

Board O'Gram

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Report of Rome Board of Education — Action Compiled by Dr. Robert A. Young, Dir. of Administrative Services

Rome Middle School Choral Ensemble: As a preamble to the Board meeting, the Rome Middle School Choral Ensemble performed for the Board and the audience. The members present included: (seventh graders) Hannah Campbell, Alberta Braziel, Elantra Pledger, Tairesha Garrett, Anita Guzman, Katie Hoffman, Katie Price, Kari Rainwater, Gaby Rivera; (eighth graders) Sydney Champagne, Ting Wang, Rebecca Gossett, Whitney Manning, Mary Tran, Lakyn Dougherty, Jane Lucas, Astred Gordon, and Yesenia Vazquez. Sadie Ludwig and Mackenzie Wright were unable to attend.

On a special note, Hannah Campbell is the first middle school student in the history of Rome City Schools to pass the first audition for All-State Chorus. She will compete in the final audition in January. Additionally, Hannah Campbell, Katie Price, Sydney Champagne, Ting Wang, Sadie Ludwig, Rebecca Gossett, Whitney Manning, Mary Tran, and Mackenzie Wright were selected to participate in the District 7 Honor Chorus.

For their musical encore the group performed a medley of festive Christmas holiday tunes which raised the spirits of all those in attendance.

Board Elections – Sims as Chairperson and Greer as Vice-Chairperson: Mrs. Sims turned the meeting over to Mr. Byington, Board attorney, to conduct the elections for the 2006 Board chairperson. Mr. Clark nominated Mrs. Sims to serve as chairperson. Mrs. Huffman seconded the motion. On a Wood/Clark motion, the Board members present unanimously decided to close the nominations, electing Mrs. Sims as chairperson by acclamation.

Mr. Byington turned the meeting over to the newly elected Chairman, Mrs. Sims. Mr. Wood nominated Mr. Greer to serve as 2006 Board vice-chairman. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. On a Huffman/Clark motion, the Board members present unanimously decided to close the nominations, electing Mr. Greer as vice-chairman by acclamation.

Georgia Authors' Writing Competition: Mrs. Huffman presented a certificate to Christopher Fincher, a second grader at East Central Elementary School, for being named a region winner in the Young Georgia Authors' Writing Competition. Two other students, Caleb Neibar, a third grader at West Central Elementary School, and Elizabeth Bibb, a ninth grader at Rome High School, were recognized at the November meeting. The Young Georgia Authors' Competition is a student writing contest sponsored by the Georgia Department of Education for students across the state in grades K-12. Public school students in all grades may submit original writing entries of short stories, poetry, essays, journals, or personal narratives for judging. These entries enter into school level, system level, regional level, and finally on to state level competition.

Annual Dash for Literacy 5K Road Race: Mr. Wood recognized Brady Bennett, a senior at Rome High School, for an unprecedented act of gratitude. In appreciation for the good educational experience which he has enjoyed in Rome City Schools, Brady Bennett planned, sought for financial and community support, organized, and managed the inaugural 5K race of the Annual Dash for Literacy 5K Road Race. The race was managed so successfully that Brady was able to present Mrs. Buffi Murphy, principal at Southeast Elementary School, and Dr. Rita Carter, principal at North Heights Elementary School, each with a \$508.00 check for library books from the proceeds. Brady was accompanied by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Buddy Bennett, and his brother Landry, an eighth grader at Rome Middle School.

Fourth Month Attendance: Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the fourth month of school. He stated that Anna K. Davie Elementary School had the highest percentage of student attendance at 97.92 percent. It was also noted that Rome Middle School had 95.75 percent of student attendance for the third month of school. The highest percent of staff attendance was East Central Elementary School at 98.11 percent.

New Employees: On a Collins/Wood motion, the Board members present unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's recommendations for support employment 2005-06: Gloria Bradford - SNP/RHS; Myrtis Rose - SNP/ES; Annette Hickman - Parapro/RHS; Wanda Hubbard – SNP/NH; and Sarah Jenkins – SNP/WE

2005 United Way Drive: At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Buck reported on the 2005 United Way Fund Drive results. He reported that Rome City Schools employees gave a total of \$29,263.64. Dr. Buck stated that this amount leads the other organizations in the educational giving category by a wide margin. Dr. Buck noted the excellent giving by the employees at Southeast Elementary School, especially on a per capita basis. United Way directly impacts the boys and girls of Rome City Schools.

