

BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Achievement and Accountability
Division of Research Services

School Effectiveness Review
2017 - 2018

Renaissance Academy
November 13-15, 2017

200 East North Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
www.baltimorecityschools.org

Table of Contents

Part I: Introduction and School Background 3
 Introduction to the School Effectiveness Review..... 3
 School Background 3
Part II: Summary of Performance Levels 4
Part III: Findings on Domains of Effective Schools 5
 Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction..... 5
 Domain 2: Talented People 11
 Domain 3: Vision and Engagement 14
 Domain 4: Strategic Leadership..... 18
Performance Level Rubric..... 21
Appendix A: School Report Comments 22
Appendix B: SER Team Members 25

Part I: Introduction and School Background

Introduction to the School Effectiveness Review

Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) developed the School Effectiveness Framework and the School Effectiveness Review process in 2009. The School Effectiveness Review (SER) uses trained school reviewers to measure a school's effectiveness against City Schools' School Effectiveness Standards. The School Effectiveness Standards are aligned with City Schools' effectiveness frameworks for teachers and school leaders.

The SER provides an objective and evidence-based analysis of how well a school is working to educate its students. It generates a rich layer of qualitative data that may not be revealed when evaluating a school solely on student performance outcomes. It also provides district and school-level staff with objective and useful information when making strategic decisions that impact student achievement.

The SER team, comprised of representatives from City Schools who have extensive knowledge about schools and instruction, gathered information from teachers, students, parents, and leadership during a two-day site visit. During the visit, the SER team observed classrooms, reviewed selected school documents, and conducted focus groups with school leadership, teachers, students, and parents. The SER team analyzed evidence collected over the course of the SER to determine the extent to which key actions have been adopted and implemented at the school. This report summarizes the ratings in the four domains and related key actions, provides evidence to support the ratings, and – based on a rubric – allocates a performance level for each key action. More information about the SER process is detailed in the School Effectiveness Review protocol, located on the City Schools website and available upon request from the Office of Achievement and Accountability in City Schools.

School Background

Renaissance Academy serves approximately 300 students in ninth through twelfth grades. The school is located on McCulloh Street in the Upton neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. The principal, Ms. Nikkia Rowe, has been at the school for five years. For more information about the school's student demographics and student achievement data, please see the School Profile, located on the City Schools website.

Part II: Summary of Performance Levels

Based on trends found in the collected evidence, the SER team assigns a performance level to each key action.

Domains and Key Actions	Performance Levels			
	Level 4: Highly Effective	Level 3: Effective	Level 2: Developing	Level 1: Not Effective

Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction	
1.1 Teachers plan highly effective instruction.	Effective
1.2 Teachers deliver highly effective instruction.	Developing
1.3 Teachers use multiple data sources to adjust practice.	Effective
1.4 School leadership supports highly effective instruction.	Effective
1.5 Teachers establish a classroom environment in which teaching and learning can occur.	Developing
Domain 2: Talented People	
2.1 The school implements systems to select, develop, and retain effective teachers and staff whose skills and beliefs represent the diverse needs of all students.	Developing
2.2 The school has created and implemented systems to evaluate teachers and staff against individual and school-wide goals, provide interventions to those who are not meeting expectations, and remove those who do not make reasonable improvement.	Effective
Domain 3: Vision and Engagement	
3.1 The school provides a safe and supportive learning environment for students, families, teachers, and staff.	Effective
3.2 The school cultivates and sustains open communication and decision-making opportunities with families about school events, policies, and the academic and social development of their children.	Effective
3.3 The culture of the school reflects and embraces student, staff, and community diversity.	Developing
Domain 4: Strategic Leadership	
4.1 The school establishes growth goals that guide strategic planning, teaching, and adjusting of practice to meet student needs.	Developing
4.2 The school allocates and deploys the resources of time, staff talent, and funding to address the priorities of growth goals for student achievement.	Effective

Part III: Findings on Domains of Effective Schools

Domains and Key Actions	Performance Levels			
	Level 4: Highly Effective	Level 3: Effective	Level 2: Developing	Level 1: Not Effective

Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction

Key action 1.1: Teachers plan highly effective instruction.	Effective
---	-----------

- Teachers implement standards-based daily lessons, units, and long-term plans using appropriate curriculum planning documents. According to school leadership and teachers, teachers use the Baltimore City Public School System’s (BCPSS) curriculum to plan daily and unit lesson plans, which is Common Core aligned, and includes the Literacy Designed Collaborative (LDC). Some teachers indicated that for Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, they are using approved curriculums outside the district; for example, for Homeland Security, a teacher is using a curriculum developed by Frederick Community College. Further, teachers stated that they were provided with a daily lesson plan template from school leadership, which includes the following components: standards, the objective, an agenda, an essential question, a drill, engagement, explicit instruction, and an assessment. Review of lesson plans confirmed they included the Maryland College and Career Readiness standards, such as a Math lesson that included the following standard: HSS.ID.B.6: “Represent data on two quantitative variables on a scatter plot, and describe how the variables are related.” The associated objective involved having students interpret slope as a rate of change and compare and contrast two interpretations of a set of real life data.
- Teachers design daily lessons that meet learners’ unique needs. In focus groups, school leadership and teachers reported that teachers use data to drive instruction, which might be evidenced through accommodations and modifications for students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and 504s, or in some cases, small group instruction. Some teachers indicated that for students who struggle, they may provide read alouds, work exemplars, peer review, and extended deadlines. Further, teachers indicated that they follow the gradual release model, while leadership noted that teachers received some training in project-based learning. Review of lesson plans confirmed accommodations and modifications were included, as well as the use of the gradual release model and small group instruction in some plans, and revealed that teachers also used videos, graphic organizers, annotation, experiments and the use of iReady to determine level of text for independent reading. For example, in one lesson plan, accommodations were included that noted students initials and extended time and reduced distractions, while content was presented through the use of visual aids, graphic organizers, and manipulatives and students built Lego atoms. Teach indicators of the Instructional Framework were also noted throughout the plan.

