

# Board O'Gram

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

**Musical Interlude:** A Rome High School senior (Logan Dugger) played a couple of pieces on his Tenor Saxophone as an interlude for the Board members, staff, and visitors before the meeting was called to order.

**District VII Middle School Honor Band:** At Mrs. Sims's request, Mr. Wilson recognized the Rome Middle School Band students who have been selected for the District VII Middle School Honor Band. Mr. Wilson stated that Rome Middle School students and hundreds of others from all across Northwest Georgia tried out for the District VII Middle School Honor Band last fall. These students had to play required scales from memory, perform a prepared etude, and had to sight-read a new piece of music. The two percussionists had to play scales, rudiments, tune the timpani and sight-read on three different instruments; snare drum, mallets, and timpani. Only the top students of each instrument were selected to participate in this celebrated clinic experience. The students met for the first time last Thursday evening and began rehearsing that night and through the day and night Friday. After more rehearsals Saturday morning, a culminating concert was then held Saturday afternoon. The event this year was held at Calhoun High School. Congratulations go to all of these fine band students from Rome Middle School.

Mr. Wilson said that, in addition to this honor, one of these middle school students, 7th grader Daniel Hester, has been selected to participate in the GMEA All-State Middle School Band. Daniel is a percussionist and, as mentioned in the district band audition criteria, had to exhibit expertise in not only one instrument, but THREE instruments in order to be selected. This is the highest honor possible for a middle school band student. It is especially exciting to have a 7th grade student rise to such high levels of musicianship. Remember, Daniel was in beginning band just last year!! He will travel to Savannah at the end of this month to participate in the All-State event. His proud parents are Mark and Donna Hester. Mr. Christian stood up and read the names of the honor students:

Julia Rhiner, daughter of Martin and Madeleine Rhiner  
Jonathan Corona, son of Leopoldo and Joanne Corona  
Dylan Horne, son of Alan and Mayami Horne  
Daniel Hester, son of Mark and Donna Hester  
Jonathan Williams, son of Wade and Wendy Williams

**All-State and District Band:** At Mrs. Sims's request, Mr. Wood recognized the Rome Middle School student who made the All-State and District Band. Mr. Wood reported that on December 1, 2007, Daniel Hester, a 7th grader at Rome Middle School, auditioned for All-State and District Honor Band. This was the first of two auditions needed to make the All-State Band and also the only audition for District Honor Band. Daniel not only made District Honor Band, but also scored high enough to be recommended to audition at the state level. On January 19th, Daniel traveled to Perry, Georgia for the final (state-wide) audition for All-State.

On February 28-March 1, Daniel will participate with the All-State Band. There are about 100 students in each middle school and high school band from all over the state who will rehearse during that time and perform a concert on March 1st.

**Rome High Varsity Co-Ed Cheerleaders:** At Mrs. Sims's request, Mrs. Collins presented the Rome High varsity co-ed cheerleaders with Certificates of Recognition for their accomplishments. Mrs. Collins stated that recently, Rome High School's co-ed cheerleading squad won runner-up at the state competition. The competition was held on November 10, 2007 in Columbus, Georgia. The 2007 varsity co-ed squad placed first in every regular season competition in which they participated. This is the first Rome High Competition Squad to place at the state level. Mrs. Jamie Wallace, Associate Principal at Rome High, stood up and read the names of the coaches and students:

Coaches are Miranda Styles and Beth Faine  
Laura Barwick (Sr)—daughter of Russell and Loretta Barwick

Brittany Walters (Sr)–daughter of John and Tammy Walter  
 Ariel Bishop (Sr)–daughter of Wayne and Sheila Bishop  
 Amanda Moon (Sr)–daughter of Gene and Laura Moon  
 Chelsea Adams (Sr)–daughter of Curtis and Deena Adams  
 Ishmael & Emanuel Woods (Sr)–sons of Sylvia Woods  
 Corey Wright (Sr)–son of Michael Wright  
 Jessica Rousseau (Jr)–daughter of Lynn Rousseau  
 Sharon Hines (Jr)–daughter of Scott and Lisa Hines  
 Conor (Jr) & Cliff (So)Young–sons of Ross and Ellen Young  
 Jacob (Jr) & Erica (Fr) Dostie–son & daughter of Vince and Anna Dostie  
 Shanna Robinson (Jr)–daughter of Terry and Carlette Robinson  
 Callie Barwick (Jr)–daughter of Jeff and Susan Barwick  
 Cara Brooks (So)–daughter of Ricky & Nellie Brooks  
 Rachel Cross (So)–daughter of Carl and Marty Cross  
 Lauren Phillips (So)–daughter of Greg & Amy Phillips  
 Eryn Rampley (Fr)–daughter of Jerry and Kay Rampley  
 Michelle Castellanos (Fr)–daughter of Rosie Strickland

