

# Board O'Gram

Vol. 32  
No. 8  
March 13, 2007

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

**National Merit Finalists:** Mr. Clark recognized the National Merit Finalists by presenting them a certificate: Hope Fillingim and Liang Hou. Mr. Clark reported that each year about 1.4 million students in high school, no later than the third year take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Of the 1.4 million entrants, some 50,000 with highest scores qualify for recognition in the National Merit Scholarship Program.

In September, the high scorers are notified through their schools that they have qualified as either a Commended Student or Semifinalist. Two-thirds (34,000) of the qualifiers received a Letter of Commendation in recognition of their outstanding academic promise.

The remaining qualifying students (16,000) are notified that they have qualified as Semifinalists. In February, another selection is made and about 15,000 students are notified that they have qualified as Finalists - that is roughly 300 per state.

Beginning in March, the Finalists will be notified of any awards that they may have earned: National Merit \$2,500 Scholarships; Corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards; or College-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards. There are a total of 8,200 scholarships to be awarded to the National Merit Finalists.

Rome High School has two students who have progressed to the Finalists level and are awaiting notification of any additional awards: Hope Fillingim and Liang Hou.

**All State Reading Chorus:** Mr. Wood recognized the Rome High School students selected for the first annual All State Reading Chorus, sponsored by the Georgia Music Educators Association: Rebekah Detweiler and Allison Hamley.

In order to be selected for this ensemble, the students had to pass a rigorous audition this past November. During the audition, the students were judged on their ability to accurately sight-read five lines of challenging music which they had never seen before. Only 100 students from the state of Georgia were selected for this honor.

The All-State Reading Chorus event took place January 25-27 in Savannah, GA. During this three-day period, all the students who were selected for the chorus rehearsed for with Dr. Jo-Michael Scheibe, a guest conductor from the University of Miami. The students sight-read more than sixty pieces of music during the rehearsal and performed six of the pieces during the concluding concert on January 27th. Rebekah Detweiler and Allison Hamley are both members of the Rome High School Chorus under the direction of Jennifer Williams.

**Anthology of Poetry by Young Americans:** Mr. Wood then recognized the high school student who had a poem published in the Anthology of Poetry by Young Americans®: Brittany Worthy. Mr. Wood reported that the Anthology of Poetry, Inc. recognizes the best poems and short stories from nationally submitted works. This year's publication is the 16th edition of the anthology. The program guidelines state that all types of poetry are acceptable, poems must be handwritten or typed, there can be only one poem from a poet, and submissions must be postmarked by November 30th of each year.

Criteria for selection include age of poet, originality, rhythmic sounds, rhymes, audience appeal, and the author's involvement in the subject matter. According to the company's website, only about half of the submissions are selected for the annual publication.

This year, Brittany Worthy, a Rome High School freshman, submitted a poem entitled, "Sadness Tree," which dealt with events like Hurricane Katrina, the war in Iraq, and the courage of the people facing them. Her work was recently selected to be included in the 16th edition of the Anthology of Poetry by Young Americans®.

**STAR Student and STAR Teacher:** Mrs. Collins recognized the STAR Student and STAR Teacher. Liang Hou, a high school senior, has been named 2007 PAGE STAR Student for Rome High School. The announcement was made recently by the Rome City Chamber of Commerce, local sponsor of the Rome STAR program. Liang Hou selected Ms. Dawn Faulkner, Literacy teacher at Rome High School as his STAR teacher.

The PAGE Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) program, in its 49th year, is sponsored by the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) Foundation, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Department of Education. Since its inception, the STAR program has honored more than 20,000 students and teachers they have selected as having had the most influence on their academic achievement. Students are selected on the basis of their SAT scores and class standing/scholastic averages.

**Sixth Month Attendance:** Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the sixth month of school. He stated that West End Elementary School had the highest percentage of student attendance at 96.84 percent. It was also noted that Rome Middle School had 95.06 percent of student attendance for the sixth month of school. The highest percent of staff attendance was North Heights Elementary School at 98.26 percent.

**New Personnel:** On a Collins/Clark motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's recommendations for Certified (New to RCS) for 2007-2008: Jim Bowen / SE; Ashley Clark / RHS; Stephanie Davis / WE; Misti Jordan / SE; Krisztina Kilpatrick / TBA; Sara Ledford / WE; Gentry Manners / RHS; Brandie Poole / SE; Robin Segrest / MN; and Tina Self / EC

On a Clark/Collins motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's recommendations for Certified (re-employment) for 2007-2008.

**Focus on Student Achievement - Southeast Elementary:** At Dr. Cooper's request, Mr. Doug Long presented the Focus on Student Achievement for Southeast Elementary School. After introducing Becky Kemnitz, Carol Maxey, and Stephanie Guyant, three Southeast teachers, Mr. Long reminded the Board that Southeast Elementary School is a 2006 Title I Distinguished School.

Mr. Long reviewed the 2005-2006 CRCT scores in Reading and Mathematics. He pointed out that there was little change longitudinally in the early grades but that there was some positive growth laterally, particularly in the second grade. In the 4th and 5th grades he showed a growth from 33 percent to 74 percent in mathematics scores. Conversely, he showed a fall from 65 percent to 25 percent between the fifth and sixth grade in mathematics.

Based on the test results, Southeast has identified several concerns that they plan to work on:

1. Five of six grades scored below system and/or state standard in Reading;
2. Four of six grades scored below system and/or state standard in Math;
3. Providing additional interventions for the 52 (27%) of students scoring in level 1 on the CRCT.

