



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Renaissance Middle School**

**Intermediate School 192**

**109 - 89 204 Street  
Queens  
NY 11412**

**Principal: Harriett Diaz**

**Dates of review: May 8 – 10, 2007**

**Reviewer: Chrissie Pittman**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Renaissance Middle School serves a multicultural community and is located in Queens. The school is divided into six small learning communities where 796 students are enrolled in grades 6 through 8. The ethnic composition of the school is 94% Black, 4% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 1% White. The school receives Title 1 funding for 72.4% of the student population, which is higher than most other City schools. There are 13.2 % special education students and an additional 6.3% are English language learners. The attendance rate is 91%, which is similar to that found in like schools and City schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has a high profile throughout the school and is well respected by the parents, staff and pupils.
- Teachers frequently observe each other's teaching and support colleagues in the classroom.
- The school gives particularly good attention to the students with the greatest need for improvement.
- Data is analyzed and used well to inform teaching and planning.
- Staffing, budgeting and scheduling decisions are effectively driven by the data collected on the students to develop and improve their outcomes.
- Good professional development effectively supports the goals of the school.
- There are good enrichment activities available after school in art, physical education and music.
- All children are known by the caring staff and student behavior is generally good.
- Parents are very pleased with the progress their children are making and like the calm and friendly atmosphere of the school.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all teachers plan and differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of different students in the same class.
- Improve long term strategic planning to produce clear goals and measurable targets for all aspects of the school's work, showing how, when and by whom these will be monitored to keep them on track.
- Continue to improve the proficiency of data gathering.
- Continue to build the school's capacity to accelerate the learning of every student.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

The principal has worked tirelessly to create an environment in which change and development can take place. She and her staff want the students to succeed and become lifelong learners. She is beginning to achieve her goal. Students are becoming much more self-disciplined and interested in learning and succeeding. There has been steady and sustainable growth in mathematics scores. As a result of the development of small learning communities, students' performance in reading and writing is improving from a very low starting point. Data is beginning to be used well to improve both the teaching and learning. However some teachers' planning and instruction is insufficiently differentiated to cater to the wide range of students' needs. Staff members are generally very supportive of each other and anxious to develop their teaching through the good staff development provided by the school. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware that what they do in the classroom relates directly to the agreed goals, although the Comprehensive Education Plan is not yet sharp enough to effectively influence school development. Given the substantial commitment of the principal and staff, and the consistent progress being made by the children, the school has good capacity to sustain change and promote development.

### How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Good baseline data is collected on all students. Each member of staff has a portfolio that includes all test scores and an analysis of each level attained. The administration regularly disseminates information gained from assessments and tests which provide teachers with up-to-date data on the performance and progress of all students. For example, from English language arts and mathematics examination scores, diagnostic tests (Grow Report) in literacy and numeracy and regional interim practice test results. The school also analyzes its results well by academic subject area to enable staff to identify areas for improvement. For example, every five weeks students are tested using programs such as the Princeton Review, Destination Math, simulated tests, surveys and rubrics. Subjects such as computing and science offer learning through different modalities.

Staff are becoming more experienced in the use of this information to revise goals and plans. Given the fairly high proportion of students with Title 1 funding there is an appropriate focus on the data for these students. Data on the ethnic mix in similar schools is considered for trends in performance and progress. The data is also beginning to be used well to compare the progress of students in each class and grade to ensure that instruction is equally effective for all. For example, coaches perform formal and informal classroom observations and work with teachers to use this data. The principal compares students' progress year to year, particularly for those students who are English language learners or Special Education students, to ensure they are making steady and sustainable progress. Particular attention is given to students with interrupted formal education.

These students are monitored in classes through constant assessments and have several enrichment programs such as the Saturday academy, labs and tutoring to make sure they are not left behind.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school appropriately uses a range of assessment information for the setting of whole-school goals and to ensure that students make good progress, particularly in mathematics. Teachers have also become more accurate in grading students’ work. This helps students to know and understand what they are doing well and what they need to do in order to improve. Staff members meet regularly to reflect upon the suitability of the next learning step for their students and refine their plans accordingly. As a result, teachers’ planning is becoming better matched to the needs of all students. There is a good team ethos among staff and good support from the principal, which enables teachers to get help when they need it. For example, through grade to team interventions, enrichment groups, Academic Intervention Services, plans and parent conferences high goals are set to improve teaching and accelerate students’ learning.

The data the school has collected through its assessment procedures has been used to identify the needs of each Academy. As a result of this analysis, the school has employed a literacy and numeracy coach to support staff in achieving their goals. Teachers were given professional development workshops in balanced literacy and there were focused ‘walk-throughs’ conducted by the supervisory team, who also conducted formal and informal observations to increase teacher awareness and student outcomes. The school is also working to improve the performance of special education students. There are a number of professionals such as Academic Intervention Service teachers, SETSS and CTT teachers, who attend the school to help special education students to achieve their goals. Where it is necessary to refer underachieving students to community services, this is done very efficiently. There is tutoring in math, science, and technology for borderline students as an ongoing process and the group of students in the greatest need are effectively changed in response to data analysis.