- Teachers set and track goals based on students’ performance levels. According to school leadership and teachers, teachers created Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), which are based on both formative and summative measures, such as the LDC. School leadership added that they are aligned with school-wide goals. Further, school leadership and teachers stated that teachers also create SMART goals through the data teams process, and an example of a goal would be to increase the points students score from a pre-assessment to a post-assessment. Regarding tracking, teachers noted that they use a variety of formative assessments to track students’ progress, including exit tickets, quizzes, benchmarks, and essays. Review of SLOs confirmed that teachers have submitted them to school leadership. One example of a SMART goal in a data from was “By the end of the year, 21 of my 41 students who take the US History exam will move into the close to proficient or proficient category.”

Key action 1.2: Teachers deliver highly effective instruction.¹	Developing
---	-------------------

- Most teachers use and communicate standards-based lesson objectives and align learning activities to the stated lesson objectives. In 37% of classrooms visited (n=8), teachers communicated lesson objectives to students by explaining and/or referencing it during the lesson, and in 63% of classes, teachers communicated lesson objectives by posting it in the classroom. Additionally, in 100% of classes, lesson activities and resources had a clear and intentional purpose and were aligned with the lesson objective. For example, in one class, the posted objective was “Scientists will be able to explain why leaves change color in the fall in order to understand the chemical process that takes place as the seasons change,” which was aligned with the article students read about leaves changing colors and experiments conducted. The associated standard was LS1.C, related to the organization for matter and energy flow in organisms.
- Teachers present content in various ways and emphasize key points to make content clear. In 100% of classrooms observed (n=8), teachers presented students with accurate, grade-level content aligned to appropriate content standards. Additionally, in 88% of classes, teachers presented content in various ways to make content clear. Lastly, in 88% of classes, teachers emphasized important points to focus the learning of content. For example, in one class in which students learned about factors that led to World War I, the teacher displayed a map in addition to lecturing.
- Some teachers use multiple strategies and tasks to engage all students in rigorous work. In only 38% of classrooms (n=8), did teachers scaffold and/or differentiate tasks to provide access to rigorous, grade level instruction for all students. For example, in most class, all students participated in the same task or activity. However, in only 25% of classes, students had opportunities to engage with

¹ Key action 1.2 evidence comes directly from classroom observations that were conducted as part of the SER. All classroom observations are twenty minute in which the observers are looking for teachers to demonstrate components of the Instructional Framework. The completed classroom visit tool can be found in appendix A.

complex texts and/or rigorous tasks. For example, in one class, students wrote a Brief Constructed Response (BCR) to a prompt for a few minutes. .

- Some teachers use evidence-dependent questioning. In only 37% of classes (n=8), did teachers ask questions that required students to cite evidence and clearly explain their thought processes. In most classes, questioning did not reach the higher levels of Bloom’s. However, in 63% of classes, teachers asked questions that were clear and scaffolded. For example, in one class, students participated in a gallery walk and answered questions such as “Describe what you see? Does the picture accurately depict life for many citizens in Baltimore? Describe your feelings about the images. Do you have control of your faith or God?”
- Some teachers check for student understanding and provide specific academic feedback. In 50% of classrooms (n=8), teachers conducted one or more checks for understanding that yielded useful information at key points throughout the lesson. Additionally, in 63% of classes, teachers gave specific academic feedback to communicate current progress and next steps to move forward. For example, in one class in which students studied areas of policing, the teacher asked questions throughout the lesson, and rotated to each student as they worked on tasks independently. Feedback included “Don’t highlight the whole text, only relevant facts,” and encouraging students to use their graphic organizers to assist them.

Some teachers facilitate student-to-student interaction and academic talk. In only 38% of classrooms (n=8), did teachers provide multiple or extended opportunities for student-to-student interaction. In most classes, students had no or only brief opportunities to interact with their peers. Additionally, in no classes did students engage in discussions with their peers to make meaning of content or deepen their understanding. In classes in which students may have been provided with some opportunities to work collaboratively, students did not participate in collaborative discussions. However, in 88% of classes, students used academic talk and, when necessary, teachers consistently and appropriately supported students in speaking academically. For example, in one class, in which students learned about why leaves changed color in the Fall, students used terms such as “photosynthesis.”

Key action 1.3: Teachers use multiple data sources to adjust practice.	Effective
---	------------------

- Teachers analyze students’ progress toward goals. According to school leadership and teachers, teachers follow the Data Driven Instructional Teams (DDIT) process to analyze data, which includes the following steps: chart data; group students based on performance data into four categories (proficient, close to proficient, far to go but likely, far to go but unlikely); set a smart goal; identify strategies to address performance errors; and progress monitor. Teachers added that they have a data template that guides them through the steps in the process. Further, teachers noted that they have received training on the process, and they discuss data in team meetings. Review of data analysis forms confirmed that teachers are following the DDIT process, though not all forms were completed – some only had data

charted for student groups, while others listed strengths, areas of growth, smart goals and strategies for each group of students.

