



**A+**  
SCHOOLS  
PROGRAM



Find out more about A+ Schools at [www.rsdmo.org/aplus](http://www.rsdmo.org/aplus)

## ROCKWOOD MISSION

We do whatever  
it takes to ensure  
all students  
realize their  
potential.



# Introduction

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The A+ Schools Program was established as part of the Missouri Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 in order to provide incentives for local high schools to raise academic expectations, reduce their dropout rate, establish relationships with the business community, and provide better career pathways to students. The legislation requires the Rockwood School District to establish guidelines and policies in order to administer the A+ Schools Program in a fair and consistent manner.

Rockwood voluntarily chooses to participate in the A+ Schools Program as a commitment to provide all students with a rigorous education that prepares them for college, post/secondary career/technical training, and a high wage job. It is the responsibility of all Rockwood high schools to meet and maintain all A+ requirements. The Missouri State Board of Education designates A+ status based on program review.

Eligible students graduating from an A+ high school may qualify for the student financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program. All reimbursements are dependent upon Rockwood School District high schools maintaining their status as an A+ School and the availability of state appropriations from the Missouri General Assembly. Reimbursement is not the funding responsibility of the Rockwood School District.

The purpose of this manual is to provide students, parents, and staff with information about the guidelines and policies of the Rockwood School District's A+ Schools Program. It is the responsibility of each high school to make sure that designation is maintained. It is the responsibility of the students and parents to read, understand, and comply with the program requirements for eligibility. Please direct any additional questions concerning this program to the A+ Schools Coordinator at your high school location.

For more information about the Missouri A+ Program visit: <http://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/grants/aplusscholarship.php>



## Nondiscrimination Statement

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The Rockwood School District prohibits and will not tolerate discrimination against or harassment of any student, employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, genetic information, marital status, disability, handicapping conditions, or any other factor that is not a proper legal basis for an employment decision. This policy will prevail in all matters concerning the staff, the students, the public, the educational programs and services of the district, and individuals with whom the Board does business. Inquiries by students, parents, or employees regarding Rockwood School District's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to the compliance coordinators listed below:

Dr. Katherine Reboulet, Compliance Coordinator for Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Missouri Human Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act and P.L. 92-318, Education Amendments of 1972, Title IX (race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, sex, age, disability (for employees) discrimination issues),

*Rockwood Administrative Center*

*111 East North Street*

*Eureka, Missouri 63025*

*636.733.2035*

Dr. Jane Brown, Compliance Coordinator for P.L. 93-112, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and P.L. 94-142, Education for all Disabled Children Act (disability and handicapping conditions (for students) discrimination issues),

*Rockwood Early Childhood Center*

*2730 Valley Road*

*Chesterfield, Missouri 63005-6920*

*636.891.6212*

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# Financial Incentives

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Students who graduate from an A+ designated high school may qualify for state-paid financial incentives to attend any public community college or career/technical school in Missouri if the students successfully meet the requirements (see Eligibility Requirements on page 7). In addition, some four-year institutions may offer financial incentives for students who meet A+ criteria.

## GOALS OF THE A+ PROGRAM

As outlined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the primary goals of the A+ Program are:

- All students will graduate from high school.
- All students will complete a selection of high school studies that is challenging and for which there are measurable learner expectations.
- All students will proceed from high school graduation to college, post-secondary career/technical school, or a high wage job with workplace skill development opportunities.

A+ students are under no obligation to use the A+ financial benefits. The benefits are earned by each individual student and are not transferable to any other student.

Receipt of private scholarships will not affect an A+ participant's eligibility for benefits.

Financial need is not a factor in determining an A+ participant's eligibility for A+ benefits. However, an A+ participant is required to complete a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to determine eligibility for non-payback financial aid (i.e. Pell Grant, Missouri State Grant, Supplementary Education Opportunity Grant).

Visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) for details.

A student who graduates at the end of the first semester of his/her senior year is eligible to receive A+ funds for the semester immediately following as long as the student has met all program eligibility requirements. Educational incentives will be provided as long as state funds are appropriated by the legislature.

In order to use A+ incentives, students must meet criteria established by the A+ Schools Program and the participating post-secondary institutions. Students are encouraged to check with the admissions office of their school of choice for any criteria in addition to the general guidelines.