Parents are kept well informed of their child’s program with frequent newsletters, the Renaissance Review, and parent teacher conferences and are actively involved in discussions about their child’s progress. The school sees working closely with parents and caregivers as essential to students’ progress and involves them actively in their children’s learning. There are three parent teacher conferences per year and parents are invited to workshops where they are shown how to help their children with their tests. However, although some students meet and challenge their targets, this is not the case for all students. Plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of most members of the school community. The Comprehensive Education Plan is appropriately written by the school leadership team as well as the principal.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school is still following a modified curriculum because of a mandated requirement to improve its performance. For example, the balanced literacy program uses the Regents curriculum for reading and writing with additional units and objectives to support the school's objectives. All students participate in a writing program across the curriculum. Teachers meet regularly to ensure that they are achieving consistency in the overall curriculum planning. Most teachers are accountable for improving instruction. There are examples of appropriate differentiation within lessons that meet the needs of different ability groups. However a minority of teachers do not consistently use the data they collect to adapt their methods of instruction or to ensure that each student has suitably differentiated work to match their ability. Most staff share ideas and discuss students’ progress. These discussions provide useful information about individual students and class and grade level performance. This structure successfully addresses the underachievement of some students. However this is not consistent and some teachers are collecting the data but don’t understand how to use it to measure student progress.

Budgeting decisions are made in response to the needs of the students as shown by the development of appropriate literacy programs. For example, professional development has recently focused on writing. Staffing appointments are made in response to these needs. For example, computer lab teachers, new guidance counselors and Wilson Reading and Read 180 coaches have all recently been employed in response to the data. Scheduling decisions reflect the goals to improve literacy and mathematics through the use of extra assistant teachers , which enable small groups to operate.

Students’ attitudes toward learning are very positive. In lessons, they concentrate well and enjoy the work. Every student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who will help them should they need it. Staff know their students and achievement has improved markedly as a result, particularly for special educational students. Relationships between all adults and students are excellent. The family atmosphere in the academies is created by the fact that the same teachers teach the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade and the students are very well known. Attendance is also given high priority. It is comparable to similar schools but below City schools. Any absences are followed up efficiently.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The principal has demonstrated, through good quality documentation, clear criteria for the selection of staff. They are initially selected based on their qualifications and high expectations for student performance. However, their love of children and their ability to work well in teams to facilitate learning is also paramount, according to the principal. The capacity to use data is being effectively enhanced through professional training, which includes the modeling of data analysis to enable staff to amend their teaching programs. In this context professional development is differentiated and increases confidence and competence in all staff to use data effectively. Recent initiatives to improve professional development even further are beginning to show a significant impact on student outcomes through, for example, model lessons in English and mathematics and courses on how to

look at data. Professional development is well designed to achieve school goals and to improve student outcomes.

The principal monitors teaching regularly, and teachers frequently observe each other's classroom instruction informally to enable further development and improve their own performance. Planning and evaluation of results is a regular feature of team meetings. The principal has high expectations and provides clear, focused and effective leadership. She is highly respected throughout the school for her ability to get things done. Parents attribute the success of their children to her. On a day to day basis the school runs smoothly as routines are well established and everyone is well supported.

The school also works well with a range of services to support students' academic and social needs. For example, Bank Street College offers children the opportunity to stay after school and get involved in extracurricular activities in sports and the arts, such as the award winning gospel choir and robotics team. These partnerships provide programs which effectively promote the aims and objectives of the school. Visiting specialists and coaches extend teachers' experiences with fresh ideas and enhance the learning experience for lower achieving students with enhanced literacy and mathematics sessions.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school has begun to monitor the impact of its plans and policies on students' learning, but this is not yet effectively embedded in the system. The cycle of analysis, goal setting and reviewing outcomes is in its infancy. The school's Comprehensive Educational Plan is well written by the principal. It is detailed with clear targets across all areas of the curriculum. However, all the staff are not fully aware of the goals and the contents of the plan and are minimally involved in the writing of it. This is a work in progress and some of the initiatives are too recent to have made any significant impact upon whole school practice or student outcomes. Nevertheless, although the plan is explicit, its use as a tool to guide improvement is limited. This is because it is not sufficiently costed and is over too short a timescale to be of little more than satisfactory use in improving student achievement.

The school is aware of where students are succeeding and where they need additional support. It has a satisfactory range of assessment procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the pace of student progress. Comparisons of student progress across classrooms and schools are appropriately being made. Where there are concerns about the achievement of students, necessary adjustments are made to strategies, plans and professional development. Coaches look at data in a proactive way to guide their planning. Details about the progress of individual students are made available through grade meetings, school leadership team meetings and discussions between professionals who bring their expertise to the school. The grade meetings include evaluating past performance, setting up plans and looking at students' work collaboratively.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>SCHOOL NAME: Renaissance Middle School (IS 192)</b> | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| <b>Quality Score</b>                                   |   | X |   |

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>   | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>                                 |   | X |   |
| 1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul> |   | X |   |
| 1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>                       |   | X |   |
| 1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.                  |   | X |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>  |   | X |   |

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b> | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.  |   | X |   |
| 2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.  |   | X |   |
| 2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.   |   |   | X |
| 2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.      |   | X |   |
| 2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.   |   | X |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>   |   | X |   |

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>   | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.  |   | X |   |
| 3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.   |   | X |   |
| 3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.   |   | X |   |
| 3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.  |   | X |   |
| 3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.  |   | X |   |
| 3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.   |   | X |   |
| 3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.  |   |   | X |
| 3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.   |   | X |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>   |   | X |   |
| <b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>   | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.   |   | X |   |
| 4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap. |   |   | X |
| 4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.  |   | X |   |
| 4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.  |   | X |   |
| 4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.  |   |   | X |
| 4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.   |   |   | X |
| 4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.  |   | X |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>   |   | X |   |
| <b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>   | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.  | X |   |   |
| 5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.  |   | X |   |
| 5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.  |   | X |   |
| 5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.   |   | X |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>   |   | X |   |