

**COLE CAMP R-1 HIGH
SCHOOL**

A+ PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Revised May 31, 2016

FOREWORD

When the Missouri State Legislature established the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993, they included the provisions for the A+ Schools Program. In an effort to enhance educational opportunities for high school students, the legislature provided that students, who attend schools which meet specific criteria explained in the A+ Schools Program Grant Application, would be eligible for financial incentives. Once designated an A+ School, Cole Camp R-1 High School graduates who meet specific A+ criteria will be eligible to receive paid tuition, books and fees to attend any public community college, vocational, or technical school in Missouri.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the guidelines and policies of the A+ Program. It is the responsibility of Cole Camp R-1 School District to follow these policies to ensure A+ designation is maintained. Accurate certification of students is crucial to the integrity of the program and A+ Schools designation. It is the responsibility of the students and parents to read this handbook carefully in order to understand all guidelines and regulations required. Direct any questions concerning this program to the A+ Coordinator at (660) 668-3011 ext. 309.

Mrs. Lynn Eckhoff
Counselor
A+ Coordinator

A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM GOALS

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

1. all students will graduate from high school.
2. all students will complete a selection of high school studies that is challenging and that has identified learning expectations.
3. all students will proceed from high school graduation to college, postsecondary vocational or technical school, or high wage job with opportunities for workplace skill development and advancement opportunities.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Following designation as an A+ School, Cole Camp R-1 graduates can qualify for two (2) years of paid tuition, books and fees at any public Missouri community college, vocational, or technical school.

These financial incentives will be available for a period of 48 months after the graduation date documented on their high school diploma. If a student enlists in the military during this time, his/her time of service does not count towards the 48 months. To maintain eligibility during that time, each participating student must enroll and attend a Missouri public community college, vocational or technical school on a full-time basis and maintain a GPA of 2.50 or higher.

These incentives will be made available after the student has made a good faith effort to first secure all available federal postsecondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. This requires students to fill out a 'Free Application for Federal Student Aid' (FAFSA) form their senior year. If federal funding is granted, the A+ monies will only reimburse the balance of tuition and general fees.

Eligibility expires when the earliest of the following occurs:

- 48 months after the graduation date documented on the student's high school transcript.
- Receipt of an associate's degree
- Completion of 105% of the hours required for the program of study in which the student is enrolled

This incentive does not pay for remedial, repeat or dropped courses.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Program, a student must be certified as an A+ student by Cole Camp R-1 High School. To qualify for certification, students must sign an A+ agreement prior to March 1 of their senior year and successfully complete the following requirements:

- be a U.S. Citizen or permanent resident of the United States
- attend a designated A+ school for three (3) consecutive years prior to graduation
- graduate from high school with a 4-year minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 or higher on a 4.00 scale;
- have a minimum of 95% cumulative attendance record over a 4-year period;
- Score proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I, Geometry OR Algebra 2 EOC;
 - If a student does not meet the requirement for the math EOC then the student may use the qualifying score from the ACT or COMPASS exam—the cut score will be determined annually by the Missouri Department of Higher Education.
- perform a minimum of 50 hours of documented, unpaid tutoring/mentoring for other Cole Camp R-1 students;
- maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol throughout 4 years of high school;
- make a good faith effort to first secure all available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment (such as the Pell Grant) by filling out and submitting the FAFSA form
- **males must register for Selective Service - in accordance with public law**

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

A+ participation is voluntary. Students may participate in the program by completing and returning an A+ Agreement to the A+ Coordinator.

