

Board O'Gram

Vol. 33
No. 5
Dec. 11, 2007

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

Choral Presentation: Two (2) Rome Middle School students, Jerica Maisonet, and Michael Nedvin, at the direction of RMS choral director, Susan Campbell, sang a holiday season choral piece. Then ten (10) Rome High School students, lead by RHS choral director, Ms. Jennifer Williams, sang two (2) holiday season pieces: Stephanie Bischof, Jacob Bowman, Hannah Campbell, Rebekah Detweiler, Sarah Godfrey, Caleb Lewis, Chani Masionet, Katie Price, Andrew Smathers, and Ellen Stolte.

All-State Chorus Honors: Mr. Wood, with the assistance of Ms. Huffman, presented achievement certificates to students for All-State Chorus honors. They reported that the Rome Middle School and Rome High School Choral Departments announced that twelve students from Rome City Schools were recently selected for the 2008 Georgia Music Educators All-State Chorus.

Rome Middle School proudly had two (2) students selected this year for All-State Chorus. Jerica Maisonet, an eighth grader at RMS has been a part of the RMS Chorus for two years. She is an outstanding student and musician. She was recently selected along with her sisters to sing in a benefit concert in Atlanta with Patti LaBelle. She is the daughter of Eduardo and Tammie Maisonet. Michael Nedvin is also an eighth grader at RMS and has been in the chorus for two years. Michael is an outstanding choral student and is the son of Brian and Karin Nedvin. These students are under the direction of Susan Campbell, the choral director at RMS. Further they reported that ten (10) members of the Rome High School Chorus were selected for the 2008 Georgia All-State Chorus. The RHS chorus students selected were: Stephanie Bischof, daughter of Betty Bischof, Jacob Bowman, son of Timothy and Suzanne Bowman, Hannah Campbell, daughter of David and Susan Campbell, Rebekah Detweiler, daughter of Mark and Regina Detweiler, Sarah Godfrey, daughter of Lance and Lynette Godfrey, Caleb Lewis, son of Bobby and Beth Lewis, Chani Maisonet, daughter of Eduardo and Tammie Maisonet, Katie Price, daughter of Danny and Tammi Price, Andrew Smathers, son of Jeff and Patricia Smathers, and Ellen Stolte, daughter of William and Mary Stolte. Hannah Campbell has made All-State Chorus for three consecutive years. Stephanie Bischof, Chani Maisonet, Caleb Lewis, Katie Price, and Ellen Stolte have made All-State Chorus for two consecutive years. The RHS chorus students are under the direction of Jennifer Williams.

Being selected for All-State Chorus is a prestigious honor, as only 11% of all students who audition are selected. To be selected, students must pass a challenging audition process, which includes singing several scales, performing a solo, completing tonal memory examples, and sight-reading three lines of music. All chorus students who made the 2008 Georgia All-State Chorus will meet in Savannah, GA on Feb. 21-23 for several intensive rehearsals with world-renown clinicians and a concluding concert.

All-State Reading Choral Competition: Mr. Wilson presented recognition certificates to students for honors in the All-State Reading Choral competition. RHS students selected were Rebekah Detweiler, daughter of Mark and Regina Detweiler, Sarah Godfrey, daughter of Lance and Lynette Godfrey, and Caleb Lewis, son of Charles and Lizabeth Lewis. Additionally, Caleb Lewis received the best score in our entire district! Sarah's and Rebekah's scores were also very good and were among the top scores in our district as well. The All-State Reading Chorus was established last year, in addition to the regular All-State Chorus, to showcase students with exceptional sight-reading skills. The All-State Reading Chorus audition is even more challenging than the regular All-State Chorus audition, and only 95 students from GA were selected for the All-State Reading Chorus this year. Rebekah, Sarah, and Caleb are also among the ten RHS students who made the regular All-State Chorus.