- Enrolled as a full-time degree seeking student
- Maintain the school's satisfactory academic progress policy
- Incentive is good for the completion of 105% of credit hours
- Must be used within forty-eight months of high school graduation date documented on your high school transcript

# Student Eligibility

Rockwood high school students meeting the following requirements may be eligible for financial reimbursement (providing Rockwood high schools maintain A+ status and funds are available from the Missouri General Assembly):

- Have a signed A+ Agreement on file at the student's high school.
- Attend an A+ designated high school for three consecutive years immediately prior to graduation.\*
- Graduate with an *unweighted*, unrounded cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. (A GPA of 2.49 will not be rounded)
- Beginning with the high school senior class of 2015, have achieved math proficiency and school's academic progress policy.
- Maintain at least a 95% cumulative attendance record in grades 9–12. An attendance rate of 94.9% will not be rounded.
- Perform 50 hours of unpaid mentoring and/or tutoring to other students in our district.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the use of alcohol and unlawful drugs.

- Make a good faith effort to apply for non-payback financial aid by completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
- Register for Selective Service if applicable

To maintain A+ eligibility at the post-secondary level, students must:

- Enroll and attend on a full-time basis a participating Missouri community college or post-secondary career/technical school.
- Be seeking a degree at the institution at which you are enrolled.
- Must meet the GPA requirements defined in your school's satisfactory academic progress policy.
- Make a good faith effort each year to secure all available federal financial aid by completing the FAFSA.
- Rockwood's ILC is not an A+ designated school.
- Check with post-secondary institution for updated policy

\* If one of your parents is a member of the military on active duty or has retired from the military and relocated to Missouri within one year of his/her retirement, you are exempt from this requirement. However, you must attend an A+ designated high school and meet all of the other high school eligibility requirements in the school year immediately preceding graduation.

## ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

A+ enrollment is voluntary. Students may participate in the program by completing and returning a signed Program Agreement to the high school A+ Office. After all signatures are obtained by the A+ Office, the student will be confirmed as an active A+ student. Upon confirmation into the A+ Program it becomes the responsibility of the student to meet all the requirements of the program to become eligible for the tuition reimbursement upon graduation.

Students are encouraged to enroll in the A+ Program during their freshman year. Early enrollment in the program allows students and parents to receive regular information on the A+ Program from the A+ Coordinator.

Students may sign up for the A+ Schools Program at any time between grades nine and eleven.

Seniors must enroll no later than the last Wednesday in September of the senior year due to the need to complete fifty required hours of tutoring.

\* Transfer students who enroll in a Rockwood High School after the last Wednesday in September of their sophomore year will NOT qualify to participate in the Rockwood A+ Schools Program, unless they transfer from another A+ designated school.

# Attendance Requirement

A+ participants are expected to attend school regularly. A+ participants must graduate with a minimum cumulative (grades 9 – 12) attendance rate of 95%. (An attendance rate of 94.9% will not be rounded.)

Attendance is based upon all days when school is in regular session. Only the days and times calculated for Average Daily Attendance (ADA) will be used to determine the 95% attendance requirement. The attendance office will keep the official record for each student.

Parents/guardians and students will be provided with information on the student's attendance at the end of each semester. However, it is the responsibility of each A+ participant to closely monitor his/her attendance.

The A+ attendance policy may provide relief in cases where the absence was beyond the control of the A+ participant via a review process.\* Each A+ participant should read and understand the attendance policy.

Anytime an A+ student is absent for one of the "Eligible Exceptions," the student may bring required documentation to the A+ office to be filed in the event an attendance review needs to be made. This precaution will ensure that required documentation is already gathered and on file.

