

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

Choral Preamble for Meeting: Mrs. Jennifer Williams (RHS Choral Director), lead the Rome High All-State Choral group through three seasonal musical selections to the Board and audience (Sleighride arr. Hawley Ades; Pacem arr. Lee Dengler; and The 12 Days of Christmas arr. Cliff Duren). The Choral members included: Hogan Barris, Kadison Beaver, Justin Chase Brooks, Kate Butcher, Alexandra Carlton, Abby Chaffin, Anna Davis, Evan Davis, James Douglas, Brady Drake, Nick Ehmann, Bryan Escutia, Christopher Fincher, Corbett Floyd, Avery Harris, Katie Hatcher, Pierce Henson, Jay Horton, Kyle Huey, Zach Kinsey, Lucy Lansing, Jessica Lewis, Victoria Liss, Courtney Lovingood, Jerica Maisonet, Michael Nedvin, Matthew Nedvin, Diana Romo, Kelvin Rucker, Mitchell Schaekel, Marlee Smith, Jere Tan, Parker Van Riper, Erich VanTubbergen, Branton Wheeler, Cayce Woodard,

All-State Chorus: On behalf of the Board, Mr. Wood presented members of the Rome High School Chorus with a Certificate of Recognition for their individual accomplishment in All-State Chorus competitions. Mr. Wood reported that the Rome High School Choral Department announced that thirty-six students from Rome High School were recently selected for the 2012 Georgia Music Educators All-State Chorus. This is the highest number of students ever selected for All-State Chorus from Rome High School, surpassing the record set last year.

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 an audition and theory test, and sight-reading three lines of music. All chorus students who made the 2011 Georgia All-State Chorus will meet in Savannah, GA on Feb. 24-26 for several intensive rehearsals with world-renown clinicians and a concluding concert. Dr. Evans presented the RHS All-State Choral director (Jennifer Williams) and students to the Board. The All-State Choral members include: Hogan Barris, Kadison Beaver, Justin Chase Brooks, Kate Butcher, Alexandra Carlton, Abby Chaffin, Anna Davis, Evan Davis, James Douglas, Brady Drake, Nick Ehmann, Bryan Escutia, Christopher Fincher, Corbett Floyd, Avery Harris, Katie Hatcher, Pierce Henson, Jay Horton, Kyle Huey, Zach Kinsey, Lucy Lansing, Jessica Lewis, Victoria Liss, Courtney Lovingood, Jerica Maisonet, Michael Nedvin, Matthew Nedvin, Diana Romo, Kelvin Rucker, Mitchell Schaekel, Marlee Smith, Jere Tan, Parker Van Riper, Erich VanTubbergen, Branton Wheeler, Cayce Woodard,

All-State Reading Chorus: On behalf of the Board, Mr. Wilson presented the Rome High School “All-State Reading Chorus” members with a Certificate of Recognition for their accomplishments. According to Mr. Wilson, eleven Rome High School chorus members were also selected for the 2012 Georgia Music Educators Association All-State Reading Chorus. This is the highest number of students ever selected for All-State Reading Chorus from Rome High School as well. The Georgia All-State Reading Chorus was established in 2006 to showcase students with exceptional sight-reading ability. The All-State Reading Chorus audition is even more challenging than the regular All-State Chorus audition as students are required to sight-read five lines of college level vocal music. Only 100 students from schools throughout Georgia are selected for this honor. The All-State Reading Chorus event will be held Jan. 27-29 in Savannah. The students will participate in three days of rehearsal with a collegiate conductor, during which they will sight-read approximately sixty pieces of music. The event will conclude with a concert at the Savannah Trade Center. Dr. Evans presented the members of the All-State Reading Chorus to the Board. The members include: Courtney Carter, Avery Harris, Dylan Horne (*Dylan had the top score for his voice part in our district and was two points shy of having the best score in the state.*), Zach Kinsey, Lucy Lansing, Courtney Lovingood (*Courtney had the top score for her voice part in our district.*), Jerica Maisonet, Michael Nedvin, Matthew Nedvin (*Matthew had the top score for his voice part in our district.*), Diana Romo, and Cayce Woodard.

Other Recognitions: Mrs. Sims recognized members of Leadership Rome in the audience.