**Georgia Music Educators All-State Band 2008:** At Mrs. Sims’s request, Mr. Clark recognized a Rome High student for being named to the Georgia Music Educators All-State Band 2008. Mr. Clark reported that Logan Dugger, a senior at Rome High School, was recently named to the 2008 Georgia High School All-State Band. Not only was Logan named to this prestigious organization, he was recognized as the top tenor saxophone player in the entire state. The competition began in the fall at district level auditions, where students had to perform required scales and sight-read a piece of music they had never set their eyes on before. Those that passed the district level audition were then sent on to the final state level audition. At this audition the students were again required to sight-read even harder literature and additionally perform two prepared pieces that demonstrated their skills at the highest levels. Obviously, Logan was up to the task and took the top spot available. Logan will travel to Savannah to rehearse and perform a concert with the All-State Band later this month. Logan’s parents are Jim and Wanda Dugger.

**Fifth Month of Attendance:** Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the fifth month of school. He stated that Anna K. Davie Elementary School had the highest elementary school percentage of student attendance at 97.76 percent. It was also noted that Rome Middle School had 98.42 percent of student attendance for the fifth month of school and was the highest in the system. The highest percent of staff attendance was North Heights Elementary School at 98.81 percent.

**New and Returning Personnel:** On a Wood/Wilson motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's personnel recommendations:

Certified Re-employment 2008-2009:	
Certified Employment 2007-2008:	Jessica Allred/RHS
Certified Employment 2008-2009:	Brant Amerman/WE; Tracy Kight/RHS; Holly Amerman/RHS; Dana Pollard/WE; Kelli Johnson/RMS; and Pamela A. Williams/WE
Support Employment 2007-2008:	Jason Riordan/RHS

**Focus on Student Achievement – Southeast Elementary;** At Dr. Cooper’s request, Mr. Doug Long presented the Focus on Student Achievement for Southeast Elementary School. Accompanying Mr. Long from Southeast were: Darnell Williamson–Counselor; Sandy Kelley–Secretary; Becky Kemnitz–3rd grade; Anita Cole–Literacy Coach; Mellisa Graney–Literacy Coach; Veronica Cole–Speech; Brandie Poole–Special Ed. Self Contained; Jim Bowen–5th/6th grade; Stephanie Guyant–Math Coach; Brenda Boyd–Media Specialist; and Carol Maxey–Kindergarten.

To begin his presentation, Mr. Long reviewed the results of Southeast’s CRCT scores and identified the grade levels of which he was especially proud and the areas that need additional work. He was particularly happy with the third grade in reading and mathematics; they scored 90.3% and 91.3% meeting and exceeding respectively. The fifth grade also performed well with an 83.3% in reading and 95.8% in mathematics meeting or exceeding the standards.

Mr. Long reported that the Special Education teachers performed very well and their efforts helped the school earn Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status. Mr. Long discussed the strategies that are currently employed at Southeast which will improve their level of success. They employ DIBELS to progress monitor their students and develop teaching strategies focused on weaknesses observed. They are increasing phonological awareness and working with Oral Reading Fluency. Mr. Long feels that departmentalization in grades 3-6 will provide more focused instruction for the students from teachers who are specialized in certain subject matter.

They are using Math Compacting in which students are given a pre-test before a lesson and grouped according to ability. It is believed that in this way, students can be taught in a more focused way, directed to their areas of weakness.

In conclusion, Mr. Long stated that their goal of becoming a Georgia School of Excellence will be achieved through maintaining high expectations and standards with their students, teachers, and parents.

**Proposed 2008-2009 School Calendar:** On a Swann/Huffman motion, the Board unanimously approved, on First Reading, the proposed 2008-2009 School Calendar as presented by Dr. Cooper. Dr. Cooper reviewed the process that was used to collect suggestions and evaluate calendar proposals. He stated that the Superintendent's Advisory Committee was asked to serve as the Calendar Committee. The calendar proposal is the one chosen by the staffs from each of the schools. Dr. Cooper reported that the factors governing calendar proposals were: the first semester would be completed before winter break, and the state testing windows would be a priority. Dr. Cooper pointed out several elements of the proposed calendar: first day of school is August 1, 2008; fall break will generally coincide with Floyd County Schools calendar; spring break will precede the CRCT window; there will be an inclement weather make-up day on May 1, 2009; and the last day of school will be May 22, 2009. The proposed calendar can be reviewed by looking at Rome City Schools website beginning Monday, February 18th.