- Teachers modify instruction in response to data. In focus groups, school leadership and teachers stated that teachers make adjustments to instruction based on data, such as re-teaching and small groups. Teachers added that they also use strategies such as peer teaching, using various learning modalities or sharing exemplars. Further, some teachers indicated that they may modify a task or provide extended time to students. Lastly, some teachers indicated that they use read alouds or model a strategy, such as annotation, to support the additional needs of some students. Review of lesson plans confirmed the presentation of content in various ways, including modeling and read alouds.
- Teachers appropriately recommend students for tiered interventions; however, limited opportunities for acceleration. According to school leadership and teachers, the school provides reading and math interventions to students based on their iReady data. School leadership and teachers added that Read 180 and Systems 44, the latter of which is provided by the reading interventionist to students who read below a fourth-grade level, which review of the interventionist’s schedule and a Systems 44 grading report confirmed. Further, school leadership and teachers indicated that the math intervention, Think through Math, is provided online. Continuing, school leadership and teachers stated that the school also offers APEX for credit recovery after school or during free periods. Regarding acceleration, however, school leadership and teachers noted that the school does not currently offer honors or Advanced Placement (AP) classes; therefore, most acceleration opportunities are only offered through small groups in classes. Lastly, school leadership and teachers noted that some students are participating in internships with the Urban Alliance and the school is working with Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) to enroll students in certificate programs. Review of an email confirmed the development of a partnership with BCCC.

Key action 1.4: School leadership supports highly effective instruction.	Effective
---	------------------

- School leadership holds and promotes a clear instructional vision of high student achievement. In focus groups, school leadership and teachers reported that areas of instructional focus for the current year have included academic conversations and close reading, per the district’s cycles of professional learning, as well as feedback and literacy across content areas. School leadership added that read alouds have also been emphasized, while teachers noted that objectives and rigor have been a focus. Further, school leadership and teachers stated that restorative circles have also been incorporated into instruction. Review of the academic programming scope document revealed that project-based learning was also an instructional focus earlier in the year, which included research and writing in English and experiments in Science.

- School leadership ensures that teachers engage in the planning of the curricula through oversight of standards-based units, lessons and pacing. According to school leadership and teachers, teachers submitted unit plans prior to the start of first and second quarter, which were reviewed by school leadership. School leadership added that they review lesson plans periodically, and also facilitate collaborative planning meetings, which teachers confirmed. Further, teachers noted that they received a lesson plan template. Review of a collaborative planning agenda revealed that required components of lesson plans included standards, essential questions, objectives, key vocabulary, procedures, the gradual release model, questions, and accommodations.
- School leadership provides formative feedback and guidance to teachers about the quality of planning, teaching, and adjustment of practice. In focus groups, school leadership and teachers stated that teachers have been observed informally at least once this school year and feedback is provided in both written and verbal form; for the former, various templates are used, though all typically include strengths, areas of growth and next steps. School leadership and teachers added the focus of informal observations has included classroom environment, objectives, and collaborative discussions. Further, teachers indicated that if a school-wide trend is noticed, it is addressed in collaborative planning or staff meetings. Review of informal feedback confirmed that a variety of forms were used – some with questions/look fors and others with questions, strengths, areas for improvement, and next steps. One suggestion was “The teacher would benefit from using the explicit teaching model...Please make sure you provide reading accommodations to those students that require it because of the amount and level of reading that is required of your course.”
- School leadership demonstrates an understanding of data analysis and is beginning to ensure the use of a complete student learning data-cycle. According to school leadership and teachers, teachers were trained on the data teams process in collaborative planning meetings and they also complete a data template, which is discussed with school leadership in collaborative meetings. School leadership and teachers added that the process was modeled by school leadership and the ILT for the rest of the staff using school-wide data, before staff were released to do the process themselves using their own data. Review of emails and collaborative planning agendas confirmed that a data overview and expectations were shared and there is a data protocol plan with data discussion points. However, review of data team forms revealed that not all forms were complete; some forms charted data, but lacked SMART goals and strategies.

Key action 1.5: Teachers establish a classroom environment in which teaching and learning can occur. ²	Developing
--	-------------------

- Most teachers implement routines to maximize instructional time. In 88% of classrooms (n=8), students were only idle for very brief periods of time while waiting for the teacher. Additionally, in 50% of classes, routines and procedures ran smoothly with minimal or no prompting from the teacher. In some classes, routines required significant prompting or were not evident; for example, in one class, students were asked to get in a circle, and some who resisted required additional direction from the teacher.
- Most teachers build a positive, learning-focused classroom culture. In 75% of classrooms (n=8), teacher interactions with students were positive and respectful. However, in only 37% of classrooms, were student interactions with teachers positive and respectful. In some classes, students were observed being disrespectful to teachers, such as one class where a student argued with a teacher and walked out of the classroom. Finally, in 63% of classes, student-to-student interactions were positive and respectful.
- Some teachers implement routines to maximize instructional time. In 50% of classrooms (n=8), teachers promoted and reinforced positive behavior. For example, in one class, a teacher gave students air high-fives for responding correctly to questions. However, in only 25% of classes, were students on-task and active participants in classwork and discussions. In most classes, many students were observed on cell phones, listening to music, with heads down or otherwise not engaged. Lastly, in 86% of classes, teacher addressed behavioral issues with minimal interruption to instructional time.

² Key action 1.5 evidence comes directly from classroom observations that were conducted as part of the SER. All classroom observations are twenty minute in which the observers are looking for teachers to demonstrate components of the Instructional Framework. The completed classroom visit tool can be found in appendix A.

Domain 2: Talented People

Key action 2.1: The school creates and implements systems to select, develop, and retain effective teachers and staff whose skills and beliefs represent the diverse needs of all students.

