

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2009-2010**

**General D. Chappie James Middle School of Science**

**Middle School 634**

**76 Riverdale Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212**

**Principal: Willis Perry**

**Dates of review: January 12 - 13, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Donald Conyers**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

General D. Chappie James is a middle school with 235 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 88% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 1% American Indian. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 87.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### This school is proficient.

At the start of this second school year, there is a noticeable change in the building. Students and staff are focused more on achievement and happy to belong to the school. Teachers take great pride in leading advisory and school spirited activities that help to bring all constituents together. Additional outreach to community agencies like Big Brother Big Sister and Salvation Army has strengthened the sense of trust and belonging.

Teachers and administrators meet to interrogate available data and determine appropriate entry points for various students in order to increase positive learning results. One important and resultant change is the ratio assignment of five students to one teacher to support academic deficiencies noted in assessment results. This has led to more students receiving passing grades in class. School leaders, however, have not shared a wider range of data results to ensure that goals are set for specific groups in order to support and measure learning over time.

School leaders aptly link goal-driven learning walks, formal observations and independent professional growth plans to the professional development plan. However, the school does not consistently measure progress with interim goals, thus limiting adjustments. One teacher reported, "We are encouraged to take risks and are supported daily". Teacher teams are beginning to identify gaps in student learning while devising effective responses. School leaders participate in these efforts but they have not yet created consistent evaluative structures to gauge team effectiveness and pedagogical growth over time.

The school community embraces its instructional goals and takes steps to ensure their realization, as administrators effectively provide double block scheduling, and fund professional development and academic support time for students. Science education is the central theme of the school. Curriculum maps link all disciplines to science and all classes support science. Each class cares for a living organism, which promotes ongoing discussion and observation. Teachers constantly make life connections although the school has not forged enough partnerships with science foundations to support continued learning in science.

Students can speak of their challenges and have plans to address areas of concern. The school uses a reporting system to communicate and keep students, families and staff focused on student assessment results and growth. This has increased student and parent involvement and improved scholarship.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and staff have created a safe and nurturing environment where students receive a good level of support in their academic and personal development.
  - Students are highly motivated about their school and report, “Each teacher and child wants everyone to be the best”. Students appreciate the support they receive and particularly benefit from advisory, academic support programs and the sports recreational activity. They attribute the environmental change to more student voice and a caring staff.
  - Each student is known and supported by an adult, with accountability for student growth and development within the learning environment. Students feel they can rely on the school to help them. Haitian students were visibly upset about the earthquake, but were gathered and counseled by caring staff at the start of the school day.
- Administrators and teachers work well together to analyze a range of student data in order to make goal driven instructional decisions.
  - Leaders and staff gather data across subjects and rely on formative assessments to adjust their instructional decisions within the confines of the curriculum maps. Decisions made include high school Regent prep in math and science, small group intensive study, and cross discipline skills reinforcement. This has led to improved achievement and better planning.
  - Teachers and administrators aptly utilize conference notes and some low inference transcripts along with Excel data sheets to drive planning to raise student achievement. This has resulted in a full-scale adjustment for 65% of seventh and eighth graders failing more than one core subject. Adjustments included a variety of assessment options and additional learning time.
- Teachers develop engaging curricula, aligned to State standards and in consonance with the school’s mission and student needs. This has improved student participation and achievement.
  - Carefully crafted curriculum maps guide most content. Anchored to content standards and elements of science, these maps serve as the core of instructional focus. Lessons are challenging and teachers take opportunities to differentiate tasks. Students confidently articulate content understandings and attest to receiving useful feedback about how to improve their learning.
  - The school successfully challenges students by making real life connections that engender discussion, problem solving, role-play, research, decision-making and evaluation of facts. This engages students and increases content understanding.