Efforts that Southeast is making to improve student learning include the items that Mr. Long calls, "The Tools in Our Tool Chest:" Writers' Workshop; Reader's Workshop; Math Workshop; Direct Instruction; Phonemic Awareness; and the After-School Tutorial Program. He also mentioned the collaboration efforts at Southeast: Leadership Team, common planning, weekly teacher meetings with Academic Coaches, and weekly faculty meetings.

In conclusion, Mr. Long mentioned Southeast Elementary School's P.A.W.S. program. "P" is for **P**ositive attitude, "A" is for **A**lways being respectful, "W" is for being a **W**illing learner, and "S" is for being **R**eSponsible. The faculty and staff at Southeast Elementary School are working toward their shared vision of being a School of Excellence.

**2007 Teacher Recruitment Plan:** At Dr. Cooper's request, Ms. Pam Hamilton presented on this year's Teacher Recruitment Plan. Ms. Hamilton began her presentation by discussing the purpose of recruitment: "To create a large and diverse highly qualified pool of educator candidates from which to select."

As Personnel Director, Ms. Hamilton, stated that there are several factors or obstacles to overcome when fully staffing a school system with highly qualified teachers. Some of the factors she discussed were the rising number of retirees in GA and the US, the declining number of graduates from teacher-training colleges, the declining number of minority candidates in all subject fields, the reduced class sizes (i.e.) state and federal mandates, the critical shortage areas (math, science, special ed, foreign languages), and fierce competition among school districts to hire very quickly.

Several of the solutions to the hiring challenges include participating in on-site recruitment with emphasis on larger metro job fairs as opposed to individual colleges and universities, expanding web-based access and processing of information and applications, increasing the use of web-based advertising (target colleges and resume sites), increasing the use of existing personnel for outreach to district graduates and in-service teachers, cultivating partnerships with colleges within geographical range of school system, utilizing statewide or national recruiting ads in publications and newspapers, develop earlier contract renewal processing, and maintaining competitive salary, benefits, and a positive working environment for teachers.

Ms. Hamilton reviewed the On-Site Recruitment Activities for 2007 and the locations that have been selected: Jacksonville State University (AL); Kennesaw State University (GA); University of Georgia (GA); Metro Atlanta Job Fair (National); West Georgia University (GA); Berry College (GA); Shorter College (GA); and Auburn University (AL). The pool of recruiters that are used for recruiting sessions include (in no particular order): Ms. Huggins, Ms. Murphy, Ms. Hamilton, Dr. Merritt, Dr. Kemp, Ms. Vaughn, Mr. Long, Dr. Phillips, Dr. Evans, and Mr. Costley.

Hiring and keeping successful, dedicated, highly qualified teachers takes a deliberate strategy. Rome City Schools have remained successful because Rome City Schools have a process for hiring the best teachers for our students.

**2007-2008 Board Goals:** On a Wood/Clark motion, the Board members present unanimously agreed to place the 2007-2008 Board Goals on First Reading. The proposed goals include:

1. Continue to support the instruction of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in Grades K, 1, 2, and 7 Math and Grades 3, 4, and 5 Science in grades/subject areas that have been fully implemented.
2. Fully implement the new Georgia Performance Standards in Grades 3, 4, 5, and 8 Math; Grades K, 1, 2, and 8 Science; and Grades 6-12 Social Studies.

3. Train K-5 teachers on the Georgia Performance Standards for Social Studies and train high school teachers/administrators on the Georgia Performance Standards for Math I.
4. Continue implementation of Writing and Math Workshops at all elementary schools for students in Grades K-6
5. Conduct system-wide training in the effective teaching of reading at all elementary schools in Grades K-6 through services and support of consultants and system literacy coaches.
6. Provide a math support class and a literacy focused study skills class as required electives for 9th grade students struggling in math and reading.
7. Continue to focus on student achievement at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and improve test scores in all subject areas.
8. Renovate East Central Elementary School and West Central Elementary School during the summer of 2007. Construct a six classroom addition at West Central Elementary School prior to January 2008.

**SPLOST II Report:** Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST II revenues. He stated that the December '06 collections of \$506,265.55 were \$68,765.55 above projections for the month (\$437,500.00). Dr. Cooper stated that the overall collections are still well above the anticipated amount by \$122,052.46.

**2007-2008 School Calendar:** On a Collins/Clark motion, the Board adopted, on Second Reading, the 2007-2008 School Calendar as presented by Dr. Cooper. Rome City Schools [2007-2008 School Calendar](#) is posted on Rome City Schools website.

**Other Board Actions and Announcements:**

- On a Collins/Clark motion, the Board members present unanimously approved placing an amendment to Board Policy IHF, that was under “First Reading” from last month, on First Reading. The amendment to IHF can be viewed through the Rome City Schools website by first going to “Board of Education”, then to “Board Policies”, and finally to “IHF - Graduation Requirements.”
- On a Wood/Clark motion, the Board members present unanimously adopted on Second Reading amendments to Board Policy JBC (Transferring Credits). This policy can be viewed from the Rome City Schools website.
- Dr. Cooper reminded the Board, visitors, and media that the schools will be closed for Spring Holidays March 26-30, 2007.
- He also announced that the February 1st inclement weather day will be made up on Thursday, April 5, 2007; one of the two inclement weather makeup days that were placed on the [2006-2007 School Calendar](#).
- Dr. Cooper, in recognition of National School Board Awareness Week (March 12–16, 2007), thanked the Board members for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to the faculty, staff, parents, and youth of Rome City Schools.
- Mrs. Sims appointed Mrs. Collins to serve as Rome City Schools Delegate and Mr. Clark as Alternate to the 2007 GSBA Delegate Assembly in Savannah, Georgia on June 22, 2007.