To: Middle School Principals

From: Pamela Henson, Director

Date: July 31, 2006

Re: Accelerated Reader

Attached please find a letter to elementary principals dated November 24, 2003, regarding recommendations for the Accelerated Reader (AR) Program.

The basic theme of the memo is that AR points should be used as a basis of motivation and incentive, not for grading purposes. According to the Institute for Academic Excellence, neither the intent nor the outcome of AR was for grading purposes. When the committee of teachers, library media specialists, principals, and central office staff met in 2003, they endorsed this principle.

In conducting school reviews last year, the school improvement teams noted that, in some schools, AR points comprised a large percentage of the student grade and that some students failed a grade and had to attend summer school because they did not have the required number of AR points.

The requirements of No Child Left Behind provide that student grades be based on content standards for that particular grade level. Therefore, no student can be retained in a grade because of an insufficient number of AR points. Furthermore, all use of AR must be tied to the grade level content standards for that grade and documented in the teacher’s lesson plans.

Please communicate these guidelines to your faculty members and ensure that they comply with them. If you have any questions, please contact either Mrs. Phyllis French at 972-6866 or Mrs. Nancy Danley at 972-6864.

C: Elementary and Secondary Coordinators and Supervisors
   Special Services Coordinator and Supervisors
A committee of elementary teachers, librarians, principals and central office staff was formed to gain input on use of the Accelerated Reader program, review research from the Institute for Academic Excellence and determine suggested program recommendations. A general concern from parents and teachers involves using AR points for grading purposes.

According to the Institute for Academic Excellence, "Accelerated Reader points should be used as the basis of a motivation and incentive system." The Accelerated Reader program serves as an accounting system for reading and the computer measures the quality, quantity, and level of reading and feeds this information back to students, teachers, and parents.

How AR Works:
- Student selects and reads book.
- Student takes quiz.
- Teacher gets report.

The Accelerated Reader management software program cannot stand alone for grading purposes. Using AR books and earned points as a component for grading purposes was never the program’s intent or desired outcome. Teachers must be involved through teacher directed instruction for assessment measures to count in grading academic performance.

In reviewing the concerns of parents and teachers in regards to grades being assigned to AR components, the committee makes the recommendation that the Accelerated Reader Program only be used as an incentive and motivation program. The committee also recommends teachers review the most recent changes created by the Institute of Academic Excellence in regards to Goal Setting.

Changes in Goal Setting:
- Recommended book-level ranges (ZPD) have been widened for students with grade equivalent scores of 4.0 and above. The new ranges are:
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Equivalent Score</th>
<th>Range of ZPD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0 – 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.2 – 5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.4 – 5.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.7 – 5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.0 – 6.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.2 – 6.5</td>
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- Emphasis is now being placed on the average % correct, instead of the book level, as the most important goal. The goal is for students to average at least 85% on Reading Practice Quizzes.
- Instead of an average book-level goal, recommendations are to set a minimum average book-level goal based on the low end of each student’s ZPD range.

Your assistance in reviewing these recommendations with teachers is appreciated.