- The school provides good grading and interim report systems to inform families and students, which ensure that students are active participants along with parents in the learning process.
  - Parents, staff and students frequently use the school’s reporting system to communicate, retrieve grades, track progress and generate progress reports three times yearly. This gives parents direct and real time interaction with the school concerning student learning results and progress. Students use the system to view assessment results and to determine which assignments they can improve or need to complete. Students have been able to join after school academic support and Saturday programs based on information gleaned from the system.
  - Students are reflective and demonstrate the desire to learn. One student responded, when asked about reflection, “It is important to help improve work and to refresh your mind.” Many of the students use rubrics to support improvement and look forward to teacher conferences. This has led to increased awareness and personal decision making in the lives of students.
- School leaders make effective organizational decisions in support of school level instructional goals, toward improved student achievement.
  - School leaders use the budget well to support the instructional goals of the school. These school wide goals are known by all constituents and are supported with available resources. The resources include funds for reduced class size, extended day and Saturday academic and recreational programs, professional development consultants, partnerships with ballroom dancing, Magic Box and American Reading Company.
  - Creative scheduling strengthens teaching and learning. Each grade has common planning time at least twice per week to review data and instructional decisions made to improve student learning. Teacher teams meet at least once per week to discuss student results, teacher practice and future learning steps. Advisory and guidance counselor time improves student confidence, behavior and engagement.
- The school presents a coherent system for monitoring and supporting effective pedagogy across the school in order to improve instructional practices.
  - Teacher practice revolves around the California Professional Teaching [CPT] standards. Teachers place themselves along a continuum and then develop long-term goals to improve practice. All teachers focus on one CPT narrative: *standard for engaging students in learning*. This focus is in alignment with school wide instructional goals and is the main driver for professional development across the school. Formal observations and feedback from learning walks highlight student engagement and professional development services, like intervisitation, accentuate student engagement.
  - The school has an established professional development team that focuses on newer teachers and provides in class support through modeling, lesson preparation and study groups. This has improved teacher competence and confidence.

## What the school needs to improve

- Expand opportunities to refine and adjust the work of teachers by developing interim indicators that reveal and evaluate progress
  - Teacher teams are in place and are involved in work agreed upon at the grade levels. The focus of these teams includes long-term goal development and common assessments, but consistent gauging of work and student growth is limited due to the absence of interim goals or benchmarks.
  - The school's long-term goals are clear, appropriate and being addressed around the school. However, the requisite knowledge of progress made is unclear because the school has not fully developed any intermediary indicators of success to evaluate its progress. As a result, timely adjustments cannot be made in response to identified need.
- Develop systems to evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaborations on a regular basis, in order to gauge effectiveness.
  - School leaders agree that the professional development across the school is responsive as well as leading the way toward realizing additional individual and school level goals. They also agree that the critical work of evaluating these professional development opportunities is still developing.
  - Teacher accountability and cooperation are two key factors at the school. As teachers lead and share their skills and expertise, there are few efforts or detailed plans in evidence to ensure that the school sustains its capacity building efforts.
- Increase external relationships with partners that have the capacity to enhance the school's instructional focus on science education in order to improve student achievement in this area.
  - Science education is ubiquitous and students state clearly that they love this subject. In spite of the science summative results and the focus on science as the school's theme, there are very few partnerships with science institutions and other science focused public schools. Additionally, as the school continues to strengthen its partnership with parents, it has not deepened its relationship with Urban Advantage to engage the parents in science education in order to garner their support to raise student achievement.
- Improve the organization of data results at the school level to maximize the focus and delivery of services to key subgroups.
  - Data gathering and analysis support grade and individual class improvement efforts appropriately. The school has recognized gaps in learning but has not fully developed a coherent plan to address known deficiencies at the school level. Consequently, needed focus on special education students, social studies and science across the school has yielded acceptable, instead of powerful impact. These missed opportunities impede goal setting and development of explicit responsive actions.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: General D. Chappie James Middle School of Science</b>	△	▷	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<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					
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	▶	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>