

Board O'Gram

Vol. 34
No. 7
March 10, 2009

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

Board Performance: Three Rome Middle School students, under the direction of Mr. Wade Williams, demonstrated the etude they performed at the 2009 All-State Middle School Band tryouts: Dylan Horne on clarinet; Daniel Hester on snare drum; and Jonathan Williams on a xylophone.

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Essay Contests: Mr. Wood recognized the winners of the DAR American History and Christopher Columbus Essay contests. Mr. Wood stated that the local Xavier Chapter of DAR sponsored a writing contest for all Floyd County and Rome City public and private school students in grades five through twelve this past fall.

Students in grades five through eight were asked to write an essay on the topic - "What message did the Gettysburg Address communicate to our war-torn nation in 1863? How are the ideals articulated in the speech still relevant for our country today?" Students in grades nine through twelve were to submit an essay focused on Christopher Columbus, with the topic this year: "Discuss five perils faced by Christopher Columbus' expedition(s) and how Columbus and his crew overcame them."

The Rome City School District was very well represented in each DAR category. The Xavier Chapter winners of the American History Essay Contest are:

Fifth Grade Winners representing West End

- Sarah Franklin, daughter of James Franklin and Lendy Collins
- Runner-up: Matthew Detweiler, son of Mark and Regina Detweiler

Sixth Grade Winner representing West End

- Briana Stevenson, daughter of Ms. Dwayne Stevenson
- Runner-up: Evan Mather, son of Douglas and Lori Mather

Rome Middle School Eighth Grade Winner

- Adrian Scheppe, son of Adrian and LaDonna Scheppe

Rome High School Twelfth Grade Winner of the Christopher Columbus Essay

- Coltan Palmer, son of Greg and Marka Palmer

Mr. Wood reported that Coltan Palmer not only won the Xavier Chapter Essay Contest for ninth through twelfth grade students, but he has gone on to win the District level and state level competition where he placed first of all essays in the state of Georgia. He will be recognized at the Georgia State DAR Conference Luncheon in Atlanta on March 28, 2009.

DAR History Teacher of the Year: Dr. Jones recognized the DAR Georgia History Teacher of the Year. He reported that this past January, Rome High Principal, Dr. Tygar Evans, received word that Andy Blackburn, social studies teacher at Rome High School, was named the DAR Georgia History Teacher of the Year. He was selected by the local Xavier Chapter of the DAR to be their representative at the state level competition. He will be recognized as the best history teacher in Georgia in late March at the Georgia DAR Convention in Atlanta. Mr. Blackburn has been the Rome City Schools Teacher of the Year twice (1987 and 2000). He has also been named STAR Teacher three times. His application will now be sent on to National level competition where we expect him to rise quickly to the top!!

2009 Spelling Bee: Mr. Wilson recognized Rome City Schools 2009 Spelling Bee winners. Mr. Wilson congratulated this year's Rome City Spelling Bee Champion - Mike Castellanos of Rome Middle School. Mike is the son of Rosie Strickland.

Mr. Wilson also congratulated Malik Slaton, our system runner-up, from North Heights Elementary School. Malik is the son of Cecilia Slaton. Mike recently represented Rome City Schools in the competition on February 28, 2009 at the Floyd County Board of Education for the regional competition.

Mr. Wilson expressed thanks to all principals for their support and encouragement of the young people who participated in Rome City Schools 2009 Spelling Bee. He said, "You should be very proud of your schools' winners, as they did a wonderful job representing your school/system and themselves. Please also pass on my thanks to your Spelling Bee Coaches. Their hard work in preparing these students was very obvious by the performance of these young people today."

Mr. Wilson introduced Mr. Russ Wheeler, National Copier Exchange, to come up and present prizes to this year's winners. National Copier Exchange has presented the system winner and runner up with these prizes for twenty-two years. The Board expressed thanks to Mr. Wheeler and National Copier Exchange for their dedication and support to the students of Rome City Schools.

Math Counts Competition: Mr. Swann recognized the Rome Middle School Math Team for their accomplishments at the Math Counts Competition. On February 6, 2009, the four member Rome Middle School Mathematics team confronted students from the Northwest Georgia area to compete in the Math Counts Competition. He stated that the competition is a very rigorous, four part competition that included individual and team participation. When the dust settled the Rome Middle School Math team finished in second place. Stephen McConkey finished second place in the individual competition and Juhi Varshney finished in third. Juhi won first place for Rome Middle School in the Countdown Round.

The Math Counts Team was under the leadership of Sandye Ashley. The participating students were:

Stephen McConkey, son of Dale and Ingrid McConkey
Juhi Varshney, daughter of Upkar and Smita Varshney
Phillip Spratling, son of Kevin and Christine Spratling
Theresa Stevens, daughter of Charles and Stephanie Stevens

2009 District 7 All-District Band: Ms. Huffman recognized the students named to the 2009 District 7 All-District Band. She reported that each year hundreds of band students from across Northwest Georgia compete individually for the opportunity to be selected to perform with the District 7 Middle School Honor Band. The District 7 region includes systems from as far south as Paulding County and Carrollton and as far north as the Tennessee line and east to Murray County. Students must prepare scales, prepared etudes, and sight-read pieces of music they have never seen and perform in front of a panel of judges. Only the most talented musicians on each instrument are selected to join this group.

