

# Board O'Gram

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Report of Rome Board of Education — Action Compiled by Dr. Robert A. Young, Director of Title I / Testing

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**Leadership Rome:** Mrs. Sims recognized visitors from Leadership Rome.

**Artwork:** Mrs. Sims announced that the artwork displayed in the boardroom foyer was provided by students and teachers from Southeast Elementary School.

**All-State Band:** Dr. Jones, on behalf of the Board, recognized Matthew Nedvin, son of Brian and Karin Nedvin, for being selected to the All-State Band. Dr. Jones stated that after going through two auditions, Matthew Nedvin, an eighth grade student at Rome Middle School, had been selected to participate in the Georgia Middle School All-State Band. He said that this was a great honor — the highest state-wide achievement a band student can receive. There are two middle school All-State Bands of equal ability and Matthew achieved first chair in his band. This means he had the first or second highest score of the audition! Out of 60 percussionists who tried out on the state level, only 14 are selected —seven in each band. On his second audition, Matthew performed three etudes on three separate percussion instruments — snare drum, timpani, and marimba. In addition, there was sight reading on each instrument. He will be representing our school in Savannah, Georgia at the All-State Band on March 3-5, 2011, with the recorded performance on March 5, 2011.

**District Honor Band:** Mr. Wilson, on behalf of the Board, recognized the students who were selected for District Honor Band. Mr. Wilson stated that seven students from Rome Middle School were selected to participate in the District 7 Honor Band Clinic on February 17-19, 2011, at Heritage High School in Ringgold, Georgia. He said that there was one audition in December, 2010, (which is the same as the All-State first audition) and from that audition, students from District 7 would form two honor bands with 100 students in each band. Mr. Wilson stated that the Board is proud to have these students represent the school and system at this exciting event.

At the request of Mr. Wilson, Mr. Christian, Rome Middle School principal, introduced the associate band directors: Mr. Williams (Band 7) and Mr. Hester (Band 8). Mr. Christian then introduced the students:

- Christine Hostetler/ seventh grade/ Clarinet– daughter of John and Jackie Hostetler
- Evan Davis/ eighth grade/ Flute – son of John and Susan Davis
- Maryam Mansoura/ eighth grade/ Trumpet – daughter of Ahed and Juhaina Mansoura
- Matthew Nedvin/ eighth grade/ Percussion – son of Brian and Karin Nedvin
- Kristen Raley/ eighth grade/ Baritone – daughter of Timothy and Shelley Raley
- Whitney Sanders/ eighth grade/ Clarinet – daughter of Neil and Donna Sanders
- Mandy Smith/ eighth grade/ Trombone – daughter of Alvin and Alicia Smith

**Attendance for Fifth Month of School:** Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the fifth month of school. He stated that West End Elementary School had the highest elementary school percentage of student attendance, 96.83 percent. It was also noted that Rome High School had 95.99 percent for the fifth month of school. The highest percent of staff attendance was Rome High School at 97.27 percent.

**Focus on Student Achievement: Southeast Elementary School:** At Dr. Cooper's request, Mr. Kelvin Portis presented the Focus on Student Achievement for Southeast Elementary School. Southeast Elementary School has an acronym which states their school motto: "SHOES." "SHOES" stands for Students Having Opportunities for Excellence and Success. Mr. Portis reviewed the grade-level Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) results from the spring 2010 administration. He reported that he was proud of their upper elementary scores but they still had room for improvement. Teachers in the lower grades have developed additional plans to improve the student achievement in those grades.

Mr. Portis used the "Boiling Point of Water" analogy to represent the work that the teachers and students must do to make a positive change. With a little extra directed effort, the teachers can do wonders with their students.

Several instructional strategies for improvement were mentioned: differentiated instruction in standards-based classroom; child specific instruction in after-school; providing support to special needs population through inclusion; and flexible RTI

groups. Also pointed out were the kinds of curriculum that the teachers at Southeast Elementary School use and the grade levels in which they are applied: Kathy Richardson in Grades K-2; I Succeed in Grades 3-6; Destination Math in Grades K-6; Cognitively Guided Instruction, Marilyn Burns Do the Math in Grades K-6; and Classworks in Grades K-6. To meet the individual needs of the students, they employ several intervention strategies as well: Direct Instruction; Road to the Code; Rewards Program; Sound Partners; and LIPS.

The faculty and staff at Southeast Elementary School have made a special effort in the area of reading. They have brought in mentor readers, authors, and encouraged students to read in areas of interest. Another area in which they are improving is the area of parent involvement. Looking at the positive three-year trend, the faculty and administration have found more effective ways to encourage parents to participate in the education of their children and attend various school/parent activities. Involved parents make a difference in the lives of their children and their success in school. Mr. Portis, in conclusion, recited a quote from Helen Keller who was asked how bad it was to lose one's sight. Her response was, "worse than losing one's sight, is to have sight without vision." Southeast Elementary School works everyday to keep the mission and vision of the school system in front of their students: "All students will graduate from Rome High School prepared for college or work."

