

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

General D. Chappie James Middle School of Science

**Middle School 634
76 Riverdale Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Willis Perry

**Dates of review: November 8 - 9, 2010
Lead Reviewer: Ainslie Cumberbatch**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

General D. Chappie James Middle School is a middle school with 204 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 85% Black, 14% Hispanic, and less than 1% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School administrators make well-informed and effective organizational decisions across all facets of the school that support teaching and learning.
 - The school programs teachers allowing them to engage routinely in common planning on grade- and subject-area teams. Consequently, teachers focus on examination of school data and case-conferencing around targeted students to identify their learning needs. Additionally, this process allows the school to frequently monitor and adjust plans based on teacher feedback in order to meet student needs. One teacher, proud of the school's accomplishments, remarked; "Even now the school is evolving to even greater heights".
 - Thorough analysis of achievement data reveals that students experience specific skill deficits in literacy and math that affect their overall school performance. Therefore, the principal reprogrammed the school to facilitate co-teachers in several English language arts and math classes to support the neediest students. Initial reviews indicate that this strategy is improving student outcomes.
- School leaders effectively use the observation tool and data-based systems to support teacher practice with a focus on improving student outcomes.
 - School leaders support instructional coherence by using observation protocol tools and student data to provide feedback to teachers. All lesson plans require a science connection and the development of the Common Core Standards. As a result, daily plans incorporate a focus on higher order thinking skills, plans for differentiating instruction, and scaffolded learning opportunities for students.
 - Administrators implement differentiated school-based professional development based on observations, professional conversations, surveys, teacher evaluations, and student work. California Professional Teaching Standards and school-wide teaching practices guide staff in setting individual teaching goals. In addition, new teachers receive mentoring to support their organizational needs. As a result, staff implement classroom practice designed to meet student needs.
- Students benefit from a standards-based broad curriculum that incorporates high school and college readiness, with resources that support learning.
 - School standard-based courses including algebra, a gifted and talented after-school program, an accelerated science program, and a writing club for students struggling with literacy reflect a range of instruction that attracts student interest and supports their learning. Students report that school is challenging but interesting and that staff help them develop high school and college skills.
 - The school's curriculum is engaging and student-centered. Using an Understanding by Design approach that begins with graduation and what it will take to achieve it, teachers use curriculum maps to guide instruction within each subject area. Unit plans that accompany the maps reflect planning that includes essential questions to address the needs of students.
- Teams of teachers work collaboratively to examine school-based data and develop tools to strengthen curriculum and instruction.

- Teachers use online programs to aggregate and organize all relevant data used in making appropriate classroom decisions. In addition, students' use of commercial programs to improve their skills provides teachers with output data that is used to determine trends and areas in which students need support.
- Teachers use common planning time to work collaboratively looking at student work and developing strategies such as writing rubrics and math games geared to improve student outcomes. Team members embrace this practice, share that they feel empowered to adjust instructional strategies with support from their supervisors, and describe the school as, "An express train to a great school."
- Staff use collaborative, data-informed processes to plan and set school-wide goals that improve teaching and learning.
 - Students, staff, and parents are very familiar with the five school goals related to performance, curriculum, professional development, attendance and school culture, developed after a review by stakeholders of school data sets. School plans reflect these focus areas, guide staff actions, and include items such as the use of unit assessments to chart student growth. As a result, staff implement action plans that foster improved student performance and behavior.
 - A collaborative effort between the inquiry, grade-level, and subject-area teams enables a thorough review of student performance data on the New York State English language arts and math exams, resulting in thoughtful action plans that focus the school's work. Attention to the key goals of college readiness, theme integration, curriculum mapping, effective teaching practices, and culture building, leverages the school's improvement efforts.
- School leaders and faculty establish clear systems for evaluating the effectiveness of support structures that affect teaching and learning.
 - School leaders regularly assess the work of teacher teams during cabinet and inquiry team meetings by reviewing team minutes and feedback from data specialists. Data specialists, who also sit on each teacher team and the school inquiry team, share information with administrators to ensure coherence across the school. As a result, administrators provide timely feedback to teams around proposed strategies and initiatives thus providing support for their work.
 - School leaders, as part of the teacher observation process, review student performance and examine teacher progress towards meeting their professional goals. As a result, administrators tailor recommendations and identify supports based on teacher and student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop teacher use of a wider variety of data-driven differentiated instructional strategies, to ensure that they meet the needs of targeted groups of students.
 - Teachers articulate the behavior patterns, learning styles and general needs of the students in their classes. However, a focus on differentiation of instruction is inconsistent across the school. In some classrooms, teaching practices do not include students as active participants or provide sufficient focus on individual student's needs. As a result, some teachers' lessons do not prepare individual students to meet their learning goals.

- The school's use of varied professional development methods supports staff in delivering instruction aligned to the Common Core Standards, including work with differentiated teaching strategies. However, not all teachers provide data-driven instruction following these standards, therefore limiting student engagement and meaningful work products.
- Identify ways of building stronger partnerships and community links to support students' personal and academic growth.
 - The school's guidance counselor and dean address students' social and emotional needs through mini-advisories, as well as group and individual counseling sessions. At present, no external partnerships with colleges, clinics, hospitals, or community-based organizations exist to address the needs raised by staff for additional social-emotional support for students. As a result, some students continue to exhibit behavior that stifles their learning.
 - School leaders employ the services of two key organizations to enhance the school's science theme. However, the school does not yet make sufficient use of these resources to completely realize the school's goal of providing students with an unparalleled science experience and meaningful real world opportunities. As a result, the school's theme is not yet fully developed.
- Further develop school structures to ensure that effective teacher practice and use of resources result in student mastery of current and evolving State standards.
 - The school does not yet have suitable unit assessments to evaluate instructional practices and student progress. Therefore, the reliance on the emerging school-wide unit assessments and classroom assessments provides insufficient data. As a result, relevant evaluation of instructional practices is hindered.
 - School leaders assess teacher performance by speaking to students, looking at student progress, and noting skill sets in the classroom to ensure appropriate alignment of school resources. However, this process is not fully developed and does not always measure student needs accurately. Therefore, the school cannot gauge the impact of its resources in accelerating student learning.
- Refine school plans to include targeted interim- and long-term goals that focus on school improvement as you move to implement the Common Core Standards.
 - School action plans generally use percentage target gains as the overall goal in the areas of performance improvement, professional development, attendance, curriculum mapping, and improved school environment. The school's cabinet and teacher teams meet regularly to review the school's progress towards meeting its goals. However, the lack of specific measurable targets hinders their ability to identify areas in need of support or revision in an expedient way.
 - The school recently introduced an interim benchmark system to measure students' progress towards long-term goals. However, the lack of a refined structure hampers the school's ability to determine program effectiveness along the way, or to make timely adjustments.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: General D. Chappie James Middle 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