One-Act Play Competition: Mr. Swann presented a certificate of recognition for achievements in the One-Act Play competition. Mr. Swann reported that the RHS Drama Department took "Sylvia" to the One-Act Competition on November 9 of this year. While RHS did not win, the students gave some great performances. The lead actor, Winnie Wright, who played the title role, was chosen as part of the All Star Cast for the Region. Winnie had the difficult role of playing Sylvia, a dog that Greg brings home during his mid-life crisis. Sylvia is a dog, but seen through Greg's eyes is humanized. Winnie did an excellent job of playing this comedic and dramatic role, blending

in enough dog traits to remind us she *was* a dog, while also making Sylvia a character that the audience could sympathize with and cheer for. Winnie is the daughter of Sam and Susan Wright.

Attendance for the Fourth Month: Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the fourth month of school. He stated that West End Elementary School had the highest percentage of student attendance at 96.92 percent. It was also noted that Rome Middle School had 98.03 percent of student attendance for the fourth month of school, the highest in the system. The Central Office had the highest percent of staff attendance for the fourth month at 97.95 percent.

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

Support Employment 2007-2008: Justin Rampley/RHS; Pedro Viruet/RHS; Stephanie Rucker/RHS; Jeremy White/RHS; Shirley Smallwood/Maintenance; Noel Wilkinson/WC; and Jody Touchstone/RHS

Focus on Student Achievement: Main Elementary: At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Williams presented the Focus on Student Achievement for Main Street Elementary School. Dr. Williams introduced the members of her faculty in attendance: Laura Gafnea, Katherine Farrar, and Belinda Miller.

Dr. Williams stated that Main Street Elementary School has earned a number of accolades over the years and is proud of their accomplishments. The 2007 CRCT results were important in that they helped the faculty and staff understand that continued improvement and support is needed every year, no matter how well a student had done in the past. The implementation of DIBELS, Direct Instruction, and individualized instruction are critical every year for students.

Dr. Williams reviewed the Criterion Referenced Competency Test results with the Board. She said that they had many successes but that they were going to focus on each student and provide the scaffolding, support, and challenges they need to perform their best.

In conclusion, Dr. Williams stated that their primary goal was to work toward continued improvement.

Special Education: A Longitudinal Review: At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Kemp reported on a longitudinal review of the performance of students with disabilities on the CRCT and GHSGT in the Rome City Schools. Accompanying Dr. Kemp was Pam Smathers, Vicky Reece, Daylene Huggins, Brenda Hay, Beverly Almaroad. Dr. Kemp reported that children with disabilities have shown remarkable and persistent improvements in every area of achievement that the longitudinal data was available: Reading 1-5, Reading 6-8, English 11th, Math 1-5, and Math 6-8. She stated that between 2002 and 2007 the number of Rome City School students with disabilities participating in the inclusion model has risen from 35% to over 71% while the state shows a significantly smaller percentage growth. She also pointed out that Rome City Schools has maintained an Early Childhood program at or near 90% while the state has been trying to increase to just over 50% as of 2007.

Dr. Kemp itemized a number of recognitions that Rome City Schools has enjoyed over the past years using the inclusion model. She stated that Rome City Schools is being recognized by the Georgia Department of Education for meeting the following goals:

- Students who meet or exceed state achievement standards for Reading/ELA and Math!
- Educating students in the Least Restrictive Environment!
- Educating young children in the Least Restrictive Environment!

The reasons that she cited for these successes are:

- Exceptional Sp. Ed. Teachers & General Ed. Teachers working together.
- Direct Instruction.
- Inclusion in Best Practices efforts such as Reading, Writing, and Math Workshops.
- Continuing to expand pre-k programming- particularly at Headstart!
- Implementation of a Phonemic Awareness/Language Development Program in all schools, particularly in Pre-K and at-risk K classes.
- Progressive and thoughtful principals and assistant principals who work diligently with all students.
- Outstanding Sp. Ed. Facilitators and School Psychologists who intervene with students at-risk.

SPLOST 2 Collections: Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST II revenues. He stated that the September '07 collections of \$529,204.58 were \$91,704.58 above projections for the month (\$437,500.00).

