

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**The General D. Chappie James Elementary School of
Science**

Elementary School K631

**76 Riverdale Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Margaret V. McAuley

Dates of review: February 3 – 4, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The General D. Chappie James is an elementary school with 464 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 82% Black, 13% Hispanic, 1% White, 3% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 90.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
 - The principal and her cabinet carefully analyze school needs and allocate resources to improve outcomes aligned to school goals, such as the retention of two educational coaches, a part-time data specialist, an additional literacy consultant and the provision of an extra preparation period for staff to reinforce school-wide instructional practices. These decisions directly align with the school's literacy improvement goals and have enabled the school to continue to improve student outcomes as evidenced by steadily increasing scale scores.
 - All teachers utilize the extra 'data prep' to participate on teams that collaborate to achieve school goals. These teams are arranged by grade and share responsibility for their student cohorts through data. In addition, teacher committees assist the principal in hiring personnel with the skills and dedication needed to meet these goals, resulting in an increase of instructional practices that engage greater numbers of students.
- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to share good practice, analyze data and student work and plan curriculum and instruction.
 - Teachers meet weekly on grade teams with their respective coaches, an administrator and the data specialist to analyze running records, student portfolio work and teacher made assessments. This data is combined with periodic assessment results to identify students' strengths and areas of need and differentiate instruction. As a result, homogeneously grouped students participate in targeted guiding reading and remedial activities to reinforce areas of need.
 - Academic intervention, special education and English language learner teachers attend these team meetings to examine student subgroup performance and adjust instruction to meet student needs. This practice results in the ongoing rearrangement of student groups based on their rates of progress to consistently provide students with instruction at their instructional level that enables them to accelerate academic progress.
- The school has established systems for monitoring teaching practice with a focus on improving instructional strategies.
 - Administrators conduct pre-observation conferences that focus on lesson structure and content in relation to the workshop model. Formal and informal observations provide explicit feedback to teachers in this regard. In addition, supervisors make unannounced classroom visits utilizing an observation snapshot template to check on progress and support efforts to improve instructional practices.

- School leaders provide targeted support to teachers through monthly staff development and additional after-school workshops. Coaches, administrators and outside consultants provide differentiated support to teachers based on their needs and goals. New teachers are mentored and all teachers participate on teams. As a result of the above practices, instructional coherence is steadily improving.
- The principal and staff work as a unified team to create a calm, respectful and orderly environment where learning can take place and students feel supported.
 - Learning Environment Survey results have prompted the school to incorporate character education and a positive behavior rewards program to improve behavior and classroom management. Because of these new systems, on-line occurrence reports have decreased and a more positive tone exists throughout the school each day.
 - The school's guidance counselor and social worker oversee the school's advisory practice. All staff "adopt" students who they check on regularly to ensure that they are prepared to participate positively in school activities. As a result, all students are well known by multiple adults and timely interventions and youth supports are provided when necessary.
- Essential student support services, collaborations and individual conferencing provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially.
 - The school's Positive Behavior in School program provides professional development that enables teachers to conduct character education lessons and celebrates students doing the right thing, contributing to its current safe and respectful environment.
 - The school's guidance counselor, social worker and parent coordinator provide child/youth services to students and families through numerous community based organizations. In addition, students participate in compassionate real world learning opportunities when they assist with the distribution of collected goods and funds to numerous shelter families in the area.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen academic rigor by consistently designing challenging student tasks and utilizing effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking and extends learning across grades and subject areas.
 - Administrators and faculty regularly examine robust amounts of data and use this information to emphasize key standards for students and adjust curricula to meet student needs. However, some teachers do not consistently stress higher order skills when planning academic tasks and various academic activities fail to engage a variety of learners.

- Increase the efficacy of differentiated instruction by developing routines that strategically group students to ensure that all students remain engaged and have multiple entry points into the curricula.
 - While the school espouses belief in the child centered classroom model to meet student needs, some teachers still conduct teacher directed lessons. In addition, differentiation practices in many classes are not designed to meet student needs, thereby resulting in frustrated and disengaged students.

- Ensure that all goals include precise short-term and long-term measurable outcomes that are understood and used to track student progress, promote accountability and provide feedback to students and families resulting in a disconnect among stakeholders.
 - Teachers conference regularly with students to communicate learning goals and next steps, however, systems are not in place to track student progress in this regard. Three report cards and two progress reports are sent home to parents, but these tools only yield information regarding grading criteria expectations and do not provide feedback regarding student learning goals and explicit student progress.

- Extend the practice of providing consistent feedback to students and their families with clear next steps for improvement based on rubrics to help them set and achieve their goals.
 - The parent coordinator conducts ARIS Parent Link workshops and the Parent Teacher Association room makes computers available to members of the community on a daily basis, however, Learning Environment Survey results indicate below average levels of parent participation. In addition, progress reports are not used to communicate specific students' strengths and weaknesses to families.
 - The school utilizes rubrics for numerous learner assignments, however, it is not an established practice to provide students with these tools before completing tasks, thereby missing opportunities for students to reflect and self-assess the quality of their work.

- Refine action planning by linking interim goals to measurable targeted benchmarks at specific intervals so that school, team and teacher action plans can be monitored to expedite revisions and maximize impact.
 - School action plans generally use percentage-based targets as the annual goal in the identified areas of improvement. Benchmarks measuring progress towards these goals at specific intervals during the school year are not indicated. Teacher team and class action plans also do not contain interim benchmarks for targeted students. The lack of these structures hampers the school's ability to determine the effectiveness of their actions along the way to allow for contingencies and to make timely adjustments that improve outcomes. It also limits the school's ability to align planning from one year to the next.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The General D. Chappie James Elementary School of Science	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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		

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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed