

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Laverne C. Nimmons

Principal Granville T. Woods P.S. 335K

2010 National US Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

2010 National Terrel H. Bell Award - Outstanding Leadership

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 percent passing rate on the New York State mathematics test and 26 percent English language arts. The school now boasts a 97 percent passing rate in mathematics and 87 percent 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. P. S. 335 made that transformation showing the most gains of any other 4th grade students 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, out scoring many other New York City school districts in similar impoverished socioeconomic communities.

Dr. Nimmons received her B.A. Degree from Queens College, Masters in Education Degree from Queens College, Professional Degree in Administration and Supervision from St. John’s University, and her PhD in Educational Leadership from Fordham University.

Dr. Nimmons now leads CSD Sixteen in both English language arts and mathematics. P.S. 335 was the only school that was nominated and won the *National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award* in Brooklyn for the 2010-2011 school year and one of two schools to win this prestigious honor in New York City. Dr. Nimmons also won the *Terrell Bell Award for Excellence in Leadership* presented to her by Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan in Washington D.C., November 2010. She was one of ten recipients out of 310, 2010 Blue Ribbon Schools nationwide. Dr. Nimmons has also won the *Educator of the Year Award* from Education Update Magazine in 2009 and 2011. She has also won the 2010 *Outstanding Educator of the Year* from The Association of Black Educators in New York (ABENY). Dr. Nimmons is currently a *Cahn Fellow of the Cahn Fellows Program for Distinguished Public School Principals* at Teachers College, Columbia University.

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; a person whose record as a principal speaks for itself in terms of accomplishments for students, staff, and community.