Developing

- School leadership has created and implemented an organizational and staffing structure that meets the diverse needs of all students. According to school leadership, staff and teachers, the school is a community school and accordingly has a community schools' coordinator to connect the school and the community. Additionally, school leadership, staff and teachers noted that the school has a lead teacher who provides reading interventions, a climate lead, and mentors through Seeds of Promise who also support in hallways and in classrooms. Further, school leadership, staff and teachers reported that the school's related service providers include a social worker, school psychologist, a clinician through Villa Maria, and a guidance counselor. Lastly, teachers noted that electives included art, Spanish, physical education, and technology. Review of the hierarchy or organization chart revealed responsibilities for individuals including the principal, assistant principal, climate lead, staff associate, and community school coordinator.
- School leadership leverages a pipeline for staff recruitment and uses a measure in the assessment of candidates; however, does not include stakeholders. In focus groups, school leadership and teachers stated that prospective candidates are identified through the district's hiring fair, as well as alternative certification pipelines, such as Teach for America and the Baltimore City Teacher Residency. School leadership and teachers added that teachers participated in interviews with leadership in order to be hired. School leadership clarified that no other stakeholders were included in the hiring process last year, since the school was facing possible closure, and therefore candidates were not hired until the summer. Further, some teachers indicated that they submitted lesson plans or provided instructional portfolios as part of the hiring process. Review of a letter from Human Capital confirmed the school's participation in the district's job fair, and review of interview questions revealed that they included the following: "Why are you interested in teaching at Renaissance Academy? What do you know about our school? Describe a classroom management plan that you have used in the past. How have you worked with all students, especially those who are functioning two or more years below grade level?"
- School leadership includes staff members in the development and retention of effective teachers and staff. According to school leadership and teachers, teachers have participated in peer observations (as well as ghost walks) related to the Cycle of Professional Learning around close reading and academic conversations. Review of a schedule and reflection and guiding questions document confirmed the peer observations. School leadership and staff added that teachers also facilitate professional development for other teachers, such as restorative practices and differentiation. Further, teachers indicated that they work closely in collaborative planning meetings, reviewing data, and creating action plans. Regarding retention, school leadership and teacher stated that because the school is small, relationships are strong not only between staff, but also between staff and students. Lastly, school

leadership indicated that they are attempting to develop a professional development relationship with Morgan State, and a teacher is attending a professional development session this summer through the University of Maryland, College Park.

- School leadership has created mentoring and other induction programs, when applicable, to support the development of some new teachers and staff, and monitors the program’s effectiveness. School leadership and teachers reported that the school has a designated mentor for new teachers, who is currently on leave, and in her absence, two veteran teachers are supporting two first year teachers. School leadership and teachers added that supports include sharing policies, lesson plan templates, contact logs, and more, as well as support with the creation of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). Teachers further noted that the mentors check in on them frequently and provide support with planning and instruction. Regarding induction, school leadership indicated that teachers who were new to the school began prior to returning teachers to participate in training on restorative practice and project-based learning. However, school leadership and teachers clarified that second and third year teachers are not currently receiving supports but will receive supports when the mentor returns. Lastly, in terms of oversight, school leadership noted that they discuss supports provided in weekly discussions with the mentor and also staff from alternative certification programs to determine progress being made by new teachers. Review of emails confirmed that the mentor shared tips, reminders, progress reports, resources such as Infinite Campus, school policies and procedures, lesson plan templates and samples, and more.

<p>Key action 2.2: The school has created and implemented systems to evaluate teachers and staff against individual and school-wide goals, provide interventions to those who are not meeting expectations, and remove those who do not make reasonable improvement.</p>	<p>Effective</p>
---	-------------------------

- School leadership makes full use of the evaluation system to develop faculty and staff capacity. According to school leadership and teachers, the school follows the district’s process for formal evaluations, which includes the pre-observation conference, the formal observation (guided by the Instructional Framework), and a post-observation conference. School leadership and teachers added that teachers also submitted Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and participated in initial planning conferences. Further, while teachers noted they are in various stages of the process for the first formal observation, teachers that have already received feedback through a post-observation conference stated that it was beneficial, and they also completed a self-assessment to use in the discussion with their evaluator. Continuing, school leadership and teachers indicated that feedback for teachers includes strengths and areas for growth, along with strategies and suggestions for improvement to increase ratings. Review of IDPs, pre-observations conference meetings, the observation schedule and completed observations confirmed the formal evaluation process.

- School leadership provides timely support and interventions to struggling teachers and staff as indicated by data and/or informal or formal observations and holds them accountable for performance. In focus groups, school leadership stated that teachers who are struggling are identified through informal observations and data, and initially, informal supports are provided in the form of verbal warnings and coaching, which become more formalized if improvement is not noted. School leadership added that while no teachers are currently on Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs), two teachers are receiving additional support for lesson planning, including templates, planning support, modeling and exemplars, as well as professional development. Further, teachers noted that supports could include more informal observations, debriefs, suggestions for strategies, professional articles to read, and exemplars. Review of coaching plans confirmed that two teachers are receiving support in lesson planning, and revealed they included a joint statement of need, a rigor trajectory and planning and practice. Review of a support plan was also noted for a staff member.
- School leadership engages faculty in a school-wide professional development plan based on identified needs and in alignment with the school's instructional vision. According to school leadership and teachers, the focus of professional development for the current year has included the district's cycle of professional learning, focused on close reading and academic conversations, as well as feedback loops (from leadership to teachers and teachers to students), and literacy across content areas. Teachers added that professional development has also included restorative practices, the data teams process, lesson planning and read alouds. Review of a Cycle of Professional Learning - Cycle 2 overview, emails and professional readings confirmed the PD on the district's cycle of learning.