**Journey to Standards Based Classrooms:** At Dr. Cooper's request, Beth Herod, writing coach at West End Elementary School, reported on the Professional Learning: Rome City's Journey to Standards Based Classrooms. There are several resources that writing teachers employ in the schools: In Pictures and In Words: Teaching the Qualities of Good Writing Through Illustration Study by Dr. Katie Wood Ray; About the Authors; Writing Workshop with our Youngest Writers by Dr. Katie Wood Ray; Teaching with Intention by Debbie Miller; and Interactive Think-Aloud Lessons by Lori Oczkus. The use of academic coaching in an embedded model of professional learning is another very important resource that is applied in the school system. This is accomplished through model classrooms and team teaching.

In a standards-based classroom, an observer will see artifacts such as opening or mini-lesson charts, word walls, and anchor charts. The teaching strategies will be small group meeting areas, teachers working with a small group or an individual child, and with an emphasis on "accountable" talk. Mrs. Herod stated that it important to teach with intention. This means that the teacher makes sure that everything in the classroom has a purpose.

The classroom bulletin boards are used for more than just displaying art. They are used to "display thinking!" It helps students organize, gives them models of instruction, and it displays the students' work with instructional comments. In preparing to teach students to write, Kate Wood Ray said, "The world that the children live in is a world where the definition of text will be greatly expanded: what it means to compose a text will go far beyond composition with words only." We all have heard, "a picture is worth a thousand words." Composition is an effort to capture the thousand words that the picture is worth.

Mrs. Herod discussed Kindergarten writing standards and how the students begin to learn the writing process. What it comes down to is: the power to write effectively is giving the students the power to think.

**Proposed 2011-2012 Calendar:** On a Wood/Jones motion, the Board unanimously approved, on first reading, the proposed 2011-2012 School Calendar as presented by Dr. Cooper. Dr. Cooper briefly reviewed the process that was used to collect suggestions and evaluate calendar proposals. The key elements of the proposed calendar include: first day of school (August 1, 2011); fall break (October 3-7, 2011); Thanksgiving holidays (November 23-25, 2011); end of first semester (December 15, 2011); winter holidays (December 19, 2011-January 2, 2012); winter break / inclement weather make-up days (February 13-14, 2012); spring holidays / inclement weather make-up days (March 26- 30, 2012); and the last day of school (May 18, 2012).

**SPLOST III Update:** Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST III revenues. The December 2010 collections of \$470,530.08 were \$32,199.42 below projections for the month (\$502,729.50). There are two projects taking place at the high school using the SLOST III funds - the two-story auxiliary gym and the band/choral room expansion. Dr. Cooper showed pictures of the two-story auxiliary gym groundwork. He said that we are waiting on good weather to begin laying concrete and steel.

**Black History Month Celebrations:** 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:

- African-American Read-In at West Central Elementary School. Celebrated leaders come to the school to read to students. For example Mrs. Faith Collins, Rome City Schools Board member, and Mr. John Mayes, Floyd County Commissioner, came to the school to read.

- Students at West End Elementary study biographies of famous African-Americans and prepare anchor charts.
- Students at Main Elementary School participated in a poster and essay contest entitled “The Power of a Dream.” Students in Grades K-6 will write their own version of the famous speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. At the conclusion of the contest, prizes will be awarded by grade level and the morning announcements will feature each grade level winning entry during the week of February 21-28, 2011.
- At the high school, students in Ms. Amy Shattuck’s class researched many prominent African-Americans and created a bulletin board depicting their historical contributions.
- Dr. Lucian Harris, former Assistant Superintendent for Rome City Schools, will be the keynote speaker during a Black History Month Assembly at Main Elementary on February 25th.
- Third Grade students at East Central Elementary are studying a unit entitled “Equal Rights for All”, which follows the Civil Rights Movement from the constitution through the civil rights era.
- Southeast Elementary will present a program entitled, “Our Children Can Soar”. The program will feature a skit of a town hall meeting of the NAACP discussing achievements of the past, present and future.
- Rome Middle School will feature a Black History Performance Night during the PTO meeting on February 21 at 6:00 pm in the school gymnasium. Performances will highlight contributions by African-Americans in song, dance, and poetry.

**Announcements:** Dr. Cooper announced the 7-AAAA basketball tournament will begin on Saturday, February 12, 2011.

**Other Board Actions:**

- On a Collins/Huffman motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper’s recommendation to rescind, on second reading, Policy BH (Board Code of Ethics) and Policy BHA (Board Member Conflict of Interest).
- On a Jones/Wood motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper’s recommendation to adopt, on second reading, Policy BH (Board Code of Ethics) and Policy BHA (Board Member Conflict of Interest). The recommended policies are templates which have been developed by the Georgia School Boards Association and meet all the new requirements set forth in statute.
- Mr. Wood read, on behalf of the Board, a resolution regarding board code of ethics and board member conflict of interest.
- On a Wilson/Wood motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper’s recommendation to amend, on second reading, the 2010-2011 School Calendar. The recommendation stated that students shall go to school on February 14th and 15th (formerly a winter holiday), and on March 14th (formerly a non-scheduled workday) to make up three of the five snow days. This will mean the students will have a 178 day year. Teachers will also have an additional post-planning day at the end of the year on May 23, 2011.
- On a Wilson/Wood motion, the Board unanimously approved the minutes for the January 18, 2011, regular board meeting, financial and other reports.