



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Henry Highland Garnet School**

**Public School 175**

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

**Principal: Carol Foster**

**Dates of review: December 14 – 15, 2006**

**Reviewer: Peter Williman**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Henry Highland Garnet School is a small elementary school for grades Pre-K through 5 with a current student enrollment of 397 students. The student population is represented by 82% Black students, 17% Hispanic students, and 1.0% Asian and other students. Special education students represent 1.8% of the total school population while some 8.3% of students are English language learners. Attendance statistics for 2006 indicate that at 92% the school's average attendance is broadly in line with City schools but below that of similar schools.

A Pre-K grade class was added in September 2006. The school is in good standing and receives Title 1 funding. The principal has been in post for eighteen years.

The school shares the building with an academy. Although the decorative order of the school is bright and attractive, the building is undergoing significant maintenance. The capacity of the school in 2005 was 112%, well above that of City and similar schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal understands clearly how the good use of data can drive the improvement of school performance..
- The assistant principal supports the principal very well in her leadership of the school.
- A comprehensive database for English language arts and for mathematics provides detailed analysis of student progress, informs high quality strategic planning and effectively underpins instructional planning for all classes.
- The school is applying data well to strengthen the quality of instruction through more rigorous differentiation.
- Teachers work collaboratively as grade teams and use the data available to them well to accelerate student progress.
- The coaches for literacy and for mathematics understand school data very well and support the staff effectively.
- Intervention teams support students requiring individual help very well.
- Professional development is well focused to help teachers understand data and create a reflective learning culture.
- Students generally have very positive attitudes to their education.
- The school is a caring community, which promotes commitment and loyalty.

### What the school needs to improve

- Use the information from the very good tracking systems of student, class and cohort progress to raise the consistency of grade achievement across the school in English language art and mathematics.
- Use the comparative data of similar schools to make explicit evaluations of the progress made by students.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

The Henry Highland Garnet School serves its students very well through the quality of its systems to assess, monitor and review student progress. This is reflected in the hard work the principal expends to understand her students' progress. As a result the profile of student achievement is on an upward trend. The principal sets high standards in her expectation that 'students be brought up to the bar' rather than the bar be lowered. She knows her students and the community well and values the confidence staff and parents have in the work of the school. The school works hard to involve parents in understanding their children's individual progress and also offers opportunities for them to develop their own skills and knowledge through, for example, computer classes.

### How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The quality of analysis, organization and presentation is the strength of data management in the school. Consequently, it is able to track all students' progress very effectively. A comprehensive range of data is collected. Collectively this data provides daily, weekly, monthly and longer interim updates on student achievement. Commercial assessments, for example, are used to check students' comprehension and reading levels and to ensure a good match to complexity of text. Students also keep their own record so know the progress they are making. Teachers confidently interrogate City assessment databases to identify students' progress in skills.

Data is available and distributed effectively to ensure each user group has information to inform its work. The principal maintains a thorough oversight of school data. She tracks students' test 'histories' to identify students whose lack of progress puts them most at risk. As a result students requiring individual help with learning, special education students and English language learners are kept under close review. Members of the school cabinet ensure that that committee is well briefed to monitor the significant features of annual and interim assessments and to understand the implications for the work in classes and grades. Good use is made of information technology to present rubrics of student progress in all classes.

Every significant assessment is collated on a single sheet to give a clear overview of progress over the year, whatever groups the students may be part of. This data is shared and effective comparisons are made of progress between students, classes and grades. Therefore, students of particular interest such as those from shelters or those students who are new to the school can be highlighted to check their achievement. Comparisons of groups internal to the school are well managed but the school has insufficient detailed data to compare its work with similar schools and to understand which factors impact most on its success.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

The wealth of data available to the school is well used to set goals and objectives and to inform instruction through the close integration of the work of the cabinet, the collaborative planning of teachers and individual teachers in their management of instruction. As a result the profile of achievement has risen over the past four years. There is evidence that where this improvement appears to falter there is a rationale, for example, through the impact of students new to the school who have not benefited from the consistency of education.

Measurable, realistic but challenging goals are set within the Comprehensive Education Plan for overall school achievement and for specific grades. Grade teaching teams work together very well and, with the support and leadership of coaches frequently review progress and plan instruction and learning for the following week or month. The high quality of the coaches’ knowledge and training adds a rigor to sharpen the focus of the work. Teachers generally differentiate their instruction effectively in line with the goals they have for student improvement. Expectations are extremely high and carefully maintained records ensure that students’ work is kept under review and well considered adjustments are made.