Domain 3: Vision and Engagement

Key action 3.1: The school provides a safe and supportive learning environment for students, families, teachers, and staff.³

Effective

- The school community shares an understanding of, and commitment to, the school mission, vision, and values, including a clear understanding of strategic goals and initiatives. According to school leadership, teachers, families, students, staff and community partners, the vision is to ensure that students finish high school prepared to enter college or the workforce, which community partners confirmed. School leadership, teachers, staff, parents, and students added that a variety of supports are in place to help students achieve the vision, including assistance completing the FAFSA and college applications, college and career fairs, CTE pathways, mentoring, and access to internships, as well as supports that extend beyond the classroom, such as mentors. Teachers further noted that the vision is posted throughout the school. Review of handbooks confirmed that the vision is as follows: “Renaissance Academy’s vision is to ensure that all students will graduate from high school prepared for success at a four-year college or university. If they have the skills necessary for college, then they will also be ready to enter a post-secondary career of their choice.”
- Students, staff, and families feel physically and emotionally safe at the school. In focus groups, school leadership, teachers, staff, parents, and students reported that the school is physically safe, which they attributed in large part to the renovation which occurred over the summer, and has allowed teachers to be able to lock their doors and restrict access within the building. School leadership, teachers, parents, and students added that the school practices emergency drill procedures – for example, lockdowns - which the site visit team observed, and which are detailed in the handbook. Further, school leadership noted that staff have posts in the building during arrival, transitions, and dismissal, which review of an email regarding climate and culture confirmed, as well as staff who check students in the morning. Continuing, teachers noted that it is easy to access the office through the intercom system, and a police officer patrols the area; review of the visitor intake process also revealed a process for screening of visitors. Lastly, school leadership indicated that all students have lockers in which to secure their belongings. Regarding emotional safety, school leadership, teachers, staff, students, and parents all reported that the school has mentors who assist in de-escalating situations, and staff and teachers strive to build relationships with students, so all students have at least one adult with whom they are comfortable, including teachers, related service staff and administration. Finally, teachers and staff added that they feel they can approach administration with suggestions, concerns, and feedback.
- School leadership establishes structures for the acknowledgement and celebration of student, faculty, and staff success. According to school leadership, teachers, staff, students and parents, the school has a student of the month (who is displayed on a wall in the school), based on attendance and lack of suspensions, as well as grades. School leadership, teachers, students, and parents added that students participate in field trips and parties, receive awards in town hall meetings, and win raffle prizes. Review

³ Less than 6 parents participated in the parent focus group.

of an email regarding attendance initiatives confirmed that students won raffle prizes and participated in parties for perfect attendance (such as Halloween Kickback), and a flyer confirmed a field trip to Six Flags. Lastly, school leadership also noted that the school held a first quarter awards ceremony for students. Regarding staff celebrations, school leadership, teachers and staff stated that staff receive staff/teacher of the month awards (Staff In Focus) with a certificate. Continuing, school leadership, staff and teachers stated that staff receive an annual award that has monetary value attached, called the Mr. Morone award. Lastly, school leadership indicated that staff receive kudos in staff meetings, group chats and updates, which teachers confirmed. Review of a Staff In Focus certificate confirmed some of the staff celebrations.

- The school develops systems that proactively attend to individual students’ social and emotional needs. In focus groups, as noted above school leadership, parents, students, and teachers stated that the school has the Seeds and Blooms of Promise mentoring program at the school, which community partners confirmed was provided through a local church, to discuss the challenges outside of school that students face. Additionally, school leadership, teachers, staff, and parents reported that the staff has been trained on the use of restorative circles, which are implemented three days per week in schools. Further, teachers, students, staff and community partners reported that there are a variety of groups that target specific students for support, such as Pain Of Prison (POPs), which supports students who have experienced incarceration, or have a family members who has, and Circle of Security (a group for teen parents), Safe Dates, which is around dating violence, and girls groups (Unapologetically Smart and Beautiful) that build self-esteem, among others. Review of Blooms of Promise photos and field trip permission slips, as well as the Unapologetically Smart and Beautiful application, flyers for COS and POPs and an overview of the Seeds of Promise and a cohort list confirmed many of the supports. Continuing, school leadership and teachers noted that AmeriCorps volunteers at the school focus solely on student attendance. Lastly, school leadership, teachers and parents indicated that the school has a Student Support Team (SST) process, through which students can be referred and receive services from the school psychologist, social worker and a clinician from Villa Maria..

<p>Key action 3.2: The school cultivates and sustains open communication and decision-making opportunities with families about school events, policies, and the academic and social development of their children.</p>	<p>Effective</p>
---	-------------------------

- The school uses multiple strategies and vehicles to communicate information about school progress, policies, events, and the academic and social development of students to families and the community. According to school leadership, parents, students and teachers, the school uses a variety of platforms through which to communicate with families, including Parent Link (an automated call system through the district), letters, phone calls, email, texts, and conversations in person. School leadership and teachers added that the school also communicates through its website and social media. Further, teachers indicated that flyers and brochures are sent home for families. Continuing, teachers and students reported that the school has Parent Teacher conferences throughout the year. Lastly, school

leadership and teachers indicated there is no need for translation of communications. Review of flyers, letters and social media links confirmed some of the communication methods by the school.

- The school establishes a regular structure for two-way communication, which facilitate opportunities for families and the community to participate in, or provide feedback on, school-wide decisions. In focus groups, school leadership, community partners, students and teachers reported that the school has a School Family Council (SFC), which meets monthly and which is run by the school’s community coordinator and includes families and community partners. Review of a School Family Council agenda from October 30th revealed that enrollment adjustments, SPP goals, upcoming events and supports were discussed. When probed, parents indicated that they believed the school had a Parent Teacher Organization, but were unsure of a School Family Council.
- School leadership establishes multiple structures for frequent communication with teachers and staff members regarding policies, progress, and school culture. According to school leadership, teachers and staff, school leadership communicates with staff via group chats, emails, texts, and meetings, such as ILT and team meetings. School leadership added that there is a school-wide calendar shared with staff that includes important dates and events, and memos are sent, while teachers and staff noted the use of Office 365. Further, some teachers indicated that they receive information through announcements broadcast over the intercom. Review of emails confirmed communication from school leadership to staff regarding expectations, updates and more.

