

All Renaissance Solutions Meet the Requirements of the **No Child Left Behind Act**

NEWS RELEASE: For immediate release

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Visually Impaired 2nd Grader Reads Along With the Rest of Her Class
7 Year Old Marissa Hirschman Gains Independence Using Accelerated Reader

Madison, WI. – January 22, 2003 – Second grade student Marissa Hirschman is visually impaired, but that doesn't stop her from succeeding in the classroom. She is currently involved in the Accelerated Reader® program at Richardson Elementary, a K-5 school in Fort Madison, Iowa.

"She's a star student," reports her teacher Kim Brown, who has taught visually impaired students for the past 13 years. "Marissa is part of the class and she participates just like the other students."

Brown was introduced to Accelerated Reader about six years ago and discovered that many Accelerated Reader books were available in Braille.

Accelerated Reader is a simple to use computerized learning information system now used in over 62,000 schools across the country. A student selects a book, reads it at his or her own pace, then takes a short quiz on the computer. The software scores the quiz, awards the students points based on the book's level, and keeps track of the student's reading record. The program makes it easy for teachers to monitor and manage reading practice in their classroom.

So how does a visually impaired student like Marissa work with Accelerated Reader?

After Marissa is done reading a book, she locates the computer desktop and finds the Accelerated Reader program through a series of keystrokes. When taking a quiz, the computer reads the questions aloud via a speech access program. Marissa then uses keystrokes to choose her answers instead of a mouse. When she's finished, her teacher reads her quiz results out loud.

"Her favorite part of the process is printing the results and getting her quiz paper at the printer all by herself," says Brown. "Marissa absolutely loves to finish a book and take the quiz. She's never scored below 80%."

"She always tells me how she loves to read. And last year alone, she read over 35 books."

Renaissance Learning™, Inc., is a leading provider of research-based learning information systems software, school improvement programs, teacher training, and consulting. The Company's learning information systems software products give students and teachers continuous constructive feedback that helps motivate students, dramatically accelerate learning, improve test scores, and help students master all standards, while reducing teacher paperwork. Adopted by over 62,000 schools, these software products are among the most popular in schools nationwide, including Accelerated Reader®, Accelerated Math®, Fluent Reader™, and STAR Early Literacy®. The Company's Renaissance™ school improvement process has been adopted by school districts across the country, and over 400,000 pre-K-12 educators have received Renaissance training. The Company also provides electronic assessment products and services to educational publishers, and sells enterprise software for training and knowledge management. The Company has six U.S. locations and subsidiaries in Australia, Canada, India, and the United Kingdom.

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Source: Renaissance Learning, Inc.

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