

Board O'Gram

Vol. 34
No. 4
Dec. 9, 2008

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

Choir Prelude to Board Meeting: As a prelude to the Board Meeting, Rome Middle School Chorus, under the direction of Ms. Susan Campbell, sang a holiday selection for the Board. Members of the RMS chorus performing were Courtney Lovingood, Diana Romo, Katie Hatcher, Chris Rudd, Erich VanTubbergen, Patrick Tarrant, Cayce Woodard, and Zach Kinsey. RHS chorus students, under the direction of Ms. Jennifer Williams, then sang some holiday selections as well. Members of the Rome High group were Stephanie Bischof, Jacob Bowman, Hannah Campbell, Sarah Godfrey, Kelly Hix, Charlie Langlois, Chani Maisonet, Jerica Maisonet, Michael Nedvin, Katie Price, Andrew Smathers, and Ellen Stolte.

Rome Middle School and Rome High School All-State Chorus: Dr. Jones presented a Certificate of Recognition to the Rome Middle and Rome High Students selected for 2009 All-State Chorus. Dr. Jones announced that nineteen students from Rome City Schools were recently selected for the 2009 Georgia Music Educators All-State Chorus. This is the highest number of students ever selected for All-State Chorus from Rome Middle and Rome High School, surpassing the record set for both schools last year.

The Rome Middle School Chorus, under the direction of Ms. Susan Campbell, had eight students selected this year for All-State Chorus:

Courtney Lovingood, daughter of Jon and Tammy Lovingood;
Diana Romo, daughter of Zenaida and Eleazar Romo;
Katie Hatcher, daughter of Lynn and Britt Hatcher;
Chris Rudd, son of Heather Rudd and Rodney Mayes;
Erich VanTubbergen, son of Elena VanTubbergen and Chuck VanTubbergen;
Patrick Tarrant, son of Fred and Melissa Tarrant;
Cayce Woodard, son of Katrina and Gary Woodard; and
Zach Kinsey, son of James and Angela Bloodworth.

The Rome High School Chorus students, under the direction of Ms. Jennifer Williams, selected were:

Stephanie Bischof, daughter of Betty Bischof;
Jacob Bowman, son of Timothy and Suzanne Bowman;
Hannah Campbell, daughter of David and Susan Campbell;
Sarah Godfrey, daughter of Lance and Lynette Godfrey;
Charlie Langlois, son of David and Marcela Langlois;
Chani Maisonet and Jerica Maisonet, daughters of Eduardo and Tammie Maisonet;
Michael Nedvin, son of Brian and Karin Nedvin;
Katie Price, daughter of Danny and Tammi Price;
Andrew Smathers, son of Jeff and Patricia Smathers; and
Ellen Stolte, daughter of William and Mary Stolte.

Mr. Wilson then presented Rome High School students selected for All-State Reading Chorus with a Certificate of Recognition. Mr. Wilson stated that the Georgia All-State Reading Chorus was established two years ago to showcase students with exceptional sight-reading ability. The All-State Reading Chorus audition is even more challenging than the regular All-State Chorus audition. The All-State Reading Chorus event will be held Jan. 29-31, 2009, in Savannah. The students will participate in three days of rehearsal with a guest conductor, during which they will sight-read approximately sixty pieces of music, and the event will conclude with a concert at the Savannah Trade Center.

The students selected were:

Sarah Godfrey, daughter of Lance and Lynette Godfrey;
Kelly Hix, daughter of Dr. Alan and Kathy Hix;
Chani Maisonet, daughter of Eduardo and Tammie Maisonet;
Katie Price, daughter of Danny and Tammi Price and
Andrew Smathers, son of Jeff and Patricia Smathers.

Mr. Wilson stated that all five students received scores that were among the top in the district.

Berry Math League Competition - Rome Middle School: Ms. Huffman presented a Certificate of Recognition to Rome Middle School students who successfully competed in the Berry Math League Competition. On Tuesday, November 11, 2008, Rome Middle School's Mathematics Team competed at Berry College in the Berry Math League Competition. Twenty teams from the state of Georgia competed in a three part competition. First, students took a twenty question written test. Next, they participated in a ten question ciphering competition where speed and accuracy determine the points awarded. Finally, each team received five questions to answer in a twelve-minute time frame. Out of 80 students, Phillip Spratling finished in second place in this portion of the competition. As a team, Rome Middle School finished in first place, ahead of the other 19 teams. Congratulations to each of these outstanding students. Mrs. Sandye Ashley is the Rome Middle School Math Team Coach.