Attendance review will **not** be granted for the following:

- Truancy
- Suspension
- Personal/Family Vacation
- Transportation
- Absences due to Final Exam Exemptions

ABSENCES ELIGIBLE FOR EXCEPTION REVIEW	DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED
Hospitalization	Physician's letter
Chronic Health problem	Physician's letter
Court Appearance	Court letter
Funeral	Parent letter and copy of death certificate, obituary, or memorial pamphlet
Religious Holiday	Letter from clergy
Personal/Family Calamity	Parent and school counselor letter
Catastrophic illness/injury	Physician's letter
College Visit	Letter from College Admissions Office

\*In the event the student is deemed ineligible after absences have been reviewed, attendance appeals may be directed to the A+ Schools Appeals Committee when a student believes that he/she has been declared ineligible unfairly. To appeal, the student or parent/guardian must notify the A+ Schools Coordinator in writing of his/her intent to appeal within 10 days of receiving an ineligibility letter.

An A+ Appeals Committee shall hear the appeal within 10 working days of receiving a written request and return its decision to the student in writing. The A+ Schools Appeals Committee will consist of the following individuals: an assistant principal, the student's counselor, a member of the advisory committee, and the A+ Coordinator (who will be a non-voting member in the appeals process). The student may appeal the A+ Appeals Committee's decision to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

A+ attendance requirements are not to be confused with the general attendance requirements of the Rockwood School District as printed in the student handbook.



# Citizenship Requirement

Students who participate in the A+ Schools Program must be good citizens and judged so by the proper school authorities. Specifically:

- The student must have no involvement with drug or alcohol possession and/or abuse during any activity associated with a Rockwood School. A violation will result in automatic removal of the student from the Rockwood A+ Program.
- The student must adhere to a code of behavior that will demonstrate respect for authority, faculty, school property, and fellow students. The school's printed discipline policy will serve as the definition of appropriate behavior. Specific information can be found in the school handbook and district policy manual.
- Students who receive consequences for a violation of the Safe Schools Act will be removed from the A+ Program (including but not limited to: assault, weapons, and drug distribution).
- Students who are convicted of a felony will not qualify.
- Students will lose A+ eligibility if they accumulate more than five days of in or out of school suspension during their high school career.

Citizenship appeals may be directed to the A+ Schools Appeals Committee when a student believes that he/she has been declared ineligible unfairly. To appeal, the student or parent/guardian must notify the A+ Schools Coordinator in writing of his/her intent to appeal within 10 days of receiving an ineligibility letter.

An A+ Appeals Committee shall hear the appeal within 10 days of receiving a written request and return its decision to the student in writing. The A+ Schools Appeals Committee will consist of the following individuals: an assistant principal, the student's counselor, a member of the advisory committee, and the A+ Coordinator (who will be a non-voting member in the appeals process).

The student may appeal the A+ Appeals Committee's decision to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

## GRADE POINT REQUIREMENT

A+ participants must graduate with a cumulative minimum unweighted, unrounded, grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. (A GPA of 2.49 will not be rounded). The cumulative GPA will be computed over a period of four years in high school.

The student's official transcript will serve as the basis for computing the cumulative GPA.

It is the responsibility of the A+ participant to closely monitor his/her grade point average through credit check letters and the Infinite Campus portal.

In addition, updates will be provided periodically to all A+ students and parents through the A+ Office. Final determination of A+ eligibility cannot be made until an A+ participant graduates and his/her final GPA is calculated.

# Tutoring/Mentoring Requirements

A+ students must verify a tutoring or mentoring assignment with the A+ Coordinator, complete an A+ Tutoring/Mentoring Agreement, and attend a training session before they may begin the accumulation of tutoring/mentoring hours.

Transportation to and from Rockwood locations away from the A+ participant's home school is the responsibility of the A+ participant. To participate in off-site tutoring/mentoring, the student must have on file an A+ Transportation Permission Form.

The student and the RSD employee supervising the tutoring/mentoring activity must maintain a log sheet to include the date, length of tutoring/mentoring sessions, and signature of the supervising employee. Log sheets will be distributed at the A+ tutor training session and available from the A+ Office. Log sheets are to be turned in to the A+ Coordinator at the end of each month so that student progress can be monitored. Students will not receive credit for unverified activities or for activities verified on forms that are lost or not delivered to the A+ Office. Failure to turn in authorized log sheets could jeopardize eligibility in the A+ Program.

