

# Inner-City New York School with 88% Poverty Rate Triples ITBS Test Performance

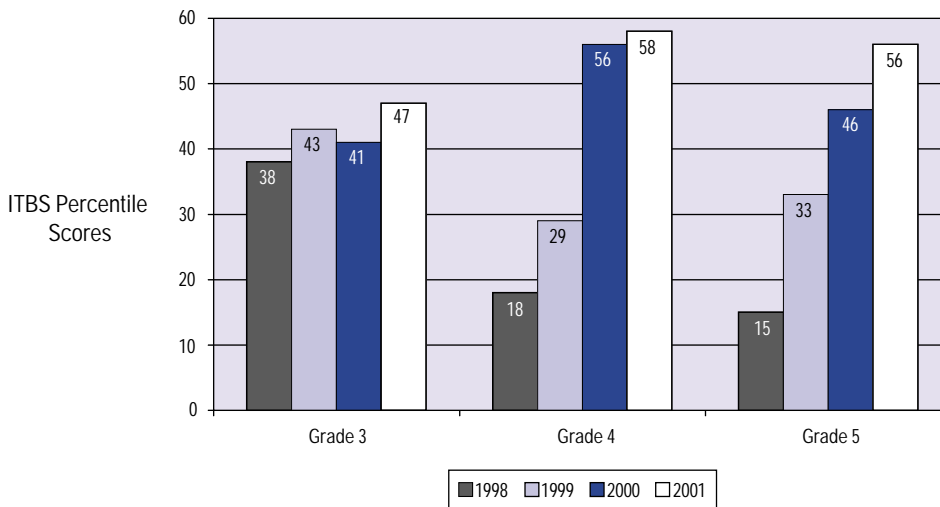
*Fourth- and Fifth-Grade Reading Scores Improve 40 and 41 Percentile Points Over Four Years*

Source: Sister Mary Marvin, principal, St. Monica School  
 Research conducted during 1998–2002 school years, report submitted in 2002.

## Introduction

Since the implementation of Accelerated Reader® and Reading Renaissance® at St. Monica School, fourth- and fifth-grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) reading scores have increased by 40 and 41 percentiles respectively, placing the 2001 classes well above proficiency levels and the national norms.

Third- through Fifth-Grade Total Reading Scores on ITBS Increase



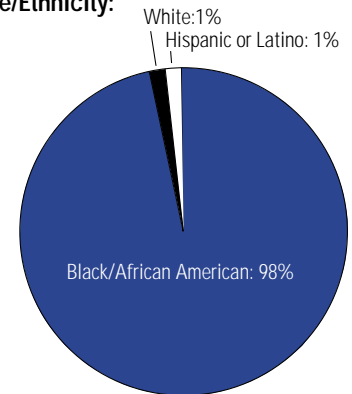
## School Profile

St. Monica School  
 Students: 160, Grades: pre-K–6  
 Rochester, N.Y.

## Demographics:

Inner City  
 Urban  
 Free or reduced lunch: 88%  
 Mobility: 34%

## Race/Ethnicity:



## Educator Background

**Mary Marvin, RSM**, has been an educator for 36 years and the principal of St. Monica School for the past 11 years. Sister Mary received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Nazareth College in Rochester, N.Y. and her master's degree from the University of Dayton in Ohio. After teaching in Rochester diocesan schools for 19 years, Sister Mary attended SUNY Brockport, N.Y., earned a Certificate of Advanced Studies in administration, and became a principal.

(more information on back)

## Study Description

In spring 1997, St. Monica School used a state technology grant to implement Accelerated Reader reading management software and train two staff members in Reading Renaissance techniques. The following year, St. Monica was among the many schools encouraged to use Title I funds to further develop their Reading Renaissance program. Since that time, the school's library has been transformed into the heart of the school, Reading Renaissance has been implemented schoolwide, and reading has become the top priority for all teachers, students, and parents.

Following Renaissance recommendations, the school provides 40 minutes<sup>1</sup> of Read To, Read With, and Read Independently (TWI)<sup>2</sup> reading practice time daily. Community volunteers work individually with children on Read To and Read With activities. In addition, school staff understand the importance of monitoring reading practice very closely with activities such as Status of the Class<sup>3</sup> and the daily review of Diagnostic Reports<sup>4</sup>. TOPS Reports are also printed after each Accelerated Reader quiz is taken in order to provide immediate feedback to students. The school is currently focusing on increasing the number of nonfiction books available in the library, in order to broaden and improve students' vocabularies.

St. Monica is also in the beginning stages of implementing Accelerated Math<sup>®</sup> math management software and Perfect Copy<sup>™</sup> writing skills development and management software.

## Results

Since implementing Accelerated Reader and Reading Renaissance, ITBS<sup>5</sup> test scores have improved significantly. In 1998, average reading scores of fourth- and fifth-grade students were far below the national norm (the 50th percentile). By 2001, however, fourth- and fifth-grade students demonstrated significantly improved reading ability that is well above the national norm. Over this four-year period, third-grade test scores increased 9 percentiles (from 38 to 47), while fourth- and fifth-grade scores improved 40 and 41 percentiles (from 18 to 58 and 15 to 56), respectively.

## Conclusion

Accelerated Reader and Reading Renaissance have helped St. Monica create a culture of reading, which has led to improved reading ability and performance schoolwide. When 88% of a school population receives free or reduced lunch, it is especially important to adopt a motivating, data-driven program that provides opportunities for individualized goal setting. St. Monica has experienced tremendous success with Accelerated Reader and Reading Renaissance and will continue to improve their implementation through Renaissance professional development, hard work, and strong leadership.

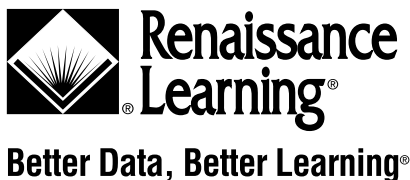
<sup>1</sup>Renaissance Learning recommends 60 minutes of daily reading practice to achieve optimal results with Reading Renaissance.

<sup>2</sup>The Renaissance practice of Reading To, With, and Independently (TWI) is a systematic scaffolding approach that helps transition emergent readers into independent reading and independent readers into more difficult literature and new genres of literature.

<sup>3</sup>Status of the Class is an informal assessment that allows the teacher to touch base with every student daily.

<sup>4</sup>A Diagnostic Report is generated by Accelerated Reader and provides concise information about each student's reading practice and progress toward individual goals.

<sup>5</sup>Riverside Publishing. *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*. Itasca, IL.: Riverside Publishing, n.d.



*For more information, or for additional copies of this report, contact:*

Educational Research Department  
PO Box 8036 • Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-8036  
(866) 846-7323 • [www.renlearn.com](http://www.renlearn.com)