Team members included:

Stephen McConkey, son of Dale and Ingrid McConkey;
Phillip Spratling, son of Kevin and Christine Spratling;
Theresa Stevens, daughter of Charles and Stephanie Stevens;
Juhi Varshney, daughter of Upkar and Smita Varshney;
Mike Castellanos, son of Rosie Strickland;
Lucy Lansing, daughter of Doug and Helen Lansing; and
Victoria Liss, daughter of Bruce and Sherri Wallace.

Fourth Month Attendance: Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the fourth month of school. He stated that Elm Street Elementary School had the highest percentage of student attendance at 97.25 percent. It was also noted that Rome Middle School had 94.64 percent of student attendance for the fourth month of school. The school with the highest percent of staff attendance was Anna K. Davie Elementary School at 97.73 percent.

New Personnel: On a Wilson/Huffman motion, the Board members present unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's personnel recommendations:

Support Employment 2008-2009: Rachel Haygood/RMS and Juanita Hoke/RMS

Focus On Student Achievement – Main: At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Dawn Williams presented the Focus on Student Achievement for Main Elementary School. Accompanying Dr. Williams were faculty members Lori Wilson, Chris Rogers, Laura Gafnea, Barbara Ford, Ginger Rowston, and parent NeNe Ocasio.

Dr. Williams reminded the audience that Main Elementary School is a National Blue Ribbon School and a 2008 Title I Distinguished School, six years running.

Dr. Williams presented and discussed Main Elementary School's Reading and Math CRCT scores. She stated that the teachers at Main have been focusing on Math this year since their scores were less than they hoped. Except for second grade math, where they earned a 93 percent, the scores revealed some areas needing focus and work. The Reading scores showed strong improvements in achievement. In the third grade, they moved from 65 percent meeting and exceeding to 87 percent. In the fourth grade, they increased from 64 percent to 73 percent. In the fifth grade, they increased from 84 percent to 93 percent. The sixth grade scores have been at or above 94 percent since 2005, when they earned a 100 percent meeting or exceeding.

The programs that Dr. Williams discussed in literacy included: DIBELS, Direct Instruction, Road to the Code, and Shurley English for Skills. She stated that they believe in a balanced approach between standards-based and skill instruction. They use Early Intervention with Direct Instruction for grades K-2 and Road to the Code for Kindergarten.

In the area of mathematics, they are applying a strong emphasis in grades 3-6 with an after-school program for identified students with needs. They will employ a Title I teacher to provide extended learning with students with identified needs. Dr. Williams also stated that they will hold Saturday School for students having identified needs in grades 4-6. Even the parents will receive training conducted by the Math Coach. Main Elementary's administration and teachers are dedicated to helping make their students successful.

Progress-Achievement for All Students: At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Dawn Kemp reported on Progress-Achievement for All Students. Dr. Kemp stated that Rome City Schools is ahead of the state in regard to meeting the inclusion requirements: 80% of the children participate in the regular classroom at least 80% of the time. Dr. Kemp said that the success of Rome City Schools children with disabilities is due to the inclusion model and the support that the administration and teachers provide to this end.

Dr. Kemp reported on the CRCT results and compared Rome City School students with disabilities with Georgia students with disabilities. She found that Rome City Schools students exceeded Georgia students in every area; especially in the GHSGT in math in the eleventh grade where they exceeded the state by more than 30 percent in 2008!

Dr. Kemp stated that Rome City Schools is being recognized by the Georgia DOE for meeting the following goals:

- Students who meet or exceed state achievement standards for Reading/ELA.
- Educating students in the Least Restrictive Environment.
- Educating young children in the Least Restrictive Environment.
- Transitioning students to their desired post-secondary outcomes.

