

Board O'Gram

Vol. 33
No. 8
March 11, 2008

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

System Spelling Bee Winners: At Mrs. Sims request, Mr. Wood recognized Rome City Schools 2008 Spelling Bee winners. Mr. Wood congratulated this year's Rome City Spelling Bee Champion – Sydney Robinson of West End Elementary School. Sydney is the daughter of Michael and Adrienne Robinson. West End has captured the system title for the past two years. He also congratulated Dallas Daniels, the system runner-up, from Rome Middle School. Dallas is the son of Terry and Julie Daniels. Sydney recently represented Rome City Schools in the regional competition on February 23, 2008, at the Floyd County Board of Education. Mr. Wood stated that the winning competition video could be accessed via the RCS website. Mr. Wood then introduced Mr. Russ Wheeler, National Copier Exchange, and asked him to present prizes to the principals of the winners. National Copier Exchange has presented the system winner and runner-up with these prizes for nearly 20 years. The winner received a \$500.00 US Savings Bond and the runner-up received a gift coupon.

Berry Math League Winners: At Mrs. Sims request, Mr. Wilson recognized RMS students who successfully participated in the Berry Math League Competition. On Thursday, February 28, 2008, sixteen teams from the Northwest Georgia area competed in the Berry College Math League. The competition consists of three parts. The first is a 20 question written test. Next is a ten question ciphering contest where speed and accuracy both come in to play. The final portion involves total cooperation as each team works together to solve five questions. Rome Middle School's math team finished in second place just two questions out of first. There were over 90 individuals and our own Whitman Groves captured the honor of being the second highest individual scorer and Amber Broome finished in fifth place.

Sandye Ashley, Coach
Amber Broome Randal & Janice Broome
Peter Clay Marc & Michelle Clay
David Dickson David & Susan Dickson
Whitman Groves Tim Groves & Angie Cawa
Michael Nedvin Brian & Karin Nedvin
Phillip Spratling Kevin & Christine Spratling
Taylor Wilson Chris & Sabrina Wilson

Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl Winners: At Mrs. Sims request, Ms. Huffman recognized the East Central students who tied for second place in the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl. In their third year of competing in the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl, the East Central Elementary School team of readers tied for second place in Western Regional competition at the University of West Georgia in Carrolton on February 9, 2008. Only ten points, or one correct answer, separated first and second place. This year 13 teams competed in the Western Regional for a chance to go to the finals at the Children's Literature Conference at the University of Georgia. The Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl involves students from grades four to twelve in age-level competition. Helen Ruffin was the school library media specialist at Skyview Elementary in DeKalb County, Georgia. She used the Georgia Children's Book Award nominees to encourage students to read. In 2003, the competition went state-wide and expanded to include over 1,750 students in the regional finals.

The coaches for the East Central Team are Ann Christian, Challenge Teacher, Pam Russell, Media Specialist, and Parent Volunteer Juhaina Omrom Mansoura.

Team members are:

Ashley Alred, daughter of James and Tara Alred
Christopher Fincher, son of Susan Fincher

Jeremia Hayes, son of Aaron and Dawn Hayes
Alan Loveman, son of Alan and Gina Loveman
Maryam Mansoura, daughter of Ahed and Juhaina Omron Mansoura
Matthew Nedvin, son of Brian and Karin Nedvin

Attendance for Sixth Month: Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the sixth month of school. He stated that Elm Street Elementary School had the highest elementary school percentage of student attendance, 96.76 percent. It was also noted that Rome Middle School had 98.06 percent of student attendance for the sixth month of school. The highest percent of staff attendance was Rome High School, 96.57 percent.

New Personnel: On a Collins/Clark motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's personnel recommendations:

Certified Employment 2008-2009: James Booker/Greenwood; Kyla Mayo/NH; Teresa Flowers/WC; Brent Mobbs/EC; LaSaunda Forrister/WC ; Haley Pyle/EC; Elizabeth Green/ES; and Ashley Woody/WC

Support Employment 2007-2008: Jay Moore/RHS and Charles Whitener/Maintenance

West Central Focus on Student Achievement : At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Janice Merritt presented the Focus on Student Achievement for West Central Elementary School. Accompanying Dr. Merritt from West Central were: Nancy Elder – kindergarten teacher; Ruth Cipolla, upper grades literacy coach; Stace Marshall, K-2 literacy coach; Courtney A. Brock, fourth grade teacher; Jessica Bishop, second grade teacher; Sherry Richardson, math coach; Allison Skeen, second grade teacher; Jenny Carpenter, third grade teacher; Brittany Brewer, first grade teacher; Brandi Tripp, second grade teacher; and Phil Wood, assistant principal.

To begin her presentation, Dr. Merritt reviewed the results of West Central's CRCT scores and identified the grade levels of which she was especially proud and the areas that needed additional work. She reported that most of the scores showed an upward trend over the past several years. Although West Central has been a Title 1 Distinguished School for six (6) consecutive years and they are 16 percent above the state average in the required Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) in reading and English language arts (ELA) and 23 percent above the required AMO in mathematics, they are working hard to achieve their goal of 100 percent achievement level. They are striving to be recognized as a Georgia School of Excellence.