Superintendent’s Announcements:

- Dr. Cooper recognized Mrs. Wood and Parke Wilkinson for the accomplishments of East Central Elementary School: designated Georgia School of Excellence for the second time in a row for achieving the top ten (10) percent in Reading and Math on the CRCT.
- Dr. Cooper reminded the Board that Rome Middle School had earned the Silver Award (one of five middle schools in Georgia),
- And because of Rome High School’s SAT scores, Rome City Schools has been named the #1 SAT System in Georgia. The average SAT score, with 131 students taking the test, was 1,621 points! No other system in Georgia even broke the 1,600 point barrier.
- Dr. Cooper also announced the Annual Rome News-Tribune Basketball Tournament will begin Monday, December 17th.
- Winter break will begin for students December 20 and they will return to class on Monday, January 7, 2008.

Board Sets 2008 Meeting Schedule: On a Huffman/Swann motion, the Board unanimously approved the 2008 Rome City Schools Board Meeting date, time, and location. The regular monthly meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month. The Caucus will begin at 5:00 p.m. in the Superintendent’s Office and the Regular Session will begin at 5:45 p.m. in the Boardroom.

Board Officer Elections: Mrs. Sims turned the meeting over to Mr. Byington, Board Attorney, to conduct the elections for the 2008 Board Chairperson. On a Swann/Huffman motion, Mrs. Sims was nominated to serve as 2008 Board Chairperson. On a Swann/Clark motion, the Board unanimously decided to close the nominations, electing Mrs. Sims as Chairperson by acclamation.

Mr. Byington turned the meeting over to the newly elected Chairperson, Mrs. Sims. On a Wood/Huffman motion, Mr. Wood was nominated to serve as 2008 Board Vice-Chairperson. On a Swann/Clark motion, the Board unanimously decided to close the nominations, electing Mr. Wood as the Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.

Board Resolution on House Resolution 900: On a Huffman/Clark motion, the Board unanimously adopted a resolution to not support House Resolution 900 which restricts local control of local government and schools.

**Rome City Schools
Resolution**

- WHEREAS, a proposal has been made for the citizens of Georgia to vote on eliminating all ad valorem property taxes and replacing the tax with a statewide sales tax more specifically called Georgia’s Repeal of Every Ad valorem Tax (GREAT) Plan; and
- WHEREAS, two independent and recognized organizations have determined that adequate funds would not be generated from a statewide sales tax to replace all ad valorem property tax; and
- WHEREAS, local governments and school systems need reliable sources of revenue under local control to operate in a financially responsible manner; and
- WHEREAS, the proposed plan would send billions of additional dollars to the state to manage and redistribute and make cities, counties and school systems fiscally subservient to the state; and
- WHEREAS, the ability to borrow money at lower interest rates by local governments and school systems would be greatly restricted by the elimination of ad valorem taxes; and

WHEREAS, the distribution would be controlled by the state political process with some communities being donors and others receiving more than they put in with citizens no longer being able to decide their services and how they pay for them; and

WHEREAS, ad valorem taxes are a deduction on federal and state income taxes; and

WHEREAS, Tax Allocation Districts, Special Tax Districts and related incentives which use ad valorem tax benefits to encourage redevelopment efforts would be decimated; and

WHEREAS, cities use property assessments determined by county tax assessors under state law; and

WHEREAS, city budgets are prepared and adopted using a very open and public process where public hearings are required if millage rates are increased.

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Rome City Board of Education urges our senator and representatives to vote against this proposal and any proposal that further restricts local control of local government and schools.

Given my hand and seal, this 11th day of December
in the year of our Lord, two thousand and seven

Judy Sims, Chairman
Rome Board of Education

Board GSBA Report: Mrs. Sims asked Board members if they wanted to comment on the GSBA meeting they recently attended. Mr. Wilson stated that he attended the New Board Member Training and gained much information from the training. Mr. Wood discussed a pamphlet he received which showed the increased burden that schools have had to take on over the past 50 years without increasing any instructional time. Ms. Huffman spoke briefly about the changes that students, teachers, and society have adjusted to in the last 30 years. For example, fewer people write cursive. More people use a keyboard now. Mrs. Sims summarized by saying that the current GSBA Executive Director is exceptional and the Georgia School Board Association is lucky to have such professionalism at the helm.

Other Board Action: On a Clark/Collins motion, the Board members present unanimously approved the minutes for the November 13, 2007, regular Board meeting, November 26, 2007 called joint Board meeting, financial, and other reports.