

# Board O'Gram

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

**Fifth Month of Attendance:** Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the fifth month of school. He stated that Elm Street Elementary School had the highest elementary school percentage of student attendance at 97.20 percent. It was also noted that Rome High School had 95.43 percent of student attendance for the fifth month of school. The school with the highest percent of staff attendance was West End Elementary School at 97.08 percent.

**New Personnel:** On a Swann/Wilson motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's personnel recommendations: Certified Re-Employment 2009-2010.

On a Jones/Collins motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's personnel recommendations: Certified Employment 2009-2010: Anna D'Herde/WE; Danesha "Kaye" Rabel/RMS; Trevor Metzger/RMS; and Katherine Roberts/WE.

Support Employment 2008-2009: Anna Hobson-Sato/ES

**Focus on Student Achievement - West Central:** At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Janice Merritt presented the Focus on Student Achievement for West Central Elementary School. Accompanying Dr. Merritt were faculty members: Ruth Cipolla, Jenny Carpenter, Tish Fricks, and Anita Cole.

Dr. Merritt's presentation was entitled "...On the Road to Becoming a School of Excellence." She reminded the audience that West Central has earned the honor of being a Title I Distinguished School seven (7) years in a row, one of only two schools in the system that can boast the achievement.

The CRCT scores were then reviewed for each grade level. Dr. Merritt stated that the math scores in third and fifth grade help set the tone for their school improvement focus: mathematics instruction. Overall, the CRCT scores were good and they could celebrate the fact that of twenty-five areas, students improved in nineteen with some of the gains in double digit percentages!

Their math focus includes new and continued strategies which include Math Workshop (sixty minutes per day), Skills Instruction/Fact Fluency (forty-five minutes), and Cognitively Guided Instruction (fifteen minutes).

Dr. Merritt said that they have taken on the philosophy of "Doing Whatever it Takes" to make sure every child is successful.

- Redelivered system-wide RTI training model to school staff;
- Organized RTI Teams / Data Teams;
- Established the Problem Solving Process;
- Data Driven Decision Making/Identified all "At Risk" students;
- Set Academic and/or Behavioral Outcome Goals;
- Set-up DI (Differentiated Instruction) Groups based on results;
- Identified Research-Based Interventions for students;
- Secured additional staff members to assist with RTI Groups; and
- Established a data-management system for Progress Monitoring to analyze achievement and discipline data.

At West Central, teachers work hard and expect every child to perform, and they also celebrate success. The following is a list of ways they celebrate: Junior Leadership; Terrific Kids and Luncheons; Character Education Luncheon; Monthly Birthday Club; Reading Celebrations; Renaissance Program; Publishing Parties; A.R. Celebration; and Writer's Academy.

Dr. Merritt discussed the support groups that participate in the educational experience for the children at West Central. She proudly named them off and explained their valuable role in the lives of their children. Finally, Dr. Merritt laid out the plan for becoming a School of Excellence: Workshops; Encouragement; Standards Based Instruction; Teaching Every Child; Communication; Engaging Every Student; Networking; Teachers that Care; Rigorous Instruction; Assessment and Attendance; and Leaving NO Child Behind. Through the efforts of the students, parents, sponsors, teachers, and administration - West Central Elementary School is a School of Excellence.

**2010 Pre-K Program and Registration:** At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Randy Phillips presented on the Pre-K Program for the 2009-2010 school year. Dr. Phillips stated that the Pre-K Program in Rome City Schools is entering the twelfth year, the first students closing in on graduation! According to Dr. Phillips, there are eight (8) Pre-K programs in Rome City Schools: one at each elementary school except East Central and two (2) at West Central. Each class serves twenty students throughout the year.

Dr. Phillips stated that there are two approved ways in which students are selected for participation in the program: First Come - First Served and Lottery. In the past, Rome City Schools used the First Come - First Served approach, but because of logistical matters, this proved to be less than desirable. This year, Rome City Schools will use a lottery system. The points of the lottery system are:

- Parents will obtain enrollment packet from neighborhood school housing a Pre-K class between March 2, 2009 and March 13, 2009;
- Each parent must complete registration forms and provide a copy of birth certificate and proof of residency;
- Return completed packet to school;
- Packet contents verified by Pre-K Resource Coordinators, sealed, and numbered;
- Drawing held at school at designated time; and
- Parents notified by mail of status.