Rome Middle School eighth grade students selected to participate in this year's 2009 All-District Honor Band include:

Dylan Horne, son of Alan and Mayumi Horne, on clarinet
Daniel Hester, son of Mark and Donna Hester, on percussion
Jonathan Williams, son of Wade and Wendy Williams, on percussion
Diana Romo, daughter of Eleazar and Zenadia Romo, on flute
Beth Bratton, daughter of Randy and Kay Bratton, on flute
Zoe Gardner, daughter of Curtis and Robin Gardner, on trumpet
Patrick Tarrant, son of Fred and Melissa Tarrant, on French horn
Andrew Jones, son of Kyle and Donna Jones, on bass clarinet

2009 Georgia All-State Middle School Band: Mr. Wilson recognized the students who were named to the 2009 Georgia All-State Middle School Band. He reported that three eighth grade Rome Middle School students have accomplished the most difficult feat possible for band students across the state of Georgia. The students were named to the prestigious Georgia All-State Middle School Band. Thousands of students participate in a series of auditions that include preparation of scales, rudiments, prepared solo etudes, and sight-reading resulting in only the best of the best being selected to perform in Savannah this past weekend with the All-State Band.

He stated that the Board is proud to announce that the following students were selected this year to receive this very high honor:

Dylan Horne, son of Alan and Mayumi Horne, on clarinet
Daniel Hester, son of Mark and Donna Hester, on percussion
Jonathan Williams, son of Wade and Wendy Williams, also on percussion

Mr. Wilson stated that in order to really understand the significance of this feat for these three young men, one must consider the fact that literally thousands of students auditioned. Dylan is actually one of only thirty-two clarinets chosen from the entire state. Jonathan and Daniel are two of the top twelve percussionists in the state. Daniel actually made the All-State Band last year as a seventh grader. We are very proud of these young people and have very high expectations for their musical future here in Rome City Schools Band Program.

State Wrestling Champion: Mr. Wood recognized two students from Rome High who earned the title of "State Wrestling Champion" in their weight class: Conor Young, son of Ross and Ellen Young; and Immanuel Kerr-Brown, son of Javier Enriquez and Amanda Kerr.

Mr. Wood said that this year Rome High Wrestling had the first wrestling state champion in school history. Rome High Wrestling produced not one, but two state champions this year. Only two other AAAA schools brought home two champions this year. As a team, Rome Wrestling managed a top ten finish for the first time in school history finishing ninth out of eighty teams. Rome Wrestling also achieved another first this year by finishing second in region 7-AAAA and qualifying for the state dual tournament in Macon defeating three top fifteen teams to qualify. Only the top two teams in each region qualify for this event.

He reported that none of this could have been accomplished without Conor Young and Immanuel Kerr-Brown. Both are Scholar Athletes and take honors classes, as well as being State Champions in wrestling. Mr. Wood stated that Conor is a senior and a four sport letterman in football, co-ed cheerleading, wrestling, and soccer. As a sophomore, Conor qualified for

the state tournament and went 2-2 there and ended the season with a record of 33-12. In his junior year, Conor placed third in State, and had a season record of 41-9. In his senior year, all his hard work and dedication paid off as he became the first state wrestling champion at Rome High and finished with a season record of 37-3. He has a career record of 112-25 with over fifty pins.

Mr. Wood reported that the glory of being Rome High's first and only state champion was short lived as Immanuel Kerr-Brown became the second less than an hour later. Immanuel is a junior at Rome High and has focused on wrestling in his athletic career. As a freshman, Immanuel ended the season as the team's Most Valuable Player with a record of 38-9. He was set back by off season surgery his sophomore year and was able to wrestle only a few matches ending with a record of 12-5. Immanuel came back his junior year with an impressive record of 49-3. He avenged two of his three losses in the state tournament en route to a 6-4 victory. Immanuel already has over fifty-five career pins.

Mr. Wood said that both Conor and Immanuel have goals of wrestling in college.

Student Attendance: 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 at 97.74 percent. It was also noted that Rome Middle School had 94.74 percent of student attendance for the sixth month of school. The highest percent of staff attendance was West End Elementary School at 97.05 percent.

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

Certified Employment 2009-2010: Sandra Crow/RHS

Support Employment 2008-2009: Phillip Smith/Maintenance

Transfer Employment 2009-2010:

Mr. Kelvin Portis from Elm Street Elementary/Assistant Principal to Anna K. Davie/Principal.

