.
2. The Database will contain useful data on policy and advocacy work to date.
3. The Database, as a directory, will be available on the AMS and AMI websites, and websites of other Montessori organizations or coalitions.
4. The Database will have IRB approval and be available to researchers.
5. The Database will be utilized by the Policy Manager to assist in gathering facts about state work related to advocacy and policy.

## Results

The following were specified as the greatest concerns for advocacy by respondents:

- 78% indicated a need for recognition of Montessori teaching credentials by states
- 74% indicated a need for teacher professional development
- 48% indicated a need for common core standards
- 43% indicated a need for school choice initiatives

Qualitative responses included multiple responses concerned with day care licensing legislation for schools educating children less than 6 years of age. The following table illustrates advocacy and educational needs according to survey respondents:



States represented by the above data include: Illinois, California, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Maine, Maryland, Florida, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Washington, and South Carolina.

## Continuing Research

**Create cohesion among coalitions.** The current database contains valuable information about advocacy efforts in isolated Montessori community coalitions. The responses of these groups show several pressing needs that could be addressed through a national movement: creating a system for Montessori credentials to be recognized by state boards of education, offering greater professional development for Montessori teachers, and addressing the common core standards with respect to the Montessori curriculum

**Adding additional state coalitions to the database.** Since this data was collected, Tier 2 coalitions have been surveyed and added to the existing database. We would like to build a comprehensive database to assist coalitions in promoting advocacy concerns and publish this information as a directory available through AMS and AMI.

## To Join the Movement:

If you would like additional information or would like to participate in this project, you may contact Tracey Sulak at [Tracey.Sulak@Baylor.edu](mailto:Tracey.Sulak@Baylor.edu).

Or, if you have a smart phone, feel free to scan this QR code to access the survey. We would like to collect information from all state coalitions, if possible.



## Researchers on the current project:

Sharon Damore, Ed.D., DePaul University; MLC Advocacy Work Group; Co-Chair, AMS Policy Committee; Database Mapping Project, Co-Director

Janet Bagby, Ph.D., Baylor University; AMS Research Committee, Chair; Database Mapping Project, Co-Director

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Under the direction of Virginia McHugh Goodwin, AMI/USA and Richard Ungerer, AMS