**Policy IHF (Graduation Policy) Amendments:** On a Wood/Clark motion, the Board unanimously approved, for First Reading, amendments to policy IHF (Graduation Requirements). Dr. Cooper, with the assistance of Mrs. Jamie Wallace, stated that the amendments are, in part, designed to keep the Rome Board of Education in line with the State Board of Education graduation requirements. The changes are also designed to maximize the opportunities offered with the new seven period day that the Board adopted for Rome High School beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. The amendments include:

- Adding a required unit for graduation to 23 units;
- Add an additional math and an additional science for the technical preparatory students;
- Create career "pathways" for technical students by "bridging" our high school technical courses with dual enrollment opportunities at Coosa Valley Technical College; and
- Provide additional opportunities for college prep and college prep advanced students to take advanced placement courses and/or other electives of their choice.

Dr. Cooper summarized the recommendation by saying that the goal of education in the Rome City Schools is to ensure that:

"All students graduating under the new graduation rule should be well prepared for the work place, technical college, or university setting."

**PowerSchool Parent Portal:** At Dr. Cooper's request, Mr. David Smith presented a demonstration on the PowerSchool Parent Portal (Grade Book). Mr. Smith, with the assistance of Dr. Phillips, walked the Board members through the various elements of the Parent Portal. They could see the classes their children were taking, the assignments and grades that they earned during the grading period, their attendance in each subject, and any teacher comments that the teacher may have made. Mr. Smith stated that the Parent Portal is available for parents of students in grades 7-12. The elementary component will be coming at a later date.

**SPLOST II Receipts:** Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST II revenues. He stated that the November '07 collections of \$408,326.43 were \$29,173.57 below projections for the month (\$437,500.00). Dr. Cooper reported that overall the SPLOST receipts are above projections.

**Special Education Recognition by State:** In Other Items: Dr. Cooper presented a system certificate to Dr. Dawn Kemp, Director of Special Education, honoring Rome City Schools for excellence in the education of students with disabilities by meeting state target for:

- students who meet or exceed achievement standards for Math
- students who meet or exceed achievement standards for reading/English language arts
- educating children in the least restrictive environment
- educating young children in the least restrictive environment

The certificate was signed by Marlene R. Bryar, Associate Superintendent for Innovative Instruction for the State of Georgia.

**Black History Month Activities:** At Dr. Cooper's request, Mrs. Debbie Downer, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, reported on activities taking place at the schools in honor of Black History Month. The list is much too long for this report but some of the activities she discussed include:

- The great uncle of a fourth grade student at East Central, Lt. Col. Charles Dryden, one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, will be coming to East Central to talk to the school about his experiences. He'll bring in artifacts and speak to small groups of students.
- At Elm Street, a teacher will dress as a significant African-American every day and discuss this person's contribution to Black History.
- Select Main Elementary students will be featured on WQTU-FM (102.3) or WGJK (1260) speaking on an African-American who made a difference in Rome, Georgia or the United States of America.
- Anna K. Davie Elementary will host an assembly on February 27 entitled "A Tribute to Maya Angelou" during which students will read and present the poetry of Maya Angelou.

**7-AAAA Basketball Tournament:** Dr. Cooper announced that the 7-AAAA Basketball Tournament would be hosted by Rome High School from February 12-16, 2008. Dr. Cooper stated that Rome Varsity Girls will play Friday at 4:00 p.m., and the Varsity Boys will play on Friday at 8:30 p.m.

**Calling on Congress: A Time for Results:** Mrs. Sims reported on a meeting she attended in Washington, D.C. She attended the National School Boards Association "Calling on Congress: A Time for Results". This was the 35th Annual Federal Relations Network Conference in Washington, D.C. which was held from February 3-5, 2008. Mrs. Sims reported on several hot topics that were discussed at the meeting: reauthorization of NCLB, adequate funding of educational initiatives, funding of IDEA, and impact and consequences of vouchers on public education.

In regard to NCLB, it seems that a reauthorization this year is not likely but perhaps it will be next year. Other related issues dealt with local control in regard to assessment of students with IEPs and ESOL issues. There was also some discussion about lowering the percentage of participation in test taking for AYP purposes.

Funding is always an important topic; control always seems to follow the dollars. The plan for funding was set at 40% participation, but currently it is at 13% with no hope of it rising close to the recommended level.

In regard to IDEA, there was discussion about how local schools should be evaluated based on local participation.

Finally, the topic of vouchers was mentioned and it seems that what was purported to be the purpose of vouchers is not what seems to be taking place. It is alleged that vouchers were designed to provide equal access to quality educational institutions. In reality, what seems to be taking place is, those with the greatest resources are the ones most benefiting from the voucher process.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.