- Students are encouraged to enroll in the A+ Program prior to or early in their freshman year (**NOTE: enrollment must be completed prior to March 1 in the year the student will graduate – 8th semester**);
- The A+ Student Agreement form must be completed with **ALL** appropriate signatures and filed with the A+ coordinator;
- Students must enroll in Cole Camp R-1 High School no later than two (2) weeks after the beginning of the fall term of the student's sophomore year;
- If a student withdraws/transfers from Cole Camp R-1 High School after the beginning of his/her sophomore year, the student will not be considered eligible for the A+ Program unless he/she re-enrolls in an A+ designated school. If a student transfers back to Cole Camp R-1 High School from a designated A+ school he/she may continue to participate in the A+ Schools Program.
- If a student transfers from another school after the beginning of his/her sophomore year, the student may only participate in the A+ Program if the school from which he/she transferred is a designated A+ school;

MONITORING OF A+ STATUS

Every September and January students who are participating in the A+ Program will receive a letter reporting their progress in each of the required areas: GPA, attendance, tutoring/mentoring hours. Seniors will receive an additional letter reporting their progress at the end of 3rd quarter. Any questions or concerns about the information reported should be directed to the A+ coordinator.

GRADE POINT REQUIREMENT

The A+ student must graduate from high school with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 on a 4.00 scale. The following statements are intended to help clarify the A+ Program policies concerning GPA:

- the cumulative GPA is over four (4) years of high school beginning with the first semester student is designated a 'freshman' and ends with the 8th semester of attendance;
- GPA's will NOT be rounded;
- the student's **official** transcript will document and certify that the GPA requirement has been met.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

A+ participants are expected to attend school regularly. A+ participants must graduate with a minimum cumulative attendance rate of 95%. The A+ program makes no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Attendance is based upon Monday through Friday when school is in regular session. Only the days and times, which are calculated for Average Daily Attendance (ADA), will be used to determine the 95% attendance requirement. Attendance is calculated in minutes, therefore, coming to school late or leaving early will affect a student's overall attendance percentage. The attendance percentage will not be rounded up.

It is the responsibility of each A+ participant to closely monitor his/her attendance. Semester updates will be mailed to the homes of the A+ participants.

The A+ attendance policy allows some relief in cases where the absence was beyond the control of the A+ participant. Request for Attendance Waivers must be filed in accordance with the following established policy guidelines. Each A+ participant should read and understand the attendance policy.

****A+ attendance requirements are not to be confused with the general attendance requirements as printed in the Cole Camp High School Handbook.**

ATTENDANCE REVIEW PROCESS Appeal for Waiver of Absences

The A+ state attendance requirements are very specific. Each September and January letters are sent to all A+ participants to update them on their A+ status. At this time, students who have fallen below the 95% cumulative attendance rate have the opportunity to appeal their attendance record. Students and/or parents who would like to appeal the recorded attendance will have **15 calendar days** to appeal the student's attendance record with the A+ coordinator. *If an appeal is not filed within 15 calendar days of notification, a waiver for days missed within that time period will not be considered.*

Attendance Waiver Guidelines:

- student/parents should use the 'Appeal of Absence' form that is available from the A+ coordinator;
- documentation to support a request for an A+ attendance waiver must be submitted to the A+ coordinator no later than 15 calendar days after receiving the progress letter.
- students with specific health histories must ensure that the medical documentation of chronic or long-term health related problems are on file with the school nurse. Such health related problems could be considered in a possible review situation;

- those submitting a request for waiver of days missed will provide official documentation including specific dates from the following:

<u>Reason for Absence</u>	<u>Documentation Required</u>
Hospitalization	Physician's letter
Chronic health problems	Physician's letter
Court Appearance	Court letter
Funeral	Parent letter and copy of obituary or memorial pamphlet
Religious Holiday	Minister's letter
Personal/family calamity	Parent <u>and</u> school counselor or principal letter
Catastrophic illness/injury	Physician's letter

****Return to school notes are not acceptable documentation.**

- student will **NOT** receive a waiver if any absence is due to:
 - Truancy
 - Suspension
 - Personal/Family Vacations
 - Transportation problems (unless it involves school provided service)
 - Routine doctor visits
 - Dentist or orthodontist visits

When all information is received, the A+ coordinator will convene a review committee to decide if a waiver for absences for A+ status determination will be granted. The review committee for attendance appeals will be composed of the following:

- HS principal
- HS counselor
- Three (3) teachers
- A+ coordinator as a non-voting facilitator

After a decision has been reached, the A+ coordinator will notify the student/parents in writing.

