

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Henry H. Garnet

Elementary School 175

**175 West 134th Street
New York
NY 10030**

Principal: Cheryl McClendon

Dates of review: February 23 - 24, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Nancy Birson

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Henry H. Garnet is an elementary school with 350 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 75% Black, 19% Hispanic, 1% White, 3% Asian, and 1% American Indian or Alaska Native students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 93%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The Henry H. Garnet has its “eye on the prize”. Its goals for student success are evident from the large, laminated curriculum maps lining the hallways to the attendance data and individual student recognition in the lobby entrance. It is likewise evident in the principal's office with large, colorful charts with interim school-wide student data and her judicious use of resources to ensure coherence and goals' attainment for the present year as well as her long-term plans for future growth. The effective systems for monitoring and evaluation means the school can respond quickly to adjust plans and provide intervention and support to improve student outcomes.

The school provides numerous supports for teachers' professional growth and helping them promote the school's goals and belief system. A yearlong calendar determines off-site days for professional development with turnkey expected when appropriate. “Head to head” meetings with administration determine how to differentiate individual teacher support further with in-house coaching, lab sites and inter-visitations. Teachers are clear as to the expectations as there is follow-through in the classroom and discussions and reflections are grounded through a common foundation.

Teachers are engaged in collaborative inquiry teams launched school-wide at the beginning of the year and supported throughout the year, as well as grade teams during common planning time. Inquiry teams however, are presently not analyzing key elements of teacher work, therefore leading to inconsistent changes to instruction.

Students in the school, while aware of high expectations, are unable to reflect on their growth or articulate the next steps. Students respond with comments such as “it's what the teacher gave us” or “I don't need to improve in anything” when asked about what and why they are learning and what their next steps are. The school is not yet consistent in the delivery of information to parents. Parents express that each teacher has a different way of communicating. Families whose children struggle receive more information than others do. If parents visit the school however, they get more information that can be useful to them in determining their child's progress.

The principal makes effective organizational decisions to empower the teaching staff and support the school's instructional goals. Her proactive approach to identifying additional funding resources enables the focused promotion of school priorities.

What the school does well

- The school provides well-varied supports for teachers that successfully further its goals for coherence in the assessment and instruction cycle.
 - o The school's practice of individual professional development plans for teachers serves to differentiate opportunities along a continuum of strengths and needs. Teachers meet "head to head" with administrators. They receive feedback based on student outcomes and formal and informal observations, resulting in individual plans that include modeling, coaching, or on- and off-site inter-visitations. Individual professional development plans' goals are clearly evident in teacher practice, especially around modeling, small group instruction and accountable talk.
 - o Due to the review of summative assessments, the administration has introduced programs aimed at bringing vertical and horizontal grade coherence to the curriculum. The successful implementation, and teacher support, of these programs has been ensured through well-planned professional development opportunities. These programs have a high degree of implementation in all classes, and teachers are able to understand connections across the grades.
- Professional learning opportunities that are purposeful and aligned with the school goals promote opportunities for teachers' independent and shared reflection.
 - o Teachers receive support from outside consultants in areas aligned to the school's goals and curricula. The school schedules all teachers yearlong for off-site calendar days to attend professional development in English language arts. The support organization offers weekly, differentiated learning opportunities for the lower and upper grade staff in data analysis or small group instruction. The school equally accesses other opportunities for content knowledge and areas such as English language learning and special education through Department of Education offerings. This inclusive and coherent approach to professional learning serves to keep the school's instructional focus at the forefront and teachers are able to reflect on pedagogy from a common foundation.
- School administration has effective systems in place for school self-evaluation and regularly monitors and adjusts curricular decisions in response to student learning needs.
 - o Administration maintains a keen eye on student learning outcomes in English language arts, math, science and social studies. They introduced a phonics/word work program in the early childhood grades, made a social studies adaptation by bringing the same structured instructional program down to grade 3, and introduced an equally structured science program in the lower grades. Leaders regularly monitor curricular decisions around short-term goals and use them to inform the school's decisive intervention policy.
- The school has established assessment tools that it utilizes to analyze student performance trends reflectively.

- o The school utilizes systems geared towards monitoring individual students' strengths and needs. Data from the school's math baseline assessment informs individual student instructional plans. The school utilizes this further to track overall trends. Following analysis, staff made a decision to provide English language learners with double doses of intervention as well as instruction through a computer adaptive math technology program. The school's strategic use of assessments also informs grade level support in English language arts, and gains in student outcomes are a result. Current data shows 65-70% of students in the early childhood grades are at grade level in English language arts at this time of the year.
- Teaching practices align to the curriculum and teachers' use of strategies and classroom routines enable students to produce meaningful work products.
 - o Teachers have a good understanding of the school's belief that students need modeling, independent practice, collaborative engagement through accountable talk and one-on-one support. Differentiation is evident through various modes of scaffolding of content and products based on student readiness.
 - o Students in math use well-varied tools to support learning. Wipe-off boards provide opportunities for students to practice skills with immediate teacher feedback. This helps them use tangible examples to improve understanding. Students use manipulatives, and computer activities provide enrichment to further support learning.
- The administration makes judicious use of its budget and its personnel that help promote its instructional goals, and long range plans.
 - o The principal creatively taps into adult volunteers, student teachers, and part-time personnel. Administration then matches these adults' expertise to students' strengths and needs. During a 30 minute morning period, out-of classroom personnel push in to classrooms to support students in need of targeted instruction in reading comprehension.
 - o The school funds collaborative inquiry work and some content area textbooks through various funding lines. The inquiry work collaboration further informs the after-school programs where teachers who share responsibility for their success with classroom teachers support students. Measures such as these support and address the school's goals around inquiry teamwork and increased student progress in literacy and math.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance teacher-developed rubrics to enable meaningful feedback to students with clear next steps.
 - o Teachers presently address student needs through differentiated lessons, small group interactions, and conferring. Some classes employ rubrics that students are aware of, but cannot explain in their own words. Students are not able to articulate their strengths and needs in a reflective manner that speaks to their knowing if they are making progress or what their next steps are.

- Ensure that a standards-based curriculum enhances the coherence of the instructional core to meet needs of variety of learners.
 - o The administration considers the curriculum “a work in progress”. As such, school leaders, in collaboration with consultants, have established key standards in English language arts and provided teachers with a framework for the delivery of instruction. There has been a stated intent that teachers will also have input in determining key standards in order to incorporate their deep and unique knowledge of students’ needs, thus moving from delivery to further refinement of what is essential.
- Standardize feedback to families so there is consistent, ongoing information regarding student progress towards meeting standards and expectations.
 - o The school uses a range of data effectively to track progress towards its plans and goals and individual teachers use data at the classroom level to ensure students make expected progress. However, the school has not yet standardized the types of data teachers communicate to parents. This leads to some inconsistency as the reporting of information and feedback to families depends on individual teachers.
- Build upon the promising work of teacher teams to deepen rigorous, research-based strategies and frameworks for school-wide benefit.
 - o The school has highly effective structures for teacher collaborations. Teachers are well aware of how certain protocols and tools such as agendas are useful in guiding their work. Analysis of student work leads to the application of resources for classroom instruction and after-school interventions. However, the structures do not address elements of teacher work so there is not yet a shared understanding of instruction that effectively addresses the learning problems noted.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Henry H. Garnet	Δ	▷	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	Δ	▷	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	▷	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed