

The State of Missouri's A+ Schools Program

Goals Of the A+ Program

The A+ Schools Program is dedicated to the following goals:

- ◆ All students will graduate from high school;
- ◆ All students will complete high school studies that are challenging and have identified learning expectations; and
- ◆ All students will proceed from high school graduation to college, post-secondary vocational/technical school or a high wage job with opportunities for workplace skill development/ advancement opportunities.



Student Manual

City of St. Charles School District



PURPOSE

In an effort to enhance educational opportunities for high school students, the Missouri State Legislature established the Outstanding Schools Act (OSA) of 1993 which includes the provisions of the A+ School Program. Since being designated as A+ Schools, St. Charles High School and St. Charles West graduates who meet specific A+ criteria are eligible to receive reimbursement for tuition and general fees subject to legislative appropriation to attend any public community college, vocational, or technical school in the state of Missouri.

The purpose of this manual is to provide students, parents, faculty and staff with the guidelines and policies of the A+ Schools Program. It is the responsibility of the City of St. Charles School District to follow these policies and to ensure A+ Schools designation is maintained. Accurate certification of students is crucial to the integrity of the program and A+ School designation. It is the responsibility of the students and parents to read this manual carefully to understand all the guidelines and regulations before signing the Students Participation Agreement.

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St. Charles High and St. Charles West High School have been designated A+ Schools. Qualified students graduating from these high schools will be eligible to receive the following:

Tuition and general fees (subject to legislative appropriation) to attend any public community college, vocational, or technical school in the State of Missouri for two years.

- ◆ The tuition incentives will be available only after the student has made a documented effort to first secure all available post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.
- ◆ The tuition incentives will only be made available to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition and general fees after available federal post secondary student financial assistance funds have been applied to those costs.
- ◆ Students will be eligible to receive the above incentive if they maintain a 2.5 GPA in the post-secondary setting.
- ◆ Students must use their A+ tuition reimbursement at a community college or a public vocational/technical school within *forty-eight (48) months* of graduation from the St. Charles School District.
- ◆ Graduates entering into active service to any branch of the armed forces may apply for deferment of scholarship eligibility ensuring they receive 48 months of eligibility at the end of their military service. To apply, please reference the MDHE website.

Reference

Websites:

Missouri Department of Higher Education
dhe.mo.gov

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
fafsa.com

Selective Service
sss.gov

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for Missouri (DESE)
dese.mo.gov

Phone Numbers:

St. Charles Community College (SCCC)
636-922-8000

SCCC A+ information
636-922-8269

Ongoing Eligibility

- Students who qualify for A+ financial assistance must enroll full time and attend one of the following eligible institutions:
 1. Public community college.
 2. Public vocational or technical school that has received reimbursement under RSMo 160.545.7 prior to Aug. 28, 2008.
 3. Private vocational or technical school that is a member of the North Central Association, is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission as of July 1, 2008, and maintains such accreditation. The school must also be designated as a 501c3 nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
- Students must maintain a cumulative 2.5 GPA to be eligible for the financial incentive.
- Students must make a good faith effort each year to first secure all available federal financial aid (FAFSA).
- All individuals required to register under the Military Selective Service Act must show proof of registration to be eligible for state-supported scholarships, programs for financial assistance for postsecondary education or loans insured by any state agency.
- A+ eligible students must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

Student Eligibility

- ◆ To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program (tuition and general fees), a student must be certified as an A+ student by his/her high school. To qualify, the student must meet the following criteria by graduation day:
- ◆ Enter into a written agreement with his/her high school prior to graduation and have attended an A+ school for at least three consecutive years.
- ◆ Graduate from high school with a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or higher.
- ◆ Successfully complete the Algebra I EOC with a score of proficient or advanced or a higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in mathematics.
- ◆ Have at least a 95% attendance record for the four-year period.
- ◆ Perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring of students through Students as Mentors (SAM).
- ◆ Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

A+ Requirements

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Students are encouraged to enroll in the program prior to or early in their sophomore year.

- ◆ The student must be enrolled at St. Charles High School or St. Charles West High School and/or another designated A+ high school for 3 consecutive years immediately prior to graduation.
- ◆ If a student withdraws or transfers from the high school after the beginning of their sophomore year, the student will not be considered eligible for the A+ Program **unless the student transfers to another A+ designated high school** in the State of Missouri.
- ◆ An A+ School Agreement (Student Statement of Intent to Participate) must be completed with all appropriate signatures.
- ◆ Anyone registering for and requesting A+ incentives must meet all criteria dating back to the beginning of their freshmen year. This includes students who attended another high school during their freshmen year and transferred to St. Charles High School or St. Charles West High School.
- ◆ Students who are active duty military dependants and students who are dependants of retired military personnel who relocate to Missouri within one year of the date of retirement from active duty are excused from this provision if the student attends a designated A+ school in the school year immediately preceding graduation and has met all other eligibility requirements.

A+ Appeal Procedure

A student (and/or parent) has the right to appeal when he/she becomes ineligible for the A+ financial incentive. In cases of appeal, the student must notify the A+ Coordinator in writing of his/her intent to appeal. The A+ Coordinator shall then convene an Appeals Committee meeting for consideration of the appeal within ten (10) school days. The Committee shall hear the appeal and return its decision to the student (and parent) within five (5) days of the meeting.

The following outlines the appeal process:

- ◆ Students/parents will have 30 days from the receipt of a progress report or disqualification letter to appeal a decision. Anyone making an appeal must use the "Appeal Form" available in the A+ Office.
- ◆ The basis of the appeal must be submitted in writing through the office of the A+ Coordinator. The students/parents may make the appeal in writing or make a presentation before the A+ Appeals Committee.
- ◆ Upon receiving a written appeal, the A+ Coordinator will convene the A+ Appeals Committee composed of the following:
 - 1) High School Principal
 - 2) A+ Coordinator *
 - 3) Director of Guidance
 - 4) Students As Mentors Teacher
 - 5) Student's Counselor
 - 6) Disciplinary Principal.

After the A+ Appeals Committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the student/parent by letter. Any and all appeals will be conducted following policies set by the Board of Education

* The A+ Coordinator will act as facilitator and a nonvoting member of the Appeals Committee.

(For Citizenship Appeals see Page 11)

Receiving A+ Status

MONITORING OF A+ STATUS

Following the end of each semester, students who are participating in the A+ Program will receive a letter reporting their progress in each of the required areas. Any questions or concerns about the information reported should be directed to the A+ Coordinator. (See appeal procedure, page 15).

NOTIFICATION OF A+ STATUS

The A+ Coordinator will review all records of A+ students, and names of eligible students will be submitted to the principal and Guidance Office for official certification upon graduation. A final A+ designation letter will be mailed to all graduates after commencement. Students receiving the A+ designation will have a notation on their official academic transcript.



- ◆ In addition to the preceding eligibility requirements The Missouri Department of Higher Education may impose additional requirements prior to the distribution of funds.

GRADE POINT REQUIREMENT

The student must graduate from high school with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. The official transcript will document and certify that the grade point requirement has been met.

ALGEBRA I END OF COURSE EXAM

The student must have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end-of-course exam or a higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the area of mathematics. Students who are unable to complete this requirement will be given an opportunity to retake the Algebra I EOC. Students not meeting this criteria may qualify by achieving a qualifying score on the math subtest of the ACT. **Qualifying scores and the required coordinating GPA will be set annually by the MDHE.**

GOOD FAITH EFFORT

- ◆ The FAFSA form is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Parents are encouraged to apply as soon as possible after January 1st of the student's senior year. Early graduates must complete the FAFSA for the previous year as well.
- ◆ Tuition incentives will only be awarded to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition and general fees after available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds have been applied to these costs.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

To be eligible for the A+ School incentive, a student must have a 95% accumulated attendance record during high school. **Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes.** Therefore, the student will acquire the habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. A student who does not meet the 95% attendance requirement **will not** be eligible for the A+ Financial Incentive. The following attendance guidelines are required of all students participating in the A+ Program:

- ◆ A cumulative attendance record will be kept from the beginning of the A+ student's freshman year until graduation.
- ◆ The high school attendance office keeps the official record of attendance. Students attending Lewis and Clark Career Center have their attendance reported daily and their records maintained in the high school attendance office.
- ◆ Cumulative attendance information from the official school attendance office will be given to the A+ School Coordinator at the beginning of each semester.
- ◆ Parents, guardians, and students will be provided information that includes the student's attendance records at the end of each semester.

