



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Eric Adams

Constituent Spotlight: Dr. Laverne C. Nimmons

ERIC ADAMS July 30, 2010



Biography of Dr. Laverne C. Nimmons

Dr. Laverne C. Nimmons is an educator who has accepted the heavy responsibility that goes with the title “principal.” For more than six years, she has been principal of Granville T. Woods Public School 335, which serves the predominantly African American Crown Heights and Bedford Stuyvesant Brooklyn neighborhoods. When Dr. Nimmons arrived at P.S. 335, the school had a 30% passing rate on the New York State mathematics test and 26% English language arts. The school now boasts a 97% passing rate in mathematics and 87% in English

language arts.

Dr. Nimmons credits her research while working on her doctoral dissertation at Fordham University as a significant factor in moving the school to its current success. Her doctoral dissertation examined how underachieving schools in poor urban areas transformed themselves into high-performing schools. She held herself, her staff, and students to very high standards and provided the necessary resources to support the school community in meeting those standards. P.S. 335 made that transformation, showing greater gains than any other 4th grade student body in New York State in both mathematics and English language arts. This distinction has earned the school a nomination for the very prestigious national Blue Ribbon Award.

Before becoming a principal at the Granville T. Woods School, Dr. Nimmons was the director of curriculum and instruction for Community School District (CSD) Sixteen. She directed elementary and middle school principals and teachers in professional development activities in instruction in the curriculum areas of mathematics, English language arts, science, social studies, music, art, early childhood, English as a second language, and technology. The district was once one of the lowest performing in the city. It has made tremendous gains in math and English language arts and continues to perform competitively, outscoring many other New York City school districts in similarly impoverished socioeconomic communities.

Under Dr. Nimmons leadership, her school now leads CSD Sixteen in performance for both English language arts and mathematics. In addition, P.S. 335 was the only school to win the 2010 National Blue Ribbon Award in Brooklyn and one of two schools to win in New York City. As principal of a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, Dr. Nimmons was among ten principals who won the Terrell Bell Award for outstanding leadership. Dr. Nimmons was selected for this distinguished honor from among 310 Blue Ribbon principals. Dr. Nimmons also won the Educator of the Year Award in 2009, presented by Education Update Magazine

at the Harvard Club. She also won the 2010 Educator of the Year Award presented by The Association of Black Educators of New York (ABENY).

To hold the position of principal in an impoverished urban school and be successful requires knowledge, tact, leadership, foresight, daring, and compassion. Dr. Nimmons is a person who exemplifies all of those values and more; she is an individual whose record as a principal speaks for itself in terms of the accomplishments of students, parents, teachers, and community.

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Carol Taylor, Blacktivist/Pioneer

Dr. Roy Hastick, Sr., Entrepreneur/Advocate

Dior Christian Dixon, Student Athlete/Volunteer

Dr. Zulema Blair, Professor/Researcher

Carmen Torres, Volunteer

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Dr. Laverne C. Nimmons, Principal, P.S. 335