According to Dr. Phillips, the lottery drawings will be according to the following tier system: Tier 1 - residents within requested school district; Tier 2 - residents within the city limits; and Tier 3 - residents outside city limits. Dr. Phillips then presented the schedule of the lottery drawing:

- March 18 - West End at 9:00 a.m.  
Elm Street at 10:30 a.m.  
Main at 1:00 p.m.
- March 19 - West Central at 9:00 a.m.  
Southeast at 10:30 a.m.
- March 20 - North Heights at 9:00 a.m.  
Anna K. Davie at 10:30 a.m.

**First Reading of the 2009-2010 School Calendar:** On a Wood/Huffman motion, the Board unanimously approved, on First Reading, the proposed 2009-2010 School Calendar as presented by Dr. Cooper. Dr. Cooper briefly reviewed the process that was used to collect suggestions and evaluate calendar proposals. He stated that there were six (6) different proposals from which staff member were to make a selection. The key elements of the calendar on First Reading are: first day of school (August 3, 2009); Fall Break (October 6-9, 2009); Thanksgiving Holidays (November 25-27, 2009); end of first semester (December 17, 2009); Winter Holidays (December 21, 2009-January 1, 2010); Spring Holidays (March 22-28, 2010); and the last day of school (May 21, 2010). The proposed calendar can be reviewed by looking at Rome City School website.

**SPLOST II Receipts:** Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST II revenues. He stated that the November '08 collections of \$374,255.62 were \$63,244.38 below projections for the month (\$437,500.00). He further stated that overall the system has collected \$405,644.49 above the projected amount. Dr. Cooper briefly reviewed the project that is being prepared for Rome High School; a twelve classroom addition. This structure will hold two (2) science labs, a cosmetology lab, and nine (9) regular classrooms. The structure should be ready for occupancy by January 2010.

**State Health Insurance Premiums:** On a Huffman/Wilson motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's recommendation to cease paying a portion of the employee's health insurance premium beginning January 1, 2010. The Board of Education has been paying \$18.00 per month on each employee's health insurance premium in addition to the required contribution rate set in law. This step, while having a small impact on the individual employee, will save the system more than \$11,000.00 per month, thus saving the equivalent of nearly two and one-half teaching positions over a period of a year.

**Black History Day Activities:** At Dr. Cooper's request, Mrs. Debbie Downer reported on school activities in celebration of Black History Month. Below is just a sampling of the activities that the schools will participate in during the month:

- Students at Main Elementary prepared radio announcements to highlight prominent African-Americans in history which are being featured on WQTU-FM (102.3) or WGJK (1260).
- Each morning, students at Southeast Elementary enjoy breakfast and a Black History presentation.
- Fourth grade students at East Central watched the historic inauguration of Barack Obama as President, and the Kindergarten classes participated in a writing activity entitled, "If I were President..."
- *Remembering the Past, Embracing the Present and Looking Toward the Future*, a skit by the student leadership team of Southeast Elementary, will be presented on February 23, 2009 at 9:00 a.m.
- At Anna K. Davie, each class will make a presentation at the Black History Assembly on February 20, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.
- At Rome High School, students will complete history projects for National History Day. Many of these projects will feature black history themes. The projects will be on display in Rome High School gym on February 24, 2009.

**Dr. Cooper announced several activities:**

- Rome High School Swim Team will participate in the Georgia State Swim Meet at Westminster during the weekend of February 14, 2009.
- Rome High School will host the Region 7-AAAA Basketball Tournament beginning February 14, 2009.
- The Rome Board of Education will convene its annual Board Retreat on February 20-21, 2009 at Red Top Mountain.

**NSBA Report:** Mrs. Sims reported on her participation in the NSBA Annual Federal Relations Network Conference she recently attended in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Sims stated that there seemed to be “an air of expectancy” under the new leadership of President Obama. Issues that Mrs. Sims reported that were discussed include:

- Fully funding NCLB and IDEA reauthorization;
- Medicaid Reimbursement;
- Teacher Quality;
- Regional Support (RESAs);
- Early Childhood Education; and
- Voucher Systems

In conclusion, Mrs. Sims also reported on Georgia Senate Bill 84. She said that this is the bill governing school board member training, ethics, role, qualifications and local requirements. One of the many things we can be proud of in Rome City Schools is the Rome Board of Education conducts its business in a professional and ethical manner and how well we work together as a team.

**Other Board Actions:**

On a Collins/Wood motion, the Board unanimously approved the minutes for the January 13, 2008, regular Board meeting, financial, and other reports.

On a Swann/Wood motion, the Board unanimously adopted, on Second Reading, Dr. Cooper’s recommendation to amend Board Policy IHF (Graduation Requirements).