Harrisonville High School

A+ Scholarship Program

Student Handbook



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Purpose of Manual

In an effort to enhance education opportunities for high school students, the Missouri State Legislature established the Outstanding Schools Act (OSA) of 1993 which included the provisions of the A+ Schools Program.

Harrisonville High School graduates who meet specific A+ program criteria as outlined in this manual will be eligible to receive reimbursement for tuition and general fees 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 guidelines and policies of the A+ Schools Program. It is the responsibility of the Harrisonville Cass R-IX School District to follow these policies to ensure A+ Schools Program designation is maintained. Accurate certification of students is crucial to the integrity of the program and A+ Schools Program designation.

It is the responsibility of students and parents/guardians to read this manual carefully to understand the guidelines and regulations that are required for a student to become A+ certified.

A+ Scholarship information from the Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development can be located via the following link and/or QR code:

A+ Scholarship Program | dhewd.mo.gov

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Student Eligibility

To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Scholarship Program (paid tuition and general fees), a student must be certified as an A+ student by the Harrisonville High School. Eligible students must meet the following requirements:

- ❖ Be a U.S. Citizen or permanent resident;
- ❖ Enter into a written agreement (Statement of Intent) prior to graduation;
- ❖ Attend a designated A+ high school for 2 years prior to graduation;
- ❖ Graduate from high school with a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or higher (unweighted; no rounding is allowed, per Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development);
- ❖ Have at least a 95% cumulative attendance record (approximately 8 days per year);
- ❖ Perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring of students through a school-sponsored program; 25% of the hours may be earned through job-shadowing;
- ❖ Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs and alcohol (both on and off campus);
- ❖ Achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end of course exam, or a higher-level, DESE-approved, EOC in the field of mathematics; or obtain a qualifying score on a DESE approved assessment (ex. ACT);
- ❖ Make a good faith effort to secure all available federal post-secondary student financial aid funds that do not require repayment. Financial need is not a requirement for eligibility; however, all students must complete the FAFSA form.
- ❖ Male students must register under the US Military Selective Service Act and show proof of such registration.

Student Incentive

Qualified A+ graduates will be eligible to receive the following:

- ❖ Tuition and general fees to attend any participating public community college, vocational or technical school in the State of Missouri will be paid for two years (pending state funding).

- ❖ The financial incentives will be available only after the student has made a documented effort to secure any available post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment (FAFSA).

- ❖ The financial incentives will only be made available to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition and general fees after any available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds have been applied to those costs.

- ❖ Students will be eligible to receive financial incentives for two years if they are enrolled as a full-time student (12 hour minimum) and maintain a 2.5 GPA in the post-secondary setting.

- ❖ Private scholarships will not affect eligibility for the A+ Program, nor will they reduce the State's responsibility to a college or technical school.

- ❖ Students must complete the two years of full-time enrollment at a community college or a public vocational/technical school within four years of graduation from Harrisonville High School.

Financial need is not a factor in determining eligibility for the A+ Program.

Good Faith Effort

The student is required to make a good faith effort to secure all available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.

- Complete and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA summary report must be sent to the community college or public vocational/technical school that the student is planning to attend. A copy of the Student Aid Report (SAR) must be given to the A+ Office.

- The FAFSA form is available in the Guidance Office in January of the year of graduation. Parents are encouraged to apply as soon as possible after January 1st of that year.

- Financial incentives will only be awarded to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition and fees after available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds have been applied to these costs.

Attendance Requirements

To be eligible for the A+ scholarship, a student must have a 95% cumulative attendance record (approximately 8 days of absence per year) beginning with their freshman year. Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes. 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+ schools Program:

- ❖ Students must attend Harrisonville High School (or have transferred from an A+ designated school) for two consecutive years prior to graduation.
- ❖ Students who graduate at semester are eligible for the A+ incentives the following semester.
- ❖ A cumulative attendance record will be kept from the beginning of a student's freshman year until graduation.
- ❖ The official record of attendance is kept by the high school attendance office.
- ❖ Cumulative attendance information is available in the A+ office.
- ❖ The A+ office will make every effort to provide parents/guardians and students with information each semester that includes the student's attendance record.
  *Parents are also encouraged to track student progress/attendance through the Parent Portal program via the district website.

Attendance Review Process:
If an appeal is necessary, it is encouraged to file the appeal immediately after absence or notification from the school.

Anyone making an appeal should use the "A+ Attendance Appeal Form" (available from the A+ office). Documentation relating specifically to the appealed absences must be included with the waiver (i.e. doctor's note must include a statement indicating specific condition or treatment including dates and student name).