Mrs. Sims pointed out that the artwork in the boardroom foyer was provided by Southeast Elementary School students and teachers.

Attendance – Fourth Month: Dr. Cooper reported the attendance for the fourth month of school. He stated that Elm Street Elementary School had the highest percentage of student attendance, 98.96 percent. It was also noted that Rome Middle School had 96.32 percent of student attendance for the fourth month of school. The school with the highest percent of staff attendance was Southeast Elementary School, 97.95 percent.

New Personnel:

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

Support Employment 2011-2012
Jeannettelena Santillan/ES
Cherilyn Selman/ES

Focus on Student Achievement - Southeast : At Dr. Cooper’s request, Mr. Kelvin Portis presented the Focus on Student Achievement for Southeast Elementary School.

Accompanying Mr. Portis was Carol Maxey, Daronda Young, Martha Holder, Hiliary Singleton, Kathy Teat, Kim Brown, Moncia Landis, Danielle Tapp, Alison Ross, Misti Jordan, and Jennifer Short.

Mr. Portis then reviewed the grade-level Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) results from the spring 2011 administration. He reported that he was proud of their upper elementary scores, especially the sixth grade reading score. They scored 100% of the students meeting or exceeding the standard! He stated that there is still room for improvement across all grades. He said that the teachers in the lower grades have developed additional plans to improve the student achievement in those grades.

Mr. Portis stated that this holiday season is filled with goodies and wonderful things to eat. Everyone has a special recipe that they enjoy. Southeast has a recipe for student improvement. The ingredients include Response to Intervention, Guided Math, GRASP, Depth of Knowledge, Professional Learning, Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. Mr. Portis stated that as a faculty, during the remainder of the year, they are going to read and discuss Clifton L. Taulbert's book, Eight Habits of the Heart for Educators. He also said that they are trying to foster a culture of "Random Acts of Kindness" throughout the school. He quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson, "You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late."

The parents at Southeast are encouraged to be involved in the school and in their students' success in the learning process. Mr. Portis gave a three-year table showing the number of parents who have participated in various school events. The parents who frequent the school and provide help receive a VIP t-shirt: Very Involved Parent. Mr. Portis said that involved parents make a difference in the lives of their children and their success in school.

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."

Special Education Program Achievements: At Dr. Cooper's request, Dr. Kemp reported on the achievement accomplished by the Special Education program of the Rome City Schools. Dr. Kemp stated that the Rome City Schools was recognized by the Georgia Department of Education for meeting 5 out of 7 major targets and several other performance objectives.

The following objectives were met: Educating children in the least restrictive environment; Reducing the students who drop out of school; Meeting or exceeding for ELA on the GHSGT; and Meeting or exceeding for Reading/ELA on the CRCT. In addition, Rome City Schools met the following targets and objectives: Educating children in the least restrictive environment; Reducing the students who drop out of school; Meeting or exceeding for ELA on the GHSGT; Meeting or exceeding for Reading/ELA on the CRCT; Meeting or exceeding for Math on the GHSGT; and Meeting or exceeding for Math on the CRCT. There was also special state recognition as well: 100% participation of SWD in the assessment program; Meeting timelines for transition of 3

year olds from Babies Can't Wait; Meeting 60 day evaluation timelines for initial evaluations for special education; Meeting 2 out of 3 targets for preschool exit; and Eighty-one percent of 2010 graduates with SWD are involved in college, employment, or sheltered workshop Submission of all state reports on time.

Dr. Kemp reviewed the various standard testing results and stated that the students with exceptionalities have performed extremely well. It is especially true when one reviews their growth over the past ten (10) years. Following in this trend, Dr. Kemp stated that Rome City Schools has made AYP for Special Education EIGHT Consecutive Years!

The way to success is expressed in this equation: High Expectations + Outstanding Instruction = Excellent Results! Outstanding instruction comes from Best Practices. Examples of the best practices that are used include but are not limited to: Linda Mood - Bell (LIPS, Visualizing and Verbalizing); Corrective Reading; Reading Mastery; GRASPS; Phonemic Awareness Instruction; Inclusion; Math, Reading and Writer's Workshops; Connecting Math Concepts; Reading and Math Fluency Drills; and SRA Rewards.