Dr. Kemp then listed the reasons the system was so successful:

- Exceptional special education teachers and general education teachers working together.
- Direct Instruction.
- Intensive efforts and improvement in the development of transition planning for Rome Middle School and Rome High School students (Deborah Johnston).
- Inclusion in Best Practices efforts such as reading, writing, and math workshops.
- Expanding Pre-K programming - particularly at Headstart and community daycare centers (Daylene Huggins).
- Implementation of a Phonemic Awareness/Language Development Program in all schools, particularly in Pre-K and at-risk kindergarten classes.
- Progressive and thoughtful principals and assistant principals who work diligently with all students.
- Outstanding special education facilitators and school psychologists who intervene with students at-risk.
- Support from reading and math content experts - Mrs. Downer, Mrs. Erwin, and Mrs. Pierce.
- A vision from the superintendent and assistant superintendent to promote the achievement of all students.

Dr. Cooper presented Dr. Kemp with a Certificate of Recognition from the Department of Education.

SPLOST II: Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST II revenues. He stated that the September '08 collections of \$464,519.09 were \$27,019.09 above projections for the month (\$437,500.00).

Construction Manager At-Risk: On a Huffman/Wood motion, the Board members present unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's recommendation to award the Construction Manager At-Risk, for the twelve classroom addition at Rome High School, to Pinson's, Incorporated.

Rome Middle School 2008 Silver Award: Dr. Cooper presented Mr. Christian, Mrs. Dixon, and Mrs. Holloway with a Certificate of Achievement from the Georgia Department of Education for Rome Middle School earning the 2008 Silver Award. This is the second year in a row that Rome Middle School has earned this award. The award is for achieving Adequately Yearly Progress for at least two consecutive years, at least 25% of their students exceeding in all areas of standards, and earning at least 96% greatest gains in standards achievements.

403(b) Plan: On a Jones/Wilson motion, the Board members present unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's 403(b) Plan recommendation as presented by Dr. Young.

Rome News-Tribune Basketball Tournament: Dr. Cooper announced that Rome High will be playing in the Rome News-Tribune Basketball Tournament beginning December 15, 2008. The tournament will take place at Berry College, Georgia Highlands College, and Shorter College.

Regular Monthly Meetings for 2009: On a Wood/Huffman motion, the Board members present unanimously approved the 2009 Rome City Schools Board Meeting dates, time, and location. The regular monthly meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month. The Caucus will begin at 5:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Office and the Regular Session will begin at 5:45 p.m. in the Boardroom.

Board Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson Elected: Mrs. Sims turned the meeting over to Mr. Byington, Board attorney, to conduct the elections for the 2009 Board Chairperson. On a Wilson/Huffman motion, Mrs. Sims was nominated to serve as 2009 Board Chairperson. On a Wood/Jones motion, the Board members present unanimously decided to close the nominations, electing Mrs. Sims as the 2009 Chairperson by acclamation.

Mr. Byington turned the meeting over to the newly elected Chairperson, Mrs. Sims. On a Jones/Huffman motion, Mr. Wood was nominated to serve as 2009 Board Vice-Chairperson. On a Wilson/Huffman motion, the Board members present unanimously decided to close the nominations, electing Mr. Wood as the 2009 Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.

Georgia School Board Association (GSBA) Notes: Mrs. Sims invited the Board members present to discuss what they learned at the GSBA meeting. Mr. Wood said that he thoroughly enjoyed getting a chance to talk with other Board members from around the state and continue to deepen working relationships with Rome City Schools Board members. Dr. Jones said that he attended the new Board member training and that he would recommend anyone who was interested in being a candidate for a school Board position to take such a training prior to running. Mrs. Sims stated that she learned about the work being conducted by the Commission on School Board Reform and the standards that school Boards will be measured against. She said that the Rome City Schools Board of Education has been on the leading edge for many years, and she is very proud to be a part of such a professional group of Board members. Ms. Huffman reported that she is proud of the way that the State Trade Association and Georgia Schools Superintendents Association work together and the relationship with the Georgia legislature that they maintain. Dr. Cooper reiterated the Board members praises by saying that the Rome City Schools Board of Education represents the school system and community very well by the professional way they perform their duties and the dedication they apply to their responsibilities.