- ❖ Students/parents should contact the A+ office as soon as possible regarding attendance waiver requests.
- ❖ An Attendance Review Committee will be composed of a counselor, a principal, and a teacher. The committee will rotate members regularly.
- ❖ The A+ Coordinator will act as facilitator and a nonvoting member of the review committee. Decisions of the review committee will be considered final.

If a waiver is granted, the attendance days waived will not be reflected in the student's attendance percentage. The attendance percentage will be manually recalculated at the end of the student's senior year to reflect any days waived.

Attendance Waiver Guidelines:
Anyone submitting a request for an attendance waiver of days missed shall provide the A+ office with the following official documentation.

Attendance Requirements (cont.)

Reason for missing Documentation

Chronic health problems Letter from physician w/explanation of chronic illness. (Copies of bills or school excuses is NOT sufficient)

Hospitalization: Letter from physician
Court date: Letter from court
Funeral: Funeral Tribute
Religious Holiday: Letter from clergyman
Exchange student: Documentation from agency
Personal/Family calamity: Principal's approval
Catastrophic illness: Letter from physician

No students will receive a waiver if absences are due to any of the following:

- ❖ Personal/family vacation
- ❖ Suspension from school for any reason
- ❖ Transportation problems (unless on a late school bus)
- ❖ Dental or other routine doctor appointment
- ❖ Truancy
- ❖ Skipping classes

Attendance requirements for A+ are not to be confused with general attendance requirements as stated in the Harrisonville Student Handbook. Documentation for appealed absences is required in the A+ office before any absences can be waived.

Grade Point Requirement

The A+ student must graduate from high school with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale (unweighted; no rounding is allowed, per Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development). The cumulative grade point average is applicable to all four years of the student's enrollment in high school. The official transcript will document and certify that the grade point requirement has been met.

The cumulative GPA will be available for parents/guardians and students each semester on the student's report card.

Tutoring/Mentoring

Objective:

In order to qualify for the A+ scholarship, students are required to perform at least 50 hours of unpaid school-based tutoring/mentoring, of which up to 25% may include job shadowing prior to graduation. The tutoring/mentoring activities must:

1. Involve A+ students with students in the district;
2. Provide encouragement to students in lower grades to stay in school and strive for good grades; and
3. Be school-based or under the auspices of the school

Requirements:

Students enrolled in the tutoring class who are seeking A+ financial incentive must also meet the following qualifications prior to beginning a tutoring/mentoring experience:

- Have a 2.5 grade point average, 95% attendance percentage, good citizenship status, and a signed A+ Statement of Intent on file in the A+ office;
- Complete an application process;
- Sign a tutoring agreement and have a tutoring permission form on file in the A+ office; and
- Provide own transportation and waive school district liability

Policies of the Tutoring/Mentoring course:

- ❖ Tutoring/mentoring must be school sponsored and/or approved by the A+ office.
- ❖ Students who leave for the tutoring course must have a permission slip on file to leave the building and are responsible for signing out/in in the high school A+ office and signing in/out at the assigned school office. Students must also go directly to and from their assigned tutoring location – no side stops.
- ❖ Students will be provided a monthly Tutoring Class Log Sheet from the A+ office. ❖ The Tutoring Class Log Sheet must be completed and returned to the A+ office in order for a student to receive credit for tutoring as well as for a grade
- ❖ Scheduled times for tutoring/mentoring are important, therefore, absences should occur only in cases of emergency. Notification of absences must be made to the appropriate supervisors in a timely manner. ❖ Failure to follow the tutoring/mentoring guidelines may result in disciplinary actions, and/or dismissal from the A+ program.
- ❖ Log Sheets for the Tutoring/Mentoring Class are due on a monthly basis. The due dates are noted on the Class Log Sheet. Log Sheets turned in late will result in a reduction of points.

Tutoring/Mentoring (cont.)

General policies for tutoring/mentoring:

- ❖ General tutoring/mentoring may be done during the school year or during summer school (when offered)
- ❖ Unless specific permission is given by the A+ office, all tutoring/mentoring must be done on Harrisonville School District premises.
- ❖ Log sheets to record general tutoring hours are available in the A+ office.
- ❖ **Students may only enroll in the tutoring/mentoring class for 2 semesters.**

It is the student's responsibility to maintain his/her log record and turn it into the A+ office in a timely manner.

Financial compensation may NOT be accepted
for tutoring/mentoring activities.

End of Course Exam
Algebra I Requirement

❖ Per the Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development: Beginning with the high school senior class of 2015, students must have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end of course exam.

❖ The State may authorize scores from other assessments to fulfill this requirement. Refer to the website below for further information.

❖ Updated information may be found on the MDHEWD website: dhewd.mo.gov

Citizenship Requirement

Students pursuing the A+ scholarship must maintain, both on and off campus, a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs/alcohol.

