

## *General Description*

The Achievement in Music Program, also known as AIM, is an exciting and motivating program which is designed to develop strong performance and technical skills as well as a thorough understanding of musical theory. It is through these acquired skills and increased musical knowledge that students are able to perform both with confidence and with a high level of musicianship.

There are twelve levels in the program, with each level containing theory, performance, and technical requirements that follow a logical progression of skills from early elementary through advanced levels. Students generally prepare one level each year and demonstrate their competency at annual exams, which are conducted by experienced judges in a comfortable and non-competitive setting.

Students of all ages who participate in the AIM Program benefit by having specific goals to guide their music study. In addition, teachers and parents appreciate an independent evaluation of the student's progress. Students are not in competition against other students, but are judged individually on their accomplishments.

Upon passing each level, students are recognized by receiving a certificate and pin.

## *Theory*

Music theory and keyboard skills are carefully graded to match the technical and performance requirements at each level. Components include:

- Sightreading
- Rhythm
- Harmonization
- Aural skills
- Written skills
- Transposition
- Score analysis

## *Performance*

Technique skills progress from basic five-finger patterns to scales, chords and arpeggios in multiple keys.

Students perform repertoire from various musical style periods as they progress from early to advanced levels.

## *Materials Available*

The following materials are available for teachers from the ISMTA Central Office:

- **AIM Syllabus**

Explains the program and lists all the requirements at each level. Includes a comprehensive sequenced list of repertoire as well as collections that teachers may choose from when selecting repertoire for exams.

- **AIM Teachers Guide**

Provides suggestions and additional materials that are helpful for beginning teachers in preparing students for exams.

- **AIM Student Workbooks**

Prepares students for a specific AIM level with lessons that introduce and reinforce theory concepts. Technical skills and sample tests are included. An invaluable resource for busy students and teachers!!

## History

The Achievement in Music program was created over many years by volunteers. It has roots in programs in other states and countries and has evolved into a unique program suitable for average as well as exceptional students.

In 1974 the Illinois State Music Teachers Association (ISMTA) adopted the Minnesota Piano and Theory Syllabus. A new Illinois curriculum was written in 1978 using that syllabus as a guide. The program has been revised several times.

In 2003 the AIM syllabus was rewritten and amended to include more practical theory and keyboard skills together with updated repertoire requirements. The addition of a Teacher's Guide and Student Workbooks has made the program easier for both students and teachers.

The AIM program continues to grow with almost 3,000 students in several states participating in the program each year!



ISMTA Central Office  
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217-398-4199  
[www.ismta.org](http://www.ismta.org)

*Contact information and order forms  
are available on the web at the  
address above. New teachers  
should contact their local AIM Chair  
for more information.*

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**Piano**

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