

Knox County R-1 A+ Manual



PURPOSE OF THE A+ STUDENT MANUAL

To enhance educational opportunities for high school students, the Missouri state legislature established the Outstanding Schools Act in 1993 which included the provisions of the A+ Schools Program. Knox County R-I High School graduates, who meet specific A+ criteria, may be eligible to receive the financial incentive for tuition and general fees to attend any public community college, vocational, or technical school in Missouri.

The purpose of this manual is to provide students, parents, faculty, and administration with the guidelines and policies of the A+ Schools Program. Accurate certification of student eligibility is crucial to the integrity of the program. **It is the responsibility of the student and parents/guardians to read this manual carefully to understand all the guidelines and requirements before signing the Student Participation Agreement.**

GOALS OF THE A+ PROGRAM

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

1. All students will graduate from high school.
2. All students will complete challenging high school studies and have identified learning expectations.
3. All students will proceed from high school graduation to college, postsecondary vocational/technical school, or a high-wage job with opportunities for workplace skill development opportunities.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVE BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

Graduates of Knox County R-I High School, who have met the A+ Schools criteria, may be eligible for the following:

The cost of tuition subject to legislative appropriation, is paid to attend any public community college or public vocational/technical school of their choice in the state of Missouri. These incentives will be made available only 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.

Students may be eligible to receive this incentive for two years. A student must be considered a full-time student by the postsecondary institution and maintain a 2.5 GPA or higher on a 4.0 scale (6.875 GPA or higher on an 11.0 scale). Students must complete the two years of full-time enrollment at a public community college or a public vocational/technical school *within four years after graduation* from Knox County R-I High School.

The financial incentives are the responsibility of the Missouri General Assembly and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and not the responsibility of the Knox County R-I School District and pending funding from the Missouri General Assembly.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

This section of the manual explains student eligibility requirements. To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program, a student must be certified an A+ student by Knox County R-I High School.

To be certified as an A+ student, an individual must do the following:

- Be a US citizen or permanent resident.
- Sign an A+ Student Participation Agreement. (Copy included in appendix)
- Attend the designated A+ School for two (2) consecutive years prior to graduation.
- Have at least a 95% attendance rate for the four years of high school.
- Complete the local standards for graduation and graduate with at least a 2.5 (6.875) or higher grade point average (GPA) on a non-weighted 4.0 (11.0) scale.
- Perform fifty (50) hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring for younger students.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs/alcohol/tobacco.
- Make a good faith effort first to secure all available postsecondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. (Required submission of Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA)
- Achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end-of-course exam (or higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the field of mathematics) OR achieve a combined ACT math subscore and high school GPA in accordance with the following scale:

ACT Math Score	17 or greater	16 or greater	15 or greater
High School Cumulative Unweighted GPA	2.5 or greater	2.8 or greater	3.0 or greater

- Financial incentives may be available for four years after high school graduation. To retain eligibility a student must maintain a 2.5 or higher grade point average while enrolled at a Missouri public community college or vocational/technical school on a full-time basis.

MONITORING OF A+ STATUS

At the end of each semester, students/parents who are participating in the A+ Program will receive a letter reporting their progress on each requirement. The A+ coordinator will review requirements with students participating in the A+ Program each year. Any questions about the information reported should be directed to the A+ coordinator.

CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR A+ FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

The A+ Coordinator will review all records of students participating in the A+ Program and names of students eligible for the financial incentive will be submitted to the high school principal and the school counselor for official certification upon graduation.

This section of the A+ Student Manual explains the requirement of enrollment to be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program.

- The student must be enrolled in a designated A+ School for two (2) consecutive years prior to graduation.
- The student must be enrolled no later than two weeks (10 school days) after the beginning of the fall term at Knox County R-I High School.
- If a student withdraws or transfers from Knox County R-I High School after the beginning of the sophomore year, the student will not be considered eligible for the A+ Schools Program, even if the student re-enrolls at Knox County R-I High School before graduation (unless the student has been enrolled at another A+ designated high school and can meet all A+ requirements).
- If a student requests participation in the program after the beginning of the freshman year, the student has to have met all criteria dating back to the beginning of the freshman year before enrollment will be completed.
- 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 their retirement, you are exempt from this requirement. However, you must attend an A+ designated high school in the school year immediately preceding graduation and meet all of the other high school eligible requirements.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

This section of the manual explains the attendance requirement of the A+ Schools Program. The attendance rate must average 95% or higher for the accumulated time between the beginning of the freshman year until graduation. The following guidelines will be in effect:

- The cumulative attendance information given to the A+ Coordinator will come from the official attendance record kept by Knox County R-I High School.
- Each semester A+ students/parents will receive a status report on all the A+ requirements including attendance.
- Only actual in-school days or approved homebound instruction due to extended illness or accident will count as school attendance for A+ requirements. It is the responsibility of the parent to request the school to make an application for homebound instruction for the student at the time of the accident/illness. Approved homebound instruction counted for daily attendance can be used to meet the required 95% attendance rate.