Certification of good citizenship will be based on the official discipline record maintained in the high school office, as well as off campus incidents reported by local authorities.

Probation while a part of the A+ Program

Disciplinary probation within the A+ Program is used with the understanding that even the best student makes mistakes. Probations are designed to recognize this characteristic in young people. However, receiving the A+ scholarship is an honor and should be treated as such. Students who are designated A+ students should demonstrate distinctive qualities and be role models for other students. Their character and ethics should meet high standards.

A student will be placed on probation for the rest of the semester upon receiving:

- Three Detention referrals in one semester;
- Two In-School-Suspension referrals in one semester; or
- Any referral of Out-of-School Suspension

If no further misdeeds occur, the student will be returned to full A+ status at the end of the semester. If there is further disciplinary action that would warrant probation during the semester a student is on probation, the student will automatically be removed from the A+ Program.

A student who receives more than two semesters of probation during his/her high school career will be removed from the A+ Program. The student will have an opportunity to appeal and have his/her disciplinary record reviewed by the Citizenship/Probation Review Committee for reinstatement and continued probation.

Citizenship Requirement (cont.)

A+ Citizenship/Probation Appeal Process

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

- ❖ Students and parents/guardians will have 15 calendar days to appeal a decision that is made dealing with discipline or probation using the A+ Citizenship-Probation Appeal Form available from the A+ office. ❖ The appeal must be made in writing through the A+ office.
- ❖ Within 10 days of receiving a written appeal, the A+ Coordinator will convene the A+ Probation and/or Citizenship Review committee.
- ❖ In all appeal cases, the A+ Coordinator will act as a facilitator and a nonvoting member of the Citizenship and/or Probation Review Committee. After the committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents by certified mail within 5 calendar days. Decisions of the Review Committee will be considered final.

A+ Citizenship Points System

Each disciplinary referral will negatively affect good citizenship status according to the chart below. A student who accumulates more than 24 citizenship points in his/her high school career will be removed from the A+ Program. Those points will be assigned as follows:

Disciplinary Action Point Value Assigned

Detention 2 points per detention
ISS 3 points per day
OSS 4 points per day

Unlawful use of Drugs/Alcohol

An A+ student will not sell, possess, or use any controlled substance or drug paraphernalia as defined by law and stated in the Harrisonville Student Handbook. Students and parents are responsible for understanding and following those guidelines. The use of prescription medicine is allowed under Board Policy.

Removal from the A+ Program

A student will be immediately removed from the A+ Program when:

- Review by the Citizenship/Probation Review committee rules for dismissal based on a student's actions.
- The student accumulates more than 24 citizenship points.
- A serious offense involving drugs or alcohol or which falls under the Safe Schools Act occurs.

The following offenses reported to law enforcement authorities will result in immediate removal from the A+ Program.

- Possession, use, sale, or transfer of alcohol, drugs, or narcotics
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Criminal activity as defined by the Safe Schools Act:
    - First and second degree murder
    - First and second degree assault
    - First and second degree burglary
    - Distribution of drugs
    - Distribution of drugs to a minor
    - Voluntary/involuntary manslaughter
    - Forcible rape or sodomy
    - Property damage
    - Kidnapping
    - Robbery
    - First degree arson
    - Sexual assault
    - Felonious restraint
- Possession of a weapon (under provision of Chapter 571 Mo. Revised Statutes)
- Assault on a student
- Physical threat to staff member
- Vandalism/theft
- False fire alarm/bomb threats and misuse of emergency equipment
- Serious sexual misbehavior/exposure
- Possession of dangerous items
- Dangerous behavior

Receiving A+ Status

Monitoring of A+ Program Status

At 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. Questions and/or concerns about the information reported should be directed to the A+ Office.

Notification of A+ Program Status

The A+ Coordinator will review all records of A+ Schools Program students and names of eligible students will be submitted to the Principal and Guidance Office for review prior to graduation. The students' official transcript will reflect A+ Program status and the A+ DESE Eligibility stamp.

A+ Cord

Students achieving both State and Local requirements for the A+ Scholarship may purchase or rent a white A+ cord to wear at graduation to signify this achievement. The cords are available to purchase or rent the day following the seniors last day of school. Students renting a cord **must** have it returned to the A+ office no later than the Friday following graduation for a refund.

Career Pathways

Each student is required to declare a Career Pathway. Career Pathways are designed to give a student direction to take courses that will be relevant to his/her chosen field of study after high school. A career pathway may be changed at any time. Students may choose from the following career pathways:

Arts and Communications Business and Technology
Human Resources Health Services
Industrial and Engineering Technology Natural Resources

More information about Career Pathways is available from the Student Services Center.