TUTORING/MENTORING REQUIREMENT

A+ students are required to perform a minimum of 50 documented, unpaid hours of tutoring/mentoring for other students in the Cole Camp R-I School District. For the purposes of the program, community service and volunteering are not considered to be an acceptable substitute for tutoring. Although, 25% of the required tutoring/mentoring hours (12.5 hours) can be completed by job shadowing.

Tutoring must be performed within the Cole Camp R-I School District. Tutoring time must be documented on either the A+ Tutoring Log or Cadet Teaching Log. These log sheets must be signed by a faculty member and /or school official in charge of that tutoring/mentoring opportunity. The log sheets are available from the A+ Coordinator. Participants are responsible for maintain his/her tutoring log accurately, obtaining the necessary signatures and for submitting the log to the A+ Coordinator in a timely manner. Log sheets should be turned in quarterly. All tutoring/mentoring experiences must be started by March 1 of the senior year and completed by the student's graduation in May.

TUTORING OPTIONS

Following is a list of possible opportunities that will count toward the 50 hours of documented, unpaid tutoring/mentoring requirement for the A+ Program. All activities must be academic in nature and can be high school, middle school, or elementary level:

Cadet Teaching Program:

- student must be attempting to meet all A+ requirements;
- student must be in his/her junior or senior year of high school;
- student must stay in good standing with the Cadet Teaching supervisor and cooperating teacher (including attendance and promptness);
- student must complete a 'Cadet Teaching Log Sheet' with appropriate signatures each quarter

Summer School Tutoring/Mentoring:

- student must stay in good standing with the Summer School director, supervising teacher and A+ coordinator.
- summer school tutors/mentors will be required to finish out the summer school period regardless of whether or not the 50 hours have been reached and attend daily;
- student must complete the 'Tutoring Log Sheet' with appropriate signatures.

Before/After School Tutoring/Mentoring:

- student must get approval from the A+ coordinator and if necessary the Boys & Girls Club director;
- student must stay in good standing with Boys & Girls Club, building administrator, and A+ coordinator;
- student must have transportation to or from school when tutoring is to begin and end. Continuous transportation problems will lead to the removal of the A+ student from this option.

Job Shadowing

- job shadowing may qualify for up to 12.5 hours;
- job shadowing must be pre-approved by the A+ Coordinator and set up with the appropriate paperwork from the HS counselor
- documentation must be completed, verified, and submitted before hours are credited; documentation should be signed off on by both the HS Counselor and the supervisor at the job shadowing site

Other opportunities may be available throughout the school year and will need to be approved by the A+ coordinator prior to completing the hours.

CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT

Participation in the A+ Program is a privilege and not a right, therefore, the Cole Camp School District requires student to adhere to standards of behavior, which will bring credit to student, the A+ program, the school, and the community. Students who represent the Cole Camp School District must demonstrate good citizenship and conduct at all times. Following is a list of guidelines to be used to determine citizenship requirements:

- student must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol including tobacco. Students who violate the district's Alcohol/Drug policy during the contract time are subject to and will automatically be removed from the A+ Program;
- student must adhere to a code of behavior (as specified in the Cole Camp R-1 High School Student Handbook/Agenda), which will demonstrate respect for authority, faculty, school, property, and their fellow students. Students who do not adhere to may jeopardize their A+ status;

- **any violation of the Safe Schools Act will result in the principal recommending immediate withdrawal from the A+ Program;**
- some discipline instances are serious in nature and may result in the removal of the student from the A+ Program. If the student is not removed from the program, he/she may be placed on immediate probation for a period of up to 180 school days from the date of the offense;
- if placed on probation, the student and parents/guardians will be required to attend a conference in order for the student to remain in the A+ Program;
- poor citizenship resulting in Out-Of-School Suspension (OSS) will result in the following action:
 - OSS 1st offense: A+ Program probation for a period of 45-180 days
 - OSS 2nd offense: loss of eligibility and removal from the A+ Program
 - Expulsion 1st offense: loss of eligibility and removal from the A+ Program

If no further misdeeds occur, the student will be returned to full A+ status following his/her probation. Any student who receives two (2) semesters of probation during his/her high school career will have his/her disciplinary record reviewed by a committee composed of two (2) administrators, A+ Coordinator, and two (2) faculty members for continued probation or possible dismissal from the program.