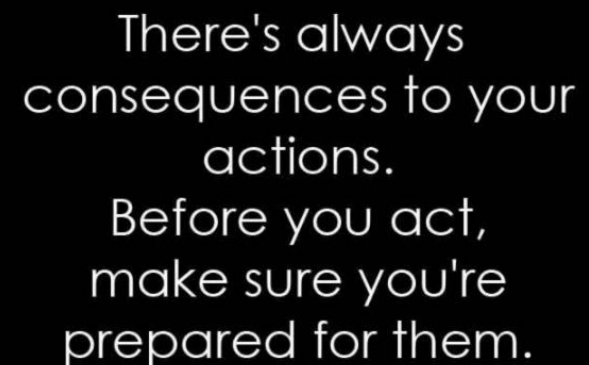
Students experiencing a catastrophic medical situation may appeal those days to the A+ Coordinator. Ongoing treatment due to extended illnesses will be reviewed on an as needed basis. A completed appeal form and doctor's documentation, for validation, is required for the ap-

PROBATION:

Any disciplinary offense based on the Student Code of Conduct (other than an offense that causes automatic removal from the program) that results in a student receiving either a Saturday Campus, In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension will result in the student being placed on probation.

Disciplinary probation is used with the understanding that even the best student makes mistakes. **Receiving the A+ Incentive is an honor and should be treated as such.**

Students receiving a third disciplinary action resulting in Saturday Campus, In-School Suspension, or Out-of-School Suspension will be removed from the A+ Program.



There's always
consequences to your
actions.
Before you act,
make sure you're
prepared for them.

UNLAWFUL USE OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL/ TOBACCO/TOBACCO RELATED PRODUCTS

An A+ student will not sell, possess, or use any controlled substance or drug paraphernalia as defined by law and stated in the High School Code of Conduct. The use of prescription medicine is allowed under BOE policy and established guidelines. Students and parents are responsible for understanding and following these guidelines.

The district prohibits all employees, students and patrons from smoking or using tobacco or tobacco related products in all district facilities, on district transportation and on all district grounds at all times.

THE FOLLOWING OFFENSES WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FROM THE A+ SCHOOL PROGRAM:

- ◆ Possession, use, sale, or transfer of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, tobacco or tobacco related products
- ◆ Possession of drug paraphernalia
- ◆ Criminal Activity as defined by the Safe Schools Act
- ◆ Assault on a student
- ◆ Intimidation of staff
- ◆ Physical threat to staff
- ◆ Vandalism/theft
- ◆ False fire alarm/bomb threats and misuse of emergency equipment
- ◆ Serious sexual misbehavior/exposure
- ◆ Possession of dangerous items
- ◆ Dangerous behavior

peal to be considered. Undocumented absences due to illness will not be approved for appeal. See A+ Attendance Appeal Procedure, page 15.

TUTORING/MENTORING REQUIREMENT

To qualify for the A+ Incentive, students must perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring/mentoring of students. Students seeking the A+ Incentive must meet the following qualifications prior to beginning a tutoring/mentoring experience:

- ◆ Have good citizenship status and a signed A+ participation agreement.
- ◆ Complete SAMs application process.
- ◆ Commit to 50 hours of service by completing the Students as Mentors (SAMs) class.
- ◆ Sign a contractual agreement specifying rules and regulations.
- ◆ Provide own transportation and waive school liability.

**NO FINANCIAL REMUNERATION MAY BE
ACCEPTED FOR TUTORING/MENTORING.**

POLICIES OF THE TUTORING/ MENTORING PROGRAM:

- ◆ Tutoring/mentoring must be school sponsored. The Students as Mentors class (SAM) meets this requirement.
- ◆ **Students must attend a mandatory training session held prior to the beginning of their designated SAMs semester.**
- ◆ An official attendance sheet with tutoring/mentoring hours must be accurately kept by the student and signed by the school official in charge of the student. It must be turned in at the end of the semester in which the tutoring/mentoring takes place.
- ◆ Tutoring/mentoring may be done during the school year or during summer school (when offered.)
- ◆ Scheduled times for tutoring/mentoring are important and absences should occur only in cases of emergency. **Notification of absence must be made to the appropriate supervisors in a timely manner. District Code of Conduct rules regarding skipping and truancy will apply.**
- ◆ Failure to follow the Tutoring/Mentoring procedures may result in dismissal from the A+ Program.

CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT

Participation in the A+ School Program is an honor and a unique privilege for St. Charles School District students. Students pursuing the A+ Incentive must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs/alcohol.

The A+ Program follows the board approved student code of conduct and appeal procedure for the high school. Any disciplinary action which affects A+ may be appealed. All disciplinary appeals must follow established board policy as stated in the Board Approved Student Code of Conduct

Certification of good citizenship will be based on the official discipline record maintained in the Administrative Offices at the student's high school.

Consequences for infractions of the discipline code are assigned by the assistant principal and that administrator is responsible for certifying the accuracy of the student's discipline.