Tutoring/mentoring activities are to be conducted in a controlled, disciplined, and orderly manner, and only for as long as the experience is productive and necessary. Participants should consider themselves as guests of the school and classrooms where the tutoring/mentoring occurs and should conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the

**A+ students must perform fifty hours of unpaid mentoring/tutoring. All tutoring/mentoring must be:**

- **Pre-approved by the A+ Coordinator**
- **Performed under the direct supervision of a Rockwood School District (RSD) employee**
- **Performed at a Rockwood School District site**
- **Accomplished during the school year or during summer school**
- **Directly related to academic success**
- **Must be met upon graduation**

Rockwood student handbook. Responsibilities of tutoring/mentoring assignments include participation at agreed upon times and dates. Advance notification should be given when the A+ participant will not be able to meet the mentoring/tutoring obligation.

The RSD employee will conduct an evaluation of the student's mentoring/tutoring obligation every four weeks. A+ participants who do not meet the behavioral expectations of the supervising Rockwood School District employee during any portion of the tutoring experience risk forfeiture of tutoring/mentoring opportunities.

A+ students who feel there are problems and/or conflicts with the supervising RSD employee or mentoring/tutoring assignment (i.e. teacher, student, etc.) should report the problem(s) immediately to the A+ Coordinator.

All tutoring/mentoring activities must be completed by seniors' last day of attendance. This enables the A+ Coordinator to verify eligibility and file all necessary paperwork.

# Math Proficiency Requirement

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The Missouri Department of Higher Education requires for A+ Eligibility that students demonstrate math proficiency in at least ONE of the following ways:

Test	Score Required
<b>Algebra I</b> End of Course (EOC) Exam	Proficient or Advanced
<b>Geometry</b> End of Course (EOC) Exam	Proficient or Advanced
<b>Algebra II</b> End of Course (EOC) Exam	Proficient or Advanced
<b>ACT – Math</b> Subtest	17* Subject to MDHE Qualifying Score

Students who took the Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II EOC exam while enrolled in the course and scored below Proficient will have ONE opportunity to re-take ONE math EOC exam of their choice.

- The A+/Testing Coordinator must be notified that a student wishes to re-test no later than November 15th of the re-test year. Testing will take place in December of each calendar year.

Each student enrolled in the A+ Program receives two status letters per year. These letters will include the student's progress on the math EOC scores, and the ACT and Compass scores that have been received or are accessible by the A+ Coordinator.

It is important for students to understand that math proficiency is now considered an A+ requirement, along with GPA, attendance, citizenship and tutoring hours. Students who do not demonstrate math proficiency prior to graduation may not be A+ Eligible nor have access to A+ funds immediately after graduation.

If you meet all the A+ Eligibility requirements upon graduation except the math proficiency requirement, you may establish eligibility by achieving a qualifying score on the math component of the ACT. You may achieve the qualifying score as a high school or postsecondary student. If you achieve the score as a postsecondary student, you may be eligible for an award in the same term that you take the test. MDHE will announce the qualifying ACT scores annually.

# Free Application for Federal Student Aid Requirement

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A+ Participants and their parents are required to complete and submit the FAFSA as a good faith effort to secure all available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. Information reported on FAFSA is required by post-secondary institutions to complete the enrollment process.

The A+ Scholarship will reimburse the unpaid balance of your tuition and general fees after all available, non-loan federal financial assistance, such as the federal Pell Grant (FAFSA), has been applied to your account. This may result in a zero award if your Pell Grant is sufficient to cover all tuition and general fees.

- Parents must complete and submit the online FAFSA form. The FAFSA information must be available to the public community college or career/technical school that the student is planning to attend.
- FAFSA information is available in the Guidance Office. Parents of seniors are encouraged to apply as soon as possible after January 1. The FAFSA may be submitted online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) by the April 1st deadline.
- The Rockwood School District does not have access to personal information submitted with the FAFSA.
- FAFSA must be completed each year the student is enrolled at a community college or career/technical school and receiving A+ funds.