In conclusion Dr. Kemp stated that the ultimate goal of the program is to fulfill the system mission: All students will graduate from Rome High School prepared for college or work! All means ALL!

Performance Learning Center – Phoenix: At Dr. Cooper's request, Mrs. Jennifer Perkins presented information on the 2011-2012 Performance Learning Center (PLC): Phoenix Program. Mrs. Perkins stated that the Phoenix Program offers an alternate path to graduating from high school; it is a non-traditional approach to instruction. The program is a mastery learning system which provides the student a chance to catch up academically and work at an individualized pace. Students in the program may earn more credits than is normally possible in the traditional high school program. Mrs. Perkins stated that it is a computer-based curriculum and project-based learning.

The multiple criteria for participation in the program include: the student must be at least 16 years old; they must have completed at least one year of high school; and they must have credit deficiencies. The admission process begins with a referral from a teacher, self, parent, or counselor. Once referred, the student goes through an assessment test and subsequent interview.

The schedule for the PLC Phoenix Program is unique in that there are three options which reflect different start times, ending times, and duration of the day. The year is split into four (4) Mini-mesters, each lasting about nine (9) weeks, Monday through Thursday. Mrs. Perkins stated that the first Mini-mester enrolled 41 students in grades 10th – 12th with 2 (two) earning enough credits to graduate. So far, during the second Mini-mester, 53 students are enrolled in grades 10th – 12th and 11 students have met all requirements for high school graduation.

Mrs. Perkins summarized by saying that the program is designed to ensure that "All students will graduate from Rome High School prepared for college or work."

2011-2012 United Way Campaign: Dr. Cooper's reported on the 2011-2012 United Way Campaign for the Rome City Schools. He identified the building-level United Way Coordinators: East Central – Tara Davenport; Elm Street – Jo Heller-Orr; Main – Lendy Collins; North Heights – Tonya Wood; Southeast – Alissa Harper Mitchell; West Central – Susan Davis; West End – Buffi Murphy; Rome Middle School – Kathy Colvin; Rome High School – J. Tygar Evans; Rome Transitional Academy – Jennifer Perkins; and Central Office – Gayland Cooper. Dr. Cooper said that he was very proud of the giving spirit of the students and staff of the Rome City Schools. Under the driving force of each school United Way Coordinator, the Rome City Schools generously gave \$22,303.75 during the 2011-2012 campaign.

SPLOST III Report: Dr. Cooper gave an update on the SPLOST III revenues. He stated that the October '11 collections of \$407,392.11 were \$95,337.39 below projections for the month (\$502,729.50). Project to date collections were \$12,697,232.54 which are \$2,384,652.46 below overall projections. Dr. Cooper presented a number of photographs showing the progress with the high school band and choral room, tennis courts, weight room and activity gym.

Other Items: Dr. Cooper presented the SACS Banner that had been awarded to Rome City Schools. The district accreditation was completed last year and SACS sent the school system the banner and a plaque commemorating RCS's success. All nine schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools with Quality and Accredited with Quality by the Georgia Accrediting Commission.

Dr. Janet McMiller, the lead SACS facilitator, said, "The students of Rome City Schools embrace their teachers as caring, concerned, and committed. That's the way it ideally should be; it rarely actually is." She praised administrators, teachers, and students for making teaching and learning the top priority with a strong dedication.

The Rome News-Tribune Basketball Tournament begins on Friday, December 16, 2011. The Rome High School girls' team will play on Monday, December 19, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. at Berry College. The Rome High School boys' team will play on Monday, December 19, 2011 at 8:30 p.m. at Georgia Highlands College.

Student Winter Holidays will be December 16, 2011 through January 2, 2012. Classes will resume on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.

Election of Board Officers: On a Wood/Huffman motion, the Board unanimously approved the 2012 Rome City School's 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 board room.

Mrs. Sims turned the meeting over to Mr. Byington, Board Attorney, to conduct the elections for the 2012 Board Chairman. On a Swann/Huffman motion, Mrs. Sims was nominated to serve as 2012 Board Chairman. On a Swann/Wilson motion, the Board unanimously decided to close the nominations, electing Mrs. Sims as the 2012 Chairman, by acclamation.

