

The Renaissance

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Charter School

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Approved Minutes

February 4th, 2026

The Renaissance Charter School

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

HONORARY MEMBERS

Sandra Geyer, 1941-2019

Hazel DuBois, Ph.D. 1937-2013

Francine Smith, 1949-2021

Hon. Rudolph Greco, Esq.

Margaret Martinez-DeLuca

1. Chairperson's Message – Monte brought us back to the first couple of years of Renaissance, when a NY Times reporter spent a month finding out what happens when teachers get to run their own school. School reform has been going on for decades, back to the 1930's and no one has "The Answer." Renaissance is now in its 30th year. Our hope should be that we continue to embrace the original spirit of not looking for the "perfect," but always striving for the best for today. It starts with building bridges of understanding between all shareholders, even during times of strife such as the school is experiencing this week.
2. Roll Call – Monte Joffe, Stacey Gauthier, Everett Boyd, and Rebekah Oakes were present remotely; Daniel Fanelli, Raymond Johnson, Chester Hicks and Jose Mane were present in person. Dr. Rachel Mandel, was absent. In addition, Matthew Del-Forte and Omar Rafael were present remotely, along with other members of the public.
3. Last Month's Minutes were approved by acclamation.
4. School Management Team Report – Please see the full report below, which includes a statement about the on-going investigation into the student incident that happened on

"Developing Leaders for the Renaissance of New York"

Monday, February 2.

- a. It was agreed that we should give the members of the public an opportunity to comment or ask questions. Three members of the public spoke, expressing concern for the community at large, but thanking the school for being transparent and for making sure that an open dialogue about this issue continues. One speaker was an alumni of Renaissance, Tenzin Damdul, who is a member of the Youth Services Committee of our local Community Board 3. Tenzin has been working to create an Education arm of the Youth Services, and is partnering with Renaissance to create a leadership program and possible Rensizzle program to address matters of concern to the youth of Jackson Heights.
5. Educational Committee Report – Rebekah Oakes and Everett Boyd with Dan to support he and the SMT as they develop strategies to address the goals that were not met in last year’s annual report.
 - a. Dan highlighted the new coaching initiatives and targeted tutoring planned for grades 5, 6 and 7; and Victor Motta and Vincent Garelick joined the meeting to address tutoring programs during High School extended day.
 - b. The committee will continue to meet throughout the school year.
6. Board Members’ New Business
 - a. Stacey gave a shout-out to Cristine Slingerland and AP Sien Li from Ren 2 who have both championed global studies, language and culture at Ren 1 & 2. They presented their projects at the NYSAIS Global Languages and Culture Conference; the only charter and public school invited to present. Their proposals (*Global Lab: Engaging Students in Global History* from Cristine and *Your World Language Program: Strategies for Launch, Inclusion and Community-wide Buy-in* from Sien) were extremely well received. Stacey is looking into making their presentation available to our school community.
 - b. Stacey reported on the upcoming Community Wellness Day held at Ren 2 on March 7, 2026. It is funded by what is left of our federal Mental Health Grant and will be open to the communities surrounding both schools. There will be

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panels and workshops addressing Mental and Physical Well-being, with resources provided by community immigration groups, Elmhurst Hospital, and many others. More information to come.

7. Adjournment of Public Meeting at 9:40 AM.

Principal's Renaissance Board Report – February 2026

January 26 Instructional Pivot & Teaching and Learning

On January 26, Renaissance successfully pivoted to remote instruction and professional development due to inclement weather.

- **PK–5** transitioned to remote instruction with strong participation and continuity of learning.
- **Teachers in grades 6–12** participated in a full-day remote professional development.

That focused on:

1. Strengthening literacy instruction across content areas in response to Regents and State exam shifts; Teachers Collaborate in content-area teams to plan shared instructional routines to increase student discourse and align high-quality texts to curricula
2. Using ANet A2 data to drive targeted instructional adjustments; and
3. Planning for Rensizzle.
 1. **This year** Rensizzle is scheduled for the **third week of March**. The program is fully student-driven, with groups formed by student choice. Students will engage in four days of experiential learning across New York City, followed by a culminating day of reflection and presentations.

High School Regents Preparation & Programming

Renaissance launched an **Extended High School Academic Day** to provide targeted Regents preparation and ensure students remain on track for graduation.

Family and student meetings were held to clearly communicate expectations, schedules, and program goals, with recordings shared to ensure access for all families.

Data, Progress Monitoring

Students participated in our internal assessment cycle 2, results showed overall growth in both ELA and Math:

- **ELA:** +5% proficiency, with strong gains in Grades 2, 3, and 9
- **Math:** +6% proficiency, with double-digit gains in Grades 2, 5, 7, and Geometry

Students are currently completing the Winter NWEA assessment; results will be used to adjust instructional supports.

Instructional Coaching & Leadership

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January included targeted coaching from **Lavinia (ELA, K–4)** and **Eureka Squared (Math in middle school)**, with a continued focus on pacing, lesson execution, and conceptual understanding.

Leadership capacity was strengthened with the addition of **Bridget**, who has already observed and debriefed with over 25 teachers and supported academic initiatives and Rensizzle planning.

Upcoming Programing and Reporting update

The Annual Comprehensive Review (ACR) is in progress and on track for submission by mid–February break, with expanded requirements addressed through targeted leadership meetings.

Planning is underway to bring back the **Summer Program (K–8)**, including four days of instruction and one day of enrichment in partnership with **82nd Street**, over five weeks. High school summer programming will be based on transcript reviews from semester 1.

And next week, Malini our MS Social Studies teacher and Students in grades **9–11 will represent Renaissance** at the **World International Model United Nations (WIMUN)** conference, an internationally recognized Model UN experience that mirrors the real work of the United Nations. Delegates collaborate with students from around the world to address pressing global issues using official UN procedures, emphasizing diplomacy, critical thinking, and consensus-building. Through this experience, students strengthen their research, public speaking, and leadership skills while developing a deeper understanding of global citizenship.

Monday Incident

As you are aware, on Monday, February 2, our school was alerted to a deeply concerning email sent from a student account to other students that contained antisemitic hate speech and threats against members of the Jewish community.

As soon as we became aware of the message, we contacted the NYPD and activated our crisis management protocols. Out of an abundance of caution, we briefly placed the building into lockdown while the matter was investigated. The lockdown was lifted once the NYPD determined it was safe to resume normal operations.

We take incidents like this extremely seriously. Hate speech and threats against any community are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Renaissance. We are fully cooperating with law enforcement and remain committed to ensuring a safe, respectful learning environment for all students. In addition to our immediate safety response, we believe it is our responsibility as educators to address these issues directly and thoughtfully with our students. This week, our advisory program is providing students with structured opportunities to reflect, ask questions, and engage in age-appropriate conversations centered on respect, tolerance, and community responsibility. Next week, we plan to follow up with student assemblies to continue this work and reinforce our shared values.

While these issues exist in the broader society, our role as educators is to help students develop the understanding, empathy, and critical thinking skills they need to navigate the world responsibly and to contribute positively to their communities.

We have communicated with families and staff, made counseling supports available for students who need them, and are continuing to follow all required disciplinary, safety, and reporting procedures. Due to student privacy protections and the ongoing investigation, I'm not able to share additional details at this time, but I want to assure the Board and community that this matter is being addressed with the seriousness it warrants.

I would also like to take a moment to thank our local elected officials and community partners who have reached out to offer their support and resources. We are grateful for that partnership as we continue to prioritize the safety and well-being of our school community.

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