

Board O'Gram

Vol. 33
No. 2
Sept. 11, 2007

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

First month of Attendance: Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the first month of school. He stated that West End Elementary School had the highest percentage of student attendance at 98.52 percent. It was also noted that Rome Middle School had 96.96 percent of student attendance for the first month of school. The school with the highest percent of staff attendance was Southeast Elementary School at 99.98 percent.

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

Certified Employment 2007-2008: Bruce Jones/RTA, Charlene Such/RMS and Daniel Tompkins/EC
Support Employment 2007-2008: Gina Byars/CO, Timothy Mosley/WC, Catherine Dizon/WE, Linda Stidham/ES, Betty Hicks-Mosteller/MN, Kathy Teat/EC, Amanda Moore/SE and Keidra Walsh/SE

2007-2008 Fundraising Recommendations: On a Huffman/Collins motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper's 2007-2008 fundraising recommendations as presented by Dr. Mike Buck.

Anna K. Davie Focus on Student Achievement: At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Ware presented the Focus on Student Achievement for Anna K. Davie Elementary School (AKD). Dr. Ware began her presentation by introducing the members of her faculty in attendance: Amber Fennell, Susan Ray, Melissa Graney, Marian Williams, Monica Landis, Katie Chappell, and Lisa Saroka. Dr. Ware reviewed some of the Anna K. Davie's celebrations over the past year or so: Distinguished Title 1 School, Adequate Yearly Progress for six (6) consecutive years, Writer's Academy, 40 A/B Honor Roll Students, and meeting the 2006-07 Reading and Math Goals.

Dr. Ware discussed their students' Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) results and highlighted some areas of strength and weakness. In the area of strength, she stated that their math scores, particularly in the second and fifth grades, were excellent. Dr. Ware pointed out that they are concerned with the transition in mathematics from the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) to Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). The instructional team at AKD is concerned that all students must work on critical thinking, problem solving and application strategies. In the area of reading and English language arts (ELA), they are concerned with vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, comprehension, and grammar.

The curriculum designed to meet their identified needs include GPS focused instruction, Reader's, Writer's, and Math Workshop, and Direct Instruction in grades K-5. They will integrate science and social studies into the literature block and utilize SRA Direct Instruction, Saxon, Horizons, and Accelerated Reading to scaffold their students.

Dr. Ware concluded by saying that it is important to have continuous assessment to ensure all students are progressing satisfactorily. It is also desirable to have a strong involved community and involved parents to help mentor and scaffold their students.

Implementation of Math GPS: At Dr. Cooper's request, Mrs. Erwin reported on Rome City Schools implementation of math Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Mrs. Erwin stated that this is the third year for GPS implementation in the sixth grade, the second year for grades K, 1, 2, and 7. She said that this is the first year for grades 3, 4, 5, and 8, and is a training year for Math 1 at the ninth grade.

Mrs. Erwin reviewed some of the strategies that are being employed to ensure that the students are successful in the new curriculum. She said that the system is adopting new textbooks which are more closely aligned with the GPS curriculum. Math coaches are developing sample teaching units designed to be aligned with the Department of Education (DOE) Framework Units. Teachers are continuing to receive staff development through on-site and off-site training. Mrs. Erwin said that an important change that has taken place over the past couple of years is that the

administration and teachers are much more data driven in making instructional decisions. The math coaches are working on implementing a balanced assessment system which aligns with the GPS. Finally, there is an emphasis to develop focused interventions to scaffold students to “on-grade” performance before they get too far behind.

In conclusion, Mrs. Erwin stated that she feels that the math instruction throughout the system is becoming increasingly more consistent and effective for students. The math scores are above the state average in all grades except the fourth. At the high school level, the percent of students passing the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) is above the state average, and Rome High School is ranked among the top 20 high schools in Georgia (out of 300) on the math section of the SAT. Also noteworthy is that Rome City Schools is ranked “Number One” in Georgia for SAT scores.

2007-2008 Professional Learning Plan: At Dr. Cooper’s request, Mrs. Downer reported on Rome City Schools Professional Learning Plan for 2007-2008. Mrs. Downer reported that staff development practices of the past simply do not work. The old paradigm where several teachers and perhaps a principal spent all day in a training session and came back to the regular work setting, seldom produced any sustained change. The current practices of professional learning — Practice, Low-Risk Feedback, Coaching, Study Teams, and Peer Visits — do produce measurable and sustained change.

Mrs. Downer discussed the Professional Learning Plan including the various programs and schedules that will be followed during the year. Direct Instruction, Reading Intervention Program, GPS Training Teams, and Fantastic Five for the Literacy Coaches (Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension) are programs and interventions that will be worked on during the year. Mrs. Downer stated that the key to effective and sustained staff development is “Job-Embedded Professional Development”.

2007-2008 Consolidated Application: On a Clark/Wood motion, the Board unanimously approved Dr. Cooper’s 2007-2008 Consolidated Application recommendation as presented by Dr. Robert Young.

SPLOST II Receipts: Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST II revenues. He stated that the June ‘07 collections of \$424,838.17 were \$12,661.83 below projections for the month (\$437,500.00). Dr. Cooper stated that project-to-date receipts are \$179,606.85 above projections.

Board receives Achievement Certificates: Dr. Cooper presented each member of the Board with an Achievement Certificate by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) for successful school board training during the 2006-2007 school year.

Board Goals amended: On a Collins/Clark motion, the Board unanimously amended, on second reading, the “2007-2008 Board Goals” to include two additional goals:

- Improve reading performance by the completion of second grade such that 90% of students meet DIBELS grade level benchmark expectations.
- Implement 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.

For a complete listing of the 2007-2008 Board Goals, go to the Rome City Schools website. From the “Home Page”, go to “Board of Education” and then to “Board Goals for 2007-2008”.

Other Announcements and Business:

- Dr. Cooper announced that Friday, September 14th, our Rome Wolves will travel to Cartersville to play the Cartersville “Canes” at 7:30 p.m.
- The Board appointed Ms. Huffman to serve as the “2007-2008 GSBA Legislative Liaison” for the Rome City School’s Board of Education.