Focus on Student Achievement - West End: At Dr. Cooper's request, Mrs. Buffi Murphy presented the Focus on Student Achievement for West End Elementary School. Accompanying Mrs. Murphy were faculty members: Mrs. Kinga Rowell, Mrs. Linda Gentry, Mr. Jonathan Weaver, Mr. Henry Pollitz, Mrs. Cassie Parson, Mrs. Wendy Edlekind, and Mrs. Vanessa Walker. Also attending the meeting on West End's behalf were parents and students: Mrs. Lori Mather, Evan Mather, Mr. Steven Rush, Jack Rush, Mr. Wayne Rush, Mrs. Jeanettia Rush, Mrs. Regina Detweiler, Mr. Mark Detweiler, Matthew Detweiler, and Rhessa Detweiler.

The title of Mrs. Murphy's PowerPoint presentation was: "West End: Exceeding Standards Is Our Expectation!" Mrs. Murphy began her presentation by reviewing their 2008 CRCT results. In grades one, two, and five, the students scored above 90% in both reading and mathematics. They scored near 90% or above in reading in all grade levels. Their math scores in third, fourth and sixth grades were above the state and local averages. Mrs. Murphy reported that they have been working to provide interventions with the students who had difficulties in the areas of reading and mathematics.

Mrs. Murphy reported that they have decided to incorporate writing across the curriculum and encourage students to write and think in the content areas. West End had adopted the following principles:

- Writing in the content areas is not a separate, optional activity; it is integral to the thinking process in science, social studies, and math.
- In real life, writing for scientists, historians, and mathematicians is much more than data collection; it is exploring, revising, and thinking on paper.
- "Writing is the most disciplined form of thinking," according to Donald Murray.

Several student writing samples were demonstrated for the Board, and one of the students from West End was in the audience. Mrs. Murphy stated that the students are instructed to "think before you write". "Good writing communicates meaning about content that matters." (Joanna Hawkins)

Evidence of West End's success is shown by the fact that they had grade-level and first runner-up winners from fifth and sixth grade in the DAR American History Essay Contest.

Mrs. Murphy stated that the support from the community and parents is second to none. It is through their efforts that West End is the school that it is today. Mrs. Murphy then gave an invitation to the Board and audience to attend their annual West End Kindergarten Circus on April 23, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., at the City Auditorium.

Concluding her presentation she read a Dr. Seuss quote:

*The more that you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go.*

Mission Statement and 2009-2010 Board Goals: On a Jones/Collins motion, the Board unanimously approved, on First Reading, the Mission Statement and 2009-2010 Board Goals:

ROME BOARD OF EDUCATION

OUR MISSION

All students will graduate from Rome High School prepared for college or work.

GOALS 2009-2010

1. Increase the high school graduation rate.
2. Continue to support the instruction of the Georgia Performance Standards in all grades/subject areas that have been fully implemented.
3. Continue to focus on student achievement at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and improve test scores in all subject areas.
4. Continue implementation of Writing and Math Workshops in Grades K-8.
5. Conduct system-wide training in the effective teaching of reading comprehension in Grades K-8 through services and support of consultants and system literacy coaches.
6. Continue to train high school teachers/administrators on the Georgia Performance Standards for Math I and Math II.
7. Construct a twelve classroom building at Rome High School to include a cosmetology lab, two science labs, and nine classrooms.
8. Continue to improve reading performance in the primary grades such 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, by offering a public safety curriculum to include emergency medical services (EMS), fire, and law enforcement.
10. Implement a Response to Intervention (RTI) Program in Grades K-12.
11. Improve student achievement in K-8 mathematics by implementing a system-wide math assessment tool and instructional interventions.

SPLOST II Receipts: Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST II revenues. He stated that the December '08 collections of \$543,640.44 were \$106,140.44 above projections for the month (\$437,500.00). He further stated that overall the system has collected \$511,784.93 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 science labs, a cosmetology lab, and nine regular classrooms. The structure should be ready for occupancy by January 2010.

Other Superintendent Announcements:

- Under Other Items, Dr. Cooper announced several activities:
- Rome City Schools Spring Break is scheduled for March 23-27, 2009.
- Rome High School will host the annual Night of Dreams on Saturday, April 4, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at The Forum. Rome Middle School and High School Jazz Bands will perform at this semi-formal event. There will be a sit-down dinner and silent auction and raffle.

Board Member Recognition Week: Dr. Cooper presented each Board member with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of School Board Member Recognition Week, March 9-13, 2009.

2009-2010 School Calendar: On a Huffman/Wood/Huffman motion, the Board unanimously adopted, on Second Reading, the 2009-2010 School Calendar as presented by Dr. Cooper. He briefly reviewed the process that was used to collect suggestions and evaluate calendar proposals. He stated that there were six different proposals from which staff members were to make a selection. The key elements of the calendar on First Reading were: 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 calendar can be reviewed by looking at the Rome City Schools website.

Other Board Actions:

- On a Collins/Swann motion, the Board unanimously approved the minutes for the February 10, 2009, regular Board meeting, financial, and other reports.
- Mrs. Sims appointed Mrs. Collins as the Rome City Schools Delegate for the 2009 GSBA Delegate Assembly in Savannah, Georgia on June 12, 2009.