SUGAR SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT #322 POLICY

TITLE: Whole-Grade Level Acceleration Policy (Grades K-8)

NUMBER: 3010

NEW: February 2014

REVISED:

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to professional staff, parents/guardians, and students regarding the expectations for whole-grade level acceleration.

II. General Statement of Policy

The mission of Sugar-Salem School District is to guide students in the development of learning skills to help them reach their full potential. To accomplish this, Sugar-Salem School District strives to meet students’ needs by developing exemplary educational programs. Given that each student is an individual comprised of unique strengths, abilities, and potential, Sugar-Salem School District strives to provide a range of opportunities appropriate for all students. The district recognizes that there are appropriate times when a whole-grade level acceleration may be the best scenario for an individual student and other scenarios where such acceleration may not be in the best interests of the student. As such, the district adopts the following policy to guide professional staff, parents/guardians, and students through the process of evaluating the appropriateness of such a move for each student.

III. Definitions

A. “Whole-grade acceleration” refers to the placement of a student a whole-grade level ahead of his or her age level peers. This practice is commonly known as “skipping a grade.”

B. Iowa Acceleration Scale 3rd Edition (IAS) is a tool used by a team of school professionals to guide whole-grade acceleration placement. The IAS aids in the collection and analysis of pertinent student information.

IV. Whole-Grade Acceleration Requirements

Students may be recommended for whole-grade acceleration by parents/guardians, certified district teachers, and/or administrative staff. The request should be made to the principal of the school where the student is currently enrolled.

Recommended Characteristic: The student should display the following characteristics:

A. Academic achievement in all areas of the curriculum

B. Intellectual Ability

C. Social and emotional maturity

D. Persistence and motivation

Critical Items: The following items are critical to successful whole-grade acceleration. If any of these items apply to the student in question, whole-grade acceleration is *not recommended*.

1. The student’s ability (measured by IQ) is less than one standard deviation above the mean (as determined by the Wechsler scale).

2. The student would be accelerated into the same grade as (or a higher grade than) a sibling.

3. The student currently has a sibling in the same grade.

4. The student indicates that he/she does not want to be whole-grade accelerated.

In the case where a student meets the recommended and critical criteria for acceleration, the building principal will initiate the process of evaluation using the Iowa Acceleration Scale 3rd Edition. The evaluation will be carried out by the principal or his/her designee (i.e. counselor, special education teacher, district psychologist, etc).

After the evaluation process is complete, the principal, evaluator, and parents/guardians will meet to review the results and the principal will deliver his/her recommendation, based on all available information, to the parents/guardians of the student. If the student is determined to be a good candidate for acceleration, the principal and parents/guardians will establish the necessary timelines for the acceleration. If the student is determined to be a poor candidate for acceleration, the principal will deliver the recommendation to the parents/guardians of the student in question. The parents/guardians will then determine whether or not they wish to pursue whole-grade acceleration for their student.

Should parents/guardians decide to accelerate their student against the recommendation of the building principal or his/her designee, a letter (prepared by the principal) documenting the evaluation, recommendations, and decisions and signed by the parent/guardian will be included in the student’s permanent file.