Dr. Merritt discussed strategies that they are using in the area of reading and writing instruction: Writer's Workshop in grades (K-6); Focus on Reading Fluency using Reader's Theatre in grades 3 – 5 in social studies; small group instruction; differentiated instruction; phonological awareness; Direct Instruction; Shurley English in grades 3 – 6; and after school tutorial three days a week. In math they are using Math Workshop in grades K – 6, Focus on Math Fluency by applying daily math fact practice, small group instruction using frameworks, investigations, and exemplars. They have had the benefit of an E-Math grant that provided staff development, smart boards, laptop computers, and classroom calculators.

An integral part of their plan is ongoing assessment. They plan to use OAS, BAMs, DIBELS, direct instruction, teacher-made assessment, and standardized assessment instrument batteries in their efforts to measure their student's needs. Once they have the assessment they will use a response to intervention strategy to bridge the gap. Dr. Merritt completed her presentation by sharing how they plan to celebrate students, parents, and community. She said that they are on the road to becoming a School of Excellence by using workshops, encouragement, standards, teaching, communication, engaging students, networking, teaching with care, rigorous instruction, assessment, attendance, and leaving no child behind.

2008 Teacher Recruitment Plan: At Dr. Cooper's request, Ms. Pamela Hamilton, Personnel Director, presented the 2008 Teacher Recruitment Plan. Ms. Hamilton stated that the purpose of a recruitment plan is to create a large, diverse, and highly qualified pool of candidates from which we can select to fill identified educator vacancies. Ms. Hamilton sited several obstacles that must be overcome in order to satisfy the system's need for a professional staff: rising number of retirees; increasing number of school-age children in Georgia; declining number of graduates from

“traditional” teacher preparation programs; decreasing number of qualified applicants in critical shortage areas and demographics; and mandated reduced-class size rules.

Some solutions that Ms. Hamilton discussed include alternative teacher preparation programs, creating job fairs that attract diverse population of candidates, expanding web-based access and communication, increasing partnerships with personnel in “teacher preparation” programs, issuing early contracts, and remaining competitive with local area school systems in regard to salary, benefits, and positive work environment.

Ms. Hamilton listed the recruitment fairs that administrators from the Rome City Schools would attend: Kennesaw State University, Berry College, Shorter College, Auburn University, Jacksonville State University, Spelman University, Atlanta University, Metro Atlanta, and University of West Georgia.

Through the efforts of the administrators and Human Resources Department, the best educators are attracted to apply to fill the vacancies in the Rome City Schools.

2008-09 Board Goals: On a Collins/Huffman motion, the board members present unanimously approved on first reading the 2008-09 Board Goals:

1. Continue to support the instruction of the Georgia Performance Standards in all grades/subject areas that have been fully implemented.
2. Continue to 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 II.
3. Continue implementation of Writing and Math Workshops in Grades K-8.
4. Conduct system-wide training in the effective teaching of reading in Grades K-8 through services and support of consultants and system literacy coaches.
5. Fully implement Math I support classes for ninth grade students requiring additional help for Math I class.
6. Continue to focus on student achievement at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and improve test scores in all subject areas.
7. Complete renovations at Anna K. Davie, North Heights, and Southeast Elementary Schools during the summer of 2008.
8. Improve reading performance in the primary grades so that 90% of students meet Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) grade level benchmark expectations on the following:
 - Kindergarten: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
 - First Grade: Nonsense Word Fluency
 - Second Grade: Oral Reading Fluency.
9. Expand the Bridge Program, a dual enrollment collaboration of Rome High School and Coosa Valley Technical College, for students that wish to pursue a technical college degree.
10. Implement a Response to Intervention Program (RTI) in Grades K-8.

SPLOST II Revenues: Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST II revenues. He stated that the November ‘07 collections of \$498,778.27 were \$61,278.27 above projections for the month (\$437,500.00). Dr. Cooper reported that overall the SPLOST receipts are above projections.

In Other Business: Dr. Cooper announced that Spring Break is scheduled for March 24 – 28, 2008. The Georgia High School Graduation Test is scheduled for March 17 – 21, 2008.

School Board Recognition Week: Dr. Cooper, in recognition of School Board Recognition Week, March 17 – 21, 2008, presented the board members with a certificate prepared by Georgia School Boards Association.

2008-09 School Calendar: On a Clark/Collins motion, the board members present unanimously approved, on second reading, the proposed 2008-2007 School Calendar as presented by Dr. Cooper. The approved 2008-09 School Calendar can be reviewed by looking at the Rome City School website.

Graduation Requirement Policy Amendments: On a Wood/Collins motion, the board members present unanimously adopted, on second reading, amendments to policy IHF (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 2008-09 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.

Mrs. Collins named GSBA Delegate: Mrs. Sims appointed Mrs. Collins as the Rome City Schools Delegate for the 2008 GSBA Delegate Assemble in Savannah, Georgia on June 20, 2008.