

# SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

## KEVIN CLARK, HEAD OF AIDAN MONTESSORI SCHOOL



### **What's your first memory of being a Head of School?**

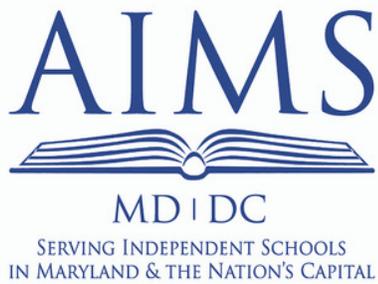
My first headship was at a small Montessori school in Massachusetts. I had previously been an Assistant Head at a school that was strikingly homogenous, demographically. My first memory of being a Head of School was looking into the classrooms at my new school and being in awe of the diversity of the student body and wondering at its potential.

### **What has surprised you most about working with schools and or students?**

Humanity and Universalism. When I was a student in elementary, high school, and college, I never considered how deeply rooted the work of education is in the work of humanity; instead, I viewed it as the work of academics. As I moved further into school administration, the deep interactions between administrators, teachers, parents, and students became obvious to me. The exchanges between unique individuals on such a deep interpersonal level became "The Work" to me, and academics, extracurricular activities, facilities became the framework within which this much more important work happened. This realization made clear to me how universal the issues are that affect people in school communities.

### **What do you find most challenging about independent education?**

We live in a country that provides public education yet empowers communities to create their own learning environments and pursue them independently. That we live in a country in which a community can get together and define the mission and pedagogy around which we would like to organize the education of our students is a hallmark of what makes us who we are. Independent education, in and of itself, is the challenge.



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**If you could change one thing about independent schools, what would it be?**

With a magic wand, I would make all schools free and accessible to all students.

**Tell us about someone who has influenced your work?**

As the head of a Montessori school, my work is most influenced by my faculty. While this is likely true of most schools - deeply committed teachers influence the head's work - this is vital to me because the mission of a Montessori school is always embedded in the minds, hearts, and souls of the teachers and their Montessori training. Rather than directing my teachers' attention to the mission of the school, my task is to extrapolate the tenets of our mission from the teachers, themselves.

**What might AIMS Members be surprised to know about you?**

I lived overseas for eight years, in Pakistan, Namibia, Egypt, and Germany.

**If you weren't serving as a Head of School, what would you be doing instead, or what would your life be like?**

I became a Head of School while walking a path in life that was unconventional. I was fortunate in the opportunities that I uncovered every couple of years as my career - driven by my interests - unfolded. Becoming a Head of School was not a career plan that I had; rather, it was the outcome of pursuing my dreams and having a hunger for interesting opportunities. I do not know what work I would be doing were I not a Head of School, but it would probably be some other natural outcome of following my instincts and seeking out things that interest me. I am particularly interested in different languages and cultures, and am sure that interest would have played a part in where I ended up.