GRADE POINT REQUIREMENT

To be eligible for the A+ Schools financial assistance, the student must graduate with a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or above on a 4.0 scale (6.875 or above on an 11.0). Students who do not achieve a score of Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra I End-of-Course (EOC) assessment will be held to a higher GPA standard as determined by state guidelines. The following statements are intended to help clarify the A+ Schools policy regarding grade point average:

- The grade point average (GPA) is non-weighted, cumulative for all four years of high school: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior.
- The student's official transcript will serve as evidence of grade point average.
- All courses taken by the student during their four years of high school will be used to calculate the GPA. If any course is taken on a pass/fail basis, students must receive a passing grade; otherwise, a failing grade is calculated in the GPA.
- An achieved score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I End of Course (EOC) Exam (or higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the field of mathematics) OR achieve a combined ACT math subscore and high school GPA in accordance with the following scale:

ACT Math Score	17 or greater	16 or greater	15 or greater
High School Cumulative Unweighted GPA	2.5 or greater	2.8 or greater	3.0 or greater

TUTORING/MENTORING REQUIREMENT

This section of the manual explains that A+ School students are required to participate in a tutoring/mentoring program for younger students. The state requires that A+ students must perform fifty (50) hours of unpaid tutoring/mentoring for younger students. Listed below are the guidelines concerning tutoring/mentoring.

To begin the tutoring/mentoring program, the A+ student must have met the following:

- Has earned at least 20 credits (Senior status) toward graduation.
- Has signed an A+ Participation Agreement.

The following procedures will be used by the A+ coordinator in determining this requirement:

- All tutoring/mentoring activities will be designed to involve the A+ student with younger students in the Knox County R-I School District.
- Tutoring/mentoring activities will provide, as an ultimate goal, encouragement to younger students to get excited about school, stay in school, and strive for good grades.
- Tutoring/mentoring activities will be school-based, academic, and under the supervision of the Knox County R-I School District.
- All tutoring/mentoring must be supervised and verified by a teacher, principal, counselor, or the A+ Coordinator.
- The A+ student is responsible for maintaining an official tutoring log sheet. Times must be exact. Only

activities verified with a timesheet signature will be counted toward the 50-hour requirement. (See sample log sheet in the appendix. A digital document is available via Google Drive.)

- The A+ student or the school may terminate the tutoring/mentoring experience with the permission of the A+ Coordinator or High School Counselor.
- All tutoring/mentoring experiences must be completed during Senior year.
- A semester course is available to A+ students. Participation in this course for one semester should result in completion of the required 50 hours of tutoring/mentoring. “SAM” is the designated course name for this semester course.
- The A+ Coordinator and District Principals will assign each student to a tutoring/mentoring site and students will sign a contractual agreement specifying rules and regulations for tutoring/mentoring.
- Training and orientation will be conducted at the beginning of each semester with follow-up during the semester.
- The A+ Student is expected to be present on the assigned days and time for the tutoring/mentoring. If an absence must occur, A+ Students are expected to notify the adult in charge of their tutoring/mentoring experiences, but 50 hours must be logged to meet the A+ requirement.
- The Tutoring/Mentoring Time Log must be completed and submitted to the A+ Coordinator at the end of each term/quarter.
- A+ students will be required to complete assignments that will be assigned weekly by the A+ Coordinator. These assignments will be via Google Classroom.
- All tutoring/mentoring is to be unpaid.

CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT

This section of the manual explains the requirement for good citizenship. Participation in the A+ Schools Program is an honor and unique privilege for Knox County R-I High School and Knox County R-I students. Students who are certified A+ students should demonstrate distinctive qualities and be role models for other students. Their character and ethics should be of the highest standards (see a copy of the district policy in the appendix).

Students and parents/guardians are reminded that the financial incentives are not a right or entitlement, but an incentive reward to be merited. Good citizenship is important and essential to meriting financial incentives. Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for understanding and following the guidelines.

Student eligibility is