## **SELECTIVE SERVICE**

**A+ participants who are required by the laws of the United States to register with the Selective Service must register or forfeit their eligibility for the A+ financial aid.**

# Accessing Tuition Benefits and Maintaining Eligibility

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A certified A+ student who has graduated from a Rockwood High School has forty-eight months after the graduation date documented on your high school transcript to take advantage of the financial incentives. To be eligible for incentives, participants must:

- Be verified by the A+ Coordinator and certified as eligible for A+ incentives.
- Be notified in writing as to approval or denial of their eligibility to receive A+ incentives. If denied, the participant will be provided with reason for the denial.
- Have name submitted to the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, A+ Division.
- Inform the post-secondary institution to which they have made application of their intent to use the financial incentives. The institution will prepare the necessary paperwork and bill the State of Missouri.
- Enroll and attend on a full-time basis at a Missouri public community college.
- Be seeking a degree from the institution at which you are enrolled.
- Maintain the school's satisfactory academic progress policy while attending any post-secondary institution. Students do not have access to funds while academic progress is below the school's satisfactory standards.
- Complete and submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for each year the student is enrolled in school.
- Failure to meet the Math MAP End-of-Course (EOC) requirement, you may attain eligibility by achieving a minimum score on the ACT math subtest. (Refer to page 11)

## PARENT REMINDERS

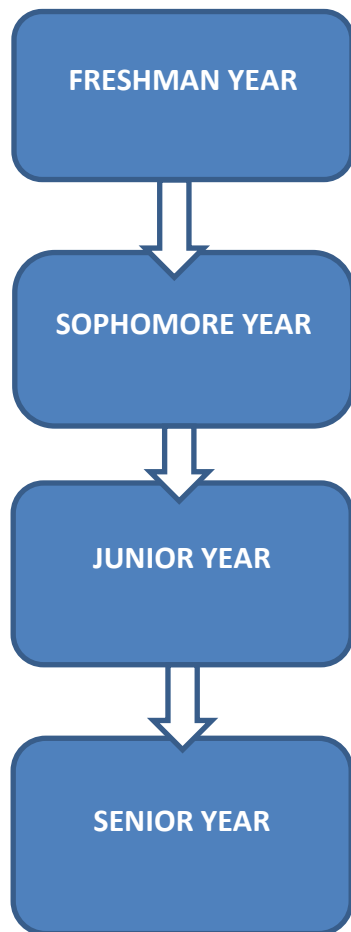
- Upon enrollment, immediately contact the financial aid office of the school of choice for assistance.
- Once your son/daughter is A+ certified, do not pay tuition to the school that your student is attending. The Missouri A+ Program will reimburse the college/career-technical school for your son/daughter's tuition.
- It is highly recommended that you encourage your son/daughter to attend the A+ orientation meeting that is sponsored by the college.
- If you have questions or concerns, please contact the financial aid office at your son/daughter's college immediately.

***Rockwood A+ Coordinators will do our best to keep parents and students informed of any new information we receive from MDHE regarding the A+ Program Eligibility Requirements.***

# Suggested Timeline

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A student may sign up for the A+ Schools program at any time between grades nine and eleven. Seniors must enroll no later than the last Wednesday in September of their senior year due to the need to complete fifty hours of tutoring/mentoring. In all cases, however, early enrollment is encouraged since attendance, GPA, and discipline records dating back to the first day of the freshman year are used to determine successful completion of the A+ Schools program requirements. Below is a suggested timeline for involvement in the A+ Schools Program.



- Sign the A+ Schools Program Agreement
- Sign the A+ Schools Citizenship Guidelines and Eligibility
- Establish GPA, attendance, and citizenship requirements

- See A+ Coordinator for potential tutoring opportunities and associated forms
- Maintain GPA, attendance, and citizenship requirements

- Continue tutoring/mentoring hours if not completed
- Maintain GPA, attendance, and citizenship requirements

## 1<sup>st</sup> Semester:

- Last opportunity to enroll – Applications due no later than the last Wednesday in September
- Complete tutoring/mentoring hours
- See the A+ Coordinator if you intend to graduate at semester and enter the post-secondary institution immediately upon graduation (or if you plan to attend summer session)
- Maintain GPA, attendance, and citizenship requirements
- Must notify A+ Coordinator no later than November 15th to re-test to meet the math proficiency requirements; testing will take place in December

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester:

- Submit FAFSA
- Maintain GPA, attendance, and citizenship requirements
- Register for Selective Service when applicable
- Meet with post-secondary admission advisor

# A+

# Forms

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EHS A+ Online Application



EHS Tutoring & Mentoring Log