Mr. Byington turned the meeting over to the newly elected Chairman, Ms. Sims. On a Collins/Jones motion, Mr. Wood was nominated to serve as 2012 Board Vice-Chairman. On a Swann/Huffman motion, the Board unanimously decided to close the nominations, electing Mr. Wood as the 2012 Vice-Chairman, by acclamation.

5-Year Local Facilities Plan Resolution: On a Huffman/Swann motion, the Board unanimously adopted the resolution to request a one-year extension to submit the five-year local facilities resolution to the Department of Education. According to the resolution the five-year local facilities plan will be due no later than March 15, 2013.

2011 Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) Discussion: Mrs. Sims invited the board members to discuss what they learned at the 2011 Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) meeting.

Mr. Wilson stated that he enjoyed listening to national speakers to get a better sense for the condition of education in the nation. He especially enjoyed listening to Mr. Jamie Vollmer who is a public education advocate working to increase student success by raising public support for America's schools. Mr. Wilson was interested in Mr. Vollmer's position on property taxes and the myth that senior citizens should no longer be required to help shoulder the burden of funding education because they do not have children in school. In Vollmer's book, Schools Cannot Do It Alone: Building Public Support for America's Public Schools, he reminds the reader that public education educates the workers who provide the services that we all enjoy. Even senior citizens benefit from an educated work force and therefore should help fund appropriate levels.

Dr. Jones commented that the sessions on the legalities of public education were very noteworthy. He said that it is interesting that the current topic in vogue in the nation is "Bullying". Dr. Jones noted that Georgia seems to be on the forefront of the legislation and has the strongest bills associated with bullying. A couple of questions that he said are relevant: what are the outcomes of the social control from the bullying legislation and where does the school system's responsibility stop in regard to bullying outside of the school house?

To add to what Dr. Jones said, Mr. Wood pointed out that one of the Traditional Christmas songs is about bullying: Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer. Mr. Wood went on to say that State Representative Brooks Coleman, Chair of Education Committee, and Senator Fran Millar, Chair of Senate Education and Youth Committee, were talking about funding for public schools. A couple of categories that Mr. Wood cited were professional development and school nurses. Mr. Wood gave an insightful comparison in regard to

funding levels over the past four years. In 2008, 8 billion dollars were allocated to education. In 2011, 7 billion dollars were allocated. This reduction represents a 12.5 percent reduction over the time, not considering the change in value of the dollar. Obviously, systems are trying to do more with less, as is everyone else.

Ms. Huffman was interested in the legal issues as they pertain to testing and ethics in school systems. Ms. Huffman mentioned the issues in Uniondale, Long Island Test Cheating Issues and the Atlanta Public Schools testing issues as examples of worst case scenarios. Systems must be ever diligent in maintaining test integrity and continue to work on awareness of the code of ethics.

Mrs. Collins discussed the key points of Jamie Vollmer's presentation, "Board members: Start your 'great conversations'". She identified the point that Vollmer listed for board members to be more successful in fulfilling their role and responsibilities. She listed the "S's" of going from good to great: "Stop, Shift, and Share." Mrs. Collins listed them as, Stop the infighting between teachers, administrators, and school board members, which only adds fuel to school antagonists. Shift from the negative message to a positive one. And share those stories of success. Mrs. Collins also discussed two additional "S's": Sustain and Start. Be vigilant and sustain the effort and, most of all, Start making a difference now.

Mrs. Sims wrapped up the conversation with her summary of the salient points of the training. Boards of Education and educators should be the ones who define what public education is all about, not others. Boards and educators need to set the direction and vision of education rather than outside forces trying to do it for them. She stated that board members of the future need to work together in a team approach. It is important to remember that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is beginning to tie Board governance with student achievement. Board members must take their training seriously.

Mrs. Sims also reiterated the importance of being very aware of the Board Code of Ethics and adhering to them very closely. Mrs. Sims handed board members a copy of Rome City Schools Board Policy BH "Board Code of Ethics" and reviewed Domain I, "Governance Structure" with the board members. Mrs. Sims said the Rome City Schools Board of Education has always worked together in a professional manner.

Mrs. Sims concluded by saying, "The Board needs to be forever vigilant in working with one another to have a positive impact on student achievement."

Other Board Actions: On a Jones/Collins motion, the Board unanimously approved the minutes for the November 8, 2011, regular board meeting, financial, and other reports