A+ CITIZENSHIP APPEAL PROCESS

Students and parent/guardians may appeal an A+ disciplinary decision using the following process:

- student/parent will have 15 calendar days upon receipt of notification letter sent to appeal in writing a decision that is made dealing with discipline or probation using the 'A+ Appeal of Citizenship' form;
- the A+ coordinator will convene a committee with the purpose of reviewing the written appeal and they will decide whether the appeal should be granted or if the original removal will stand. This committee will consist of:
 - a. HS principal
 - b. HS counselor
 - c. Three (3) administrators
 - d. A+ coordinator as non-voting facilitator
- the A+ coordinator will notify the student/parents in writing after the committee has met as to their decision;
- if the student/parent does not agree with the decision of the A+ appeal committee, he/she will have ten (10) calendar days from receipt of the written decision to appeal in writing to the superintendent. This appeal process will then be conducted in a manner to be determined by the superintendent at his/her discretion.

SELECTIVE SERVICE REQUIREMENT

All male students are required to register with Selective Service when they turn 18 years of age. You can register online at www.sss.gov.

GOOD FAITH EFFORT

The A+ Program requires students/parents to first make a good faith effort to secure all available federal postsecondary financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. This requirement will be met by parents/students completing and submitting the FAFSA. This must be completed before the student graduates. The website to electronically fill out the FAFSA online is www.fafsa-online.org

MISSOURI COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Please look at <http://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/grants/aplusscholarship.php> for a full list of eligible A+ community colleges and vocational technical schools.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does signing the A+ Agreement mean?

By signing and submitting the A+ agreement, students and their parents are simply indicating an interest in the student's participation in the A+ Program and that they understand the requirements that qualify the student for that program. When an agreement has been signed by all parties and returned, a file will be established for that student with the A+ Coordinator. This will denote the student's active participation in the A+ Program and will contain all pertinent information relative to the student's eligibility for A+ funds.

Does participating in the A+ program restrict a student's choices?

Participating in the A+ Program DOES NOT in any way restrict a student's educational choices. The A+ Schools Program is designed to provide greater opportunities for students. Signing up will not restrict the options available to a student while in high school or upon graduating from high school.

What if an A+ participant decides to attend a four-year college or university?

There are no repercussions for participating in the A+ Program and completing the student eligibility requirements. Many students will develop plans to attend a four-year college or university following high school. The A+ Schools Scholarship incentive MAY NOT be applied to costs associated with a four-year college or university, however, there are many universities that are now offering independent scholarships for students meeting the A+ requirements. Students can check with the university they are planning on attending to see if they offer any scholarships for this.

If for whatever reason an A+ eligible student should withdraw from the four-year institution with at least a 2.5 GPA, he/she could enroll at a Missouri public community college or vocational-technical school and be eligible for A+ tuition benefits. A+ tuition benefits are available to students for up to four years after the date of their graduation from high school, provided state funds are appropriated by the legislature.

What if an A+ participant decides not to attend a community college or vocational or technical school?

Participation in the A+ Program in no way restricts a student's post high school career or educational opportunities. It is simply a funding resource for post-secondary education should the student choose to utilize it.

Does participating in the A+ Program guarantee the students will receive the tuition benefits?

There are at least three factors that will impact the availability of tuition benefits to a particular student. First, the high school from which the student graduates must meet and maintain all the requirements for A+ Schools designation. Second, State funding must be available. Third, the student must meet all the criteria outlined in the A+ Schools Program and the participation agreement, which the student signed.

Does a student qualify for A+ tuition benefits if his/her daily average attendance is 94.8 or his/her grade point average is 2.47 on a 4.0 scale upon graduation?

No—The A+ School Program does not permit rounding up of GPA or attendance percentage.