Focus on Student Achievement – North Heights: Dr. Rita Carter presented the Focus on Student Achievement for North Heights Elementary School. Dr. Carter stated that North Heights is “Charting a Course of Excellence” for their boys and girls. Their mission statement, to paraphrase, says that all of their students will meet or exceed GPS Grade Level Performance Standards. Dr. Carter displayed their CRCT results and revealed scores that exceed state scores.

Dr. Carter attributed her students’ success to the programs that have been implemented at North Heights. They are working on Math Workshop as a format to foster concept development. Math specialists work with teachers to enhance the math instruction. Special Education students receive Direct Instruction strategies and an additional math skills segment to assist their learning. The program has two built in safety nets for students who struggle: after-school program and summer school.

In the area of literacy, the Writing Workshop program is in the fourth year of implementation. With the assistance of Mrs. Debbie Downer, the teachers are preparing more rigorous standards at the K-3 level. Another program designed for literacy is the Principal’s Book of the Month. In this program, each month, the principal reads a theme selected book to the students at North Heights.

Professional Learning is a critically important component in the overall educational plan at North Heights. Weekly collaborative planning sessions are held where student work is analyzed, test data is reviewed, and instructional plans are set. The teachers at North Heights use a team approach in educating their students.

Dr. Carter mentioned that Fine Arts at North Heights are flourishing. It was reported that twenty percent of their sixth graders participate in the band program and ten percent of the entire student body participates in the choral program. School choral honors include four of their students named to the State Honor Chorus and six students named to the District Honor Chorus.

Teachers from North Heights, attending the meeting, giving Dr. Carter moral support, were Laura Gafnea, Terry Storey, Emily Padgett, Dana DePew, and Sandra Camp.

Board Policy Review: Dr. Cooper briefly discussed the process that is going to be used to review the entire Rome City Schools Board Policy Manual. Each policy will be evaluated for its usefulness and accuracy by a review team. Specific recommendations will be made to the Board ranging from keeping a policy as it is to rescinding it. Dr. Cooper stated that the process will be deliberate and methodical. Once the policies are all reviewed, they will all be accessible to the general public through a link from the Rome City Schools website to the Georgia School Boards Association website.

SPLOST II Update: Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST II revenues. He stated that the September ‘05 collections of \$457,707.89 were \$40,602.41 over projections.

Title 1 Distinguished Schools: Dr. Cooper announced that Anna K. Davie Elementary and West Central Elementary School were both recognized as 2005-2006 Title 1 Distinguished Schools because they have achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) four years in a row. Each school will receive a performance award for \$10,540.00.

AYP Certificate of Recognition: Dr. Cooper also announced that East Central Elementary School, Elm Street Elementary School, Main Elementary School, and North Heights Elementary School each received a Certificate of Recognition from the Department of Education for achieving AYP for three years in a row.

Main Elementary School Nominated for *Blue Ribbon School Program*: Dr. Cooper announced that Main Elementary School was nominated by Cathy Cox, Georgia State Superintendent of Schools, to apply for the *Blue Ribbon Schools Program*. Dr. Bynes and the Main Elementary School staff will have an application to complete by February 2006. *The Blue Ribbon Schools* will be identified later in the year.

RCS Special Education Recognized by Department of Education: Dr. Cooper reported that Rome City Schools received two certificates from the Division for Exceptional Students at the Georgia Department of Education. One certificate was for most improvement by educating students in the least restrictive environment, by increasing the percentage of fully certified teachers, and by transitioning students to their desired post-secondary outcomes. The second certificate was for highest performance by increasing the percentage of fully certified teachers and by educating young children in the least restrictive environment. Dr. Cooper presented the certificates to Dr. Dawn Kemp, Director Special Education, on behalf of Rome City Schools Special Education Department.

GSBA Meeting Comments: Mrs. Sims opened the floor for Board Members to comment on their recently attended GSBA meeting. Mr. Clark briefly discussed the school legal session that they attended. Mr. Wood mentioned that Georgia State Superintendent of Schools, Kathy Cox, presented on “Apples to Apples,” a comparison of national SAT scores that revealed that Georgia is not at the bottom of the barrel as many would suggest. In conclusion, Mrs. Sims stated that the focus group formed to update the GSBA Board Member Guidelines is scheduled to be completed by 2007.