The data available from special education and intervention teachers demonstrates the very positive impact they have on students requiring their specific help. From precarious starts students targeted through specific programs, for example in early literacy skills, make exceptional progress. The principal plays a significant role in identifying students to receive additional support through the well-planned after school and Saturday programs.

Staff make consistent successful efforts to share information with parents. The work of the parent coordinator is central to this effort. The increasingly well-supported workshops raise parents understanding of the curriculum and help parents to feel part of the school.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

The school uses programs and resources well to deliver the mandatory curriculum. Pacing calendars set the schedules of work in an annual timeframe to plan effective curriculum delivery. Programs have been selected which enhance the data provided through City and State assessments. Commercial programs provide valuable week-to-week data, for example, in reading and mathematics to indicate student progress in addition to the end of unit assessments in the core mathematics program.

There are clear links of responsibility and accountability for teachers through the work of coaches to the cabinet and to the principal. The principal and the assistant principal assign themselves specific as well as general responsibilities for overseeing instructional activity. The school’s stated priority to develop well focused differentiated learning for individual students is fully supported and implemented through these links. Teachers use observation and student data effectively to match students to relevant curricula. For

example, in a literacy lesson, groups of students were very appropriately engaged. One group, assisted by a para-professional worked on an independent reading task while another group used a listening centre and a third worked with computer programs. The teacher instructed a carefully chosen focus group. As a result of this good planning and the opportunities for a variety of activity within programs, students enjoy their lessons, they are attentive to teachers and generally well on task.

The principal uses available resources very well to ensure that the work of teachers is well supported by the purchase of relevant programs and well chosen resources. The principal and assistant principal know the teachers well and through reflective consultation match teachers in grade teams or strengthen specific grade classes. Schedules have been very well managed to provide extensive opportunities for grade team planning and professional support and guidance through matched preparation times. Attendance is a priority, which is closely monitored. Recent evidence shows there has been some significant improvement to bring the school statistics more closely in line with similar schools.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The principal's management of staffing and professional development is very effective in supporting school goals, for example, in developing differentiated instruction. This is well illustrated by the quality of her appointments to leadership roles and to the faculty. Cabinet members are very data literate and use it extensively in their work. Teachers are computer literate which enables them to use current assessment data programs to inform instruction. The staff, as a whole, is a community of learners who are mutually supportive and receptive to new developmental ideas.

The high quality of professional development is illustrated by the way the cabinet planned a whole staff development day around the theme of flexible grouping for differentiation. Grade teams worked separately and in partnerships to identify groupings within their classes. Coaches are now able to report to the cabinet evaluation meeting the specific evidence of the beneficial impact of this activity demonstrated through improvement in the organization for learning in classes. Building on this activity coaches help teachers help teachers directly to differentiate and review instructional activity.

The openness of the staff community means that teachers are able to visit each other's classrooms to see teaching and share ideas in addition to their grade meeting discussions. The principal knows her teachers very well through the frequent informal visits she makes to classes and through her own teaching of students which checks the impact of instruction. Formal review of teachers' work is appropriately in place too. The wealth of the principal's experience as a leader shows in her vision and clear prioritization, the quality of her relationships with students, staff and parents and the delegation and trust with which she empowers her staff. As a result leaders and faculty are secure in the quality of their work and the school routine reflects the schools' stated values day-to-day. The school has a very good partner in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centre which organizes a wide range of after school learning and activity for students.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The school's range of data and the ways in which students' achievement is consistently recorded ensures that each student's progress is well monitored over the school year and from year to year. Appropriate adjustments in goals and objectives are made as a result of the reviews which teachers, coaches and intervention teachers make. The principal, together with the individual members of the cabinet, compare the progress of classes and grades to identify differences in performance. The school recognizes in their reviews that, like so many other schools, there is a peak in grade performances at grade 4 and this requires further investigation to bring a consistency to the growth of school achievement overall.

The cabinet and the School Leadership Team periodically check the progress of the Comprehensive Education Plan against the qualitative and quantitative evidence of the school progress towards goals. Action is taken to bring the progress of plans back on track. For example, review drew attention to the progress in science goals and therefore adjustments have been made to ensure more systematic teaching in the subject through the planning of a curriculum calendar. The underlying strengths of this school's ability to maintain growth and momentum are the quality of leadership knowledge and skills and the close inter-relationship of leadership with faculty.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Henry Highland Garnet School (PS 175)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			<b>X</b>
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			<b>X</b>
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X