Key action 3.3: The culture of the school reflects and embraces student, staff, and community diversity.	Developing
---	-------------------

- School leadership, teachers, and staff build strong relationships with families and community stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. According to school leadership and teachers, the school is a community school through Promise Heights, and the community school coordinator is responsible for outreach to families and partners, which community partners confirmed. School leadership, teachers and staff added that events draw families, including Back to School Night (which review of an agenda confirmed), a barbeque prior to the start of the school year, senior inauguration, spirit week, assemblies, and student celebrations. Review of emails confirmed that the school also had a pep rally and a Back to School Block Party was hosted by a local church. School leadership added that the school has a variety of partners that support the school and students in a variety of ways – mental health, college and career readiness, enrichment, advocacy and meeting basic needs, and include local churches, the Family League, Griot’s Eye, Urban Alliance, Safe Streets and more, which review of a partner list confirmed. Continuing, community partners indicated that the community school coordinator attends local community meetings. Lastly, school leadership, teachers, staff, and students noted that the food bank is open to the community, which review of a flyer confirmed, and leadership clarified that after school programs are open as well, and include supper for participants.

- The school's curricula, resources and programs consider linguistic, socioeconomic and some cultural diversity. According to school leadership, parents, students and teachers, the school offers Spanish to students, which the site visit team observed. Regarding socioeconomic diversity, school leadership, teachers, staff, community partners and students stated that the school has a food bank which distributes twice each month, a washer and dryer available to students and families, a coat drive in winter, donated uniforms, and dues covered by the school for field trips and events such as prom, some of which were confirmed by the laundry facility procedure and food bank flyers. School leadership and staff added that the school has emergency funds through United Way to assist families in need with BGE and other expenses. Regarding cultural diversity, school leadership, teachers, staff, and students reported that students participate in field trips to the symphony, Calvert Cliffs, an HBO screening of the documentary "Baltimore Rising" (about Freddie Gray) and plays at Center Stage; review of a School Family Council agenda confirmed the BSO concert incentive. Students and some teachers indicated that through their classes, students read books about other cultures (*Persepolis*, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and *The Beautiful Struggle*) and in art, students created African masks and participated in a photo shoot wearing traditional African dress. Lastly, community partners reported that families can be referred to Prestley Ridge for financial support, or House of Ruth if family members are victims of domestic violence, which leadership confirmed.
- The school is working to maintain a positive school culture and climate. According to school leadership, parents, students and teachers, the school is positive, due to staff and their relationships with students, and also the renovation of the building that occurred over the summer. School leadership and teachers added that there are a variety of supports in place for students, from restorative practices to counselors and mentors. However, some teachers indicated that sometimes behavior management can be a challenge, and while other teachers noted that there are gaps in communication at times between school leadership and staff. Parents indicated that school leadership and staff fought to keep the school open, which united stakeholders in a common cause; community partners confirmed that the school has a resilient spirit, and demonstrates hope for what is possible. Lastly, students noted that everyone comes together and accepts one another as they are. The site visit team observed that the school was clean, well lit, and staff were visible and supporting during transitions.

Domain 4: Strategic Leadership

Key action 4.1: The school establishes growth goals that guide strategic planning, teaching, and adjusting of practice to meet student needs.

Developing

- School leadership and teachers establish goals for the improvement of student learning that are measurable and aligned to student need and school improvement. According to school leadership and teachers, the goals for the current school year included in the School Performance Plan are: 80% of students enrolled in English will increase their rubric score per task for the LDC module; 45% of students enrolled in Math will be proficient per end of year assessments; student items with the lowest satisfaction per the school survey (hall roaming, respect, fighting, belonging) will increase by 10%; and cumulative GPA for students in ninth grade will increase by .1 by the end of the year per the ILT tool. School leadership added that the ILT created the goals through a reflection process during which goals and data from the prior year were reviewed. However, when probed, not all teachers could articulate the goals for the current school year; some teachers indicated there was a goal of assessing 80% of students, and some noted that there was an attendance or ARCA goal, while others stated there was a general focus on literacy and feedback, though they were aware of the School Performance Plan and noted that some teachers helped to create the goals.
- School leadership ensures the alignment of some school goals, action plans and key priorities. In focus groups, school leadership and teachers stated that close reading, feedback, and academic conversations support the academic goals. Some teachers added that the interventions – Read 180, Systems 44 and Think Through Math - also support academic goals, while other teachers indicated a focus on literacy across content areas. Further, school leadership reported that to support the climate goal, the school has climate leads who conduct safety checks, track late passes, and a climate team that has created an action plan to support the school’s climate. However, because teachers were not aware of the goals, they could not speak to the strategies aligned with them, specifically the non-academic goals. Review of the community school action plan revealed that focus areas included academic and enrichment, as well as college and career readiness, which included mentoring groups, and partnerships to support internship placements, career readiness curriculum and dual enrollment certificate programs; however, no strategies were listed in the SPP reflection. Lastly, the site visit team also reviewed an attendance plan, though no stakeholders referenced the plan, or the strategies noted within it.
- School leadership and staff participate in analysis of school-wide data and plan to revisit and adjust action plans as needed. According to school leadership and teachers, during bi-weekly ILT meetings, time is designated to review school-wide data, such as course-wide failure, GPA and attendance, though school leadership noted they have not received the ILT tool from the district so far this year and thus have not reviewed school-wide data so far this year. Teachers added that they reviewed school-wide data in the beginning of the year (iReady, ARCA and attendance), however not since then. Review of an ILT agenda from August confirmed that school-wide data was reviewed in the beginning of the year.

School leadership and teachers noted that they will review school-wide data again at the mid-year mark, when they have updated data.

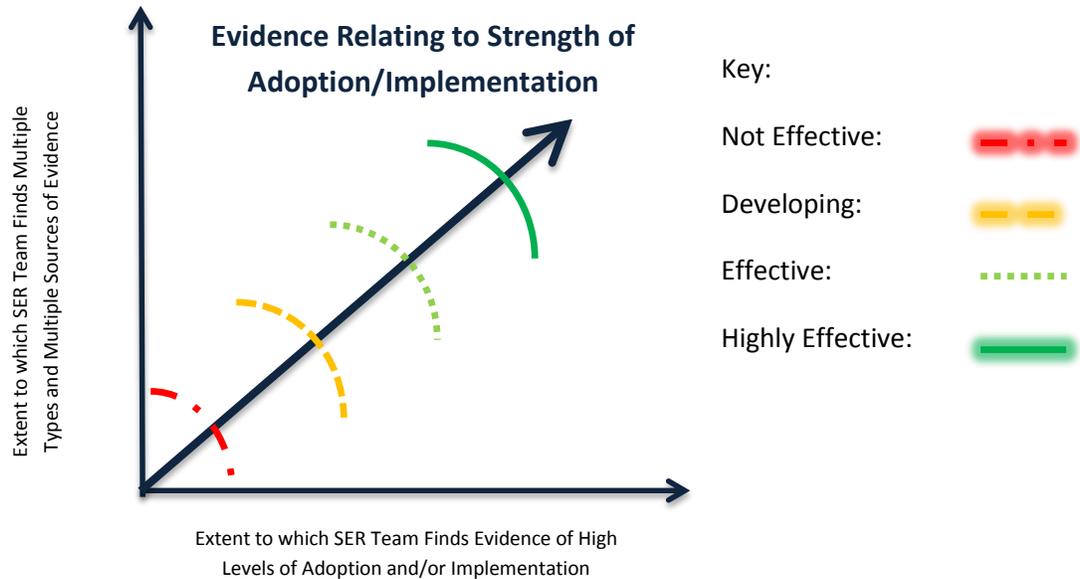
Key action 4.2: The school allocates and deploys the resources of time, staff talent, and funding to address the priorities of growth goals for student achievement.	Effective
---	------------------

- Budget distributions and resource allocations do not fully support teaching and learning. According to school leadership and teachers, while there are currently no vacancies, the school recently had to cut teachers due to budget adjustments, and two teachers are on FMLA, with a long-term substitute in place for one of the teachers, which parents and students confirmed. Specifically, school leadership and teachers reported that the school needs more teachers (social studies, English and science), guidance counselor, and more special educators. School leadership, students, parents and some teachers added that in regards to supplies and materials, they have enough books and paper, other teachers indicated that supplies and materials were disposed of during the renovation, or what they do have is not in good condition. Some teachers also stated that the principal will purchase things when they are needed, though other teachers noted it may take a long time to receive requested materials. Regarding technology, school leadership and teachers reported that the school has a computer lab, laptop carts, and iPads, which students confirmed, though teachers noted that the quality of the technology is poor, and the technology teacher uses the lab, so there is not much availability for teachers to schedule use for their classes. Parents confirmed that technology at the school is limited. Review of the principal’s budget tool revealed that funds have been allocated for substitute teachers, books and other supplies, and projectors.
- School leadership leverages teacher and staff talent, expertise, and effectiveness by delegating essential responsibilities and decisions to appropriate individuals. In focus groups, school leadership and teachers reported that teachers serve on the ILT, and also facilitate data and collaborative planning meetings. School leadership and teachers added that two teachers support newer staff as mentors, and a teacher also serves as the SLO ambassador. Further, some teachers noted that they lead after school clubs, though they have not been successful in getting students to participate regularly. Lastly, school leadership noted that one teacher serves as the climate lead, and also supports testing.
- School leadership consistently provides and focuses common staff time on instructional practices and development in support of student achievement. According to school leadership and teachers, teachers meet weekly to participate in Cycles of Professional Learning, or data meetings, as well as conduct ghost and peer walks. Teachers added that they also discuss lesson plans and strategies for instruction during that time. Review of collaborative planning agendas confirmed the focus on the cycle of professional learning and data, as well as the Instructional Framework, and revealed that a temperature check was also included, as well as courageous conversations around culture responsiveness and awareness.

- The school collaborates with families and community partners and to garner resources to meet the needs of students and the school. In focus groups, school leadership, staff and teachers stated that some families volunteer, such as through supporting video projects, with the food bank, chaperoning field trips and in classes, which parents and students confirmed. School leadership and teachers added that alumni of the school volunteer as well, such as during Career Day. Further, school leadership, teachers, staff, and community partners noted that a variety of partners support the school, including Bmore Healthy Babies (Parent University), Seeds and Blooms of Promise (mentors), local universities provide students with internships and career pathways, Villa Maria (clinicians), Safe Streets and more. Parents noted that a variety of local churches support the school, which staff and community partners confirmed. Community partners reported that Promise Heights is the lead agency responsible for coordinating the community strategy, while the Violence Prevention program supports Safe Dates, which staff confirmed. Review of a community partners list confirmed all abovementioned partners.

Performance Level Rubric

The SER team will use the following guidance to select a performance level for each key action. Note that the quality standard for each performance level is based upon: the extent to which the SER team finds multiple types⁴ and multiple sources⁵ of evidence AND the extent to which the SER team finds evidence of high levels of adoption and/or implementation of a practice or system. The SER team will also reflect on the Instructional Framework and School Leadership Framework in their analysis prior to assigning a rating for each key action.



Rating	Performance Level	Quality Standard
1	Not Effective	Evidence indicates that the key action is not a practice or system that has been adopted and/or implemented at the school, or the level of adoption/implementation does not improve the school's effectiveness.
2	Developing	Evidence indicates that the key action (including some indicators) is a practice or system that is emerging at the school, but that it has not yet been implemented at a level that has begun to improve the school's effectiveness, OR that the impact of the key action on the effectiveness of the school cannot yet be fully determined.
3	Effective	Evidence indicates that the key action (including most indicators) is a practice or system that has been adopted at the school, and is implemented at a level that is improving the school's effectiveness.
4	Highly Effective	Evidence indicates that the key action (including all indicators) is a practice or system that has been fully adopted at the school, and is implemented at a level that has had a strong, significant or sustainable impact on the school's effectiveness.

⁴ "Multiple types of evidence" is defined as evidence collected from two or more of the following: document review, stakeholder focus groups; and classroom observations.

⁵ "Multiple sources of evidence" is defined as evidence collected from three or more stakeholder focus groups; two or more documents; and/or evidence that a descriptor was documented in 75% or more of lessons observed at the time of the visit.

Appendix A: Classroom Observation Data

The classroom visit tool is aligned to Baltimore City Schools Instructional Framework. During each classroom visit, the observer collects evidence based on his/her observations and then determines whether the indicator was “evident”, “partially evident” or “not evident” for each of the 22 indicators. Below is the summary of the eight classroom observations that were conducted.

TEACH 1: Communicate Standards-Based Lesson Objectives	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Communication of objective	37%	63%	0%
Learning activities and resources align with lesson objective	100%	0%	0%
TEACH 2: Present Content Clearly	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Accurate, grade-level content	100%	0%	0%
Alternate presentation of content	88%	0%	12%
Emphasis of Key Points	88%	0%	12%
TEACH 3: Use Strategies and Tasks To Engage All Students In Rigorous Work	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Scaffolded and/or Differentiated Tasks	37%	0%	63%
Opportunities To Engage With Complex Texts and Tasks	25%	50%	25%
TEACH 4: Use Evidence-Dependent Questioning	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Questions Requiring Justification	38%	25%	37%
Clear And Scaffolded Questions	63%	37%	0%
TEACH 5: Check For Understanding and Provide Specific, Academic Feedback	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Informative Checks for Understanding	50%	25%	25%
Specific, Academic Feedback	63%	0%	37%
TEACH 6: Facilitate Student-To-Student Interactions and Academic Talk	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Opportunities for student-to-student interaction	38%	25%	37%
Evidence-based discussions	0%	0%	100%
Student academic talk	88%	0%	12%

TEACH 7: Implement Routines To Maximize Instructional Time	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Maximized instructional time	88%	12%	0%
Smooth routines and procedures	50%	25%	25%
TEACH 8: Build A Positive, Learning-Focused Classroom Culture	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Teacher-to-student interactions	75%	25%	0%
Student-to-teacher interactions	37%	63%	0%
Student-to-Student interactions	63%	37%	0%
TEACH 9: Reinforce Positive Behavior, Redirect Off-Task Behavior, and De-escalate Challenging Behavior	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Reinforce positive behavior	50%	12%	38%
Off-task behavior	25%	75%	0%
Time impact of redirection/discipline or off-task behavior	86%	0%	14%

Appendix B: School Report Comments

Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction

None

Domain 2: Talented People

None

Domain 3: Vision and Engagement

None

Domain 4: Strategic Leadership

None

Appendix C: SER Team Members

The SER visit to Renaissance Academy was conducted on November 13-15, 2017 by a team of representatives from Baltimore City Public Schools.

Brianna Kaufman is the Manager for the School Effectiveness Reviews in the Office of Achievement and Accountability in Baltimore City Public Schools. Brianna began her career as an elementary art teacher in Bryan, TX. After obtaining her Master's degree, she interned and worked at a number of art museums in the education department including the: Dallas Museum of Art, The National Gallery of Art in DC, and the Walters Art Museum. In 2008, Brianna made the shift from art education to general education reform as a Program Manager at the Fund for Educational Excellence. There she managed a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that focused on College and Career Readiness. Prior to joining OAA, Brianna worked as the College and Career Readiness Education Specialist for Baltimore City Public Schools. Brianna holds a Bachelor's degree in elementary education from Texas Lutheran University, a Master's degree in Art Education from University of North Texas, and a Master's of Business Administration from Loyola University in Maryland.

Katherine Harris Toler is a Program Evaluator II in the Office of Achievement and Accountability in Baltimore City Public Schools. Prior to joining OAA, Ms. Toler was a District Mentor in the Office of Teacher Support and Development. In Baltimore City Public Schools, Ms. Toler has served as teacher, Academic Coach, Dean of Instruction, and High School Administrator. Ms. Toler has also served as teacher in the Anne Arundel County Public School System, the Baltimore County Public School System and the Vance County Public School System in North Carolina. She holds a B.A. in English with a Concentration in Secondary Education from North Carolina Central University and a Masters of Education in School Improvement Leadership from Goucher College.

Mona Khajawi is a Program Evaluator II in the Office of Achievement and Accountability in Baltimore City Public Schools. She has had a variety of experience in the field of education, including teaching, program management and evaluation. Most recently, she worked in the capacity of Evaluation Specialist with City Year in Washington, D.C., assessing the quality of educational programming implemented by 140 AmeriCorps members in eleven schools throughout the district. She initially gained exposure to evaluation while interning with the Academy for Educational Development, where she assisted in conducting reviews of a subset of the Gates-funded small schools in New York City. Previously, she also taught English in a rural high school in Ukraine, and served as an Assistant Program Coordinator of the AmeriCorps program at the Latin American Youth Center in Washington, D.C. Mona holds a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a Master's degree in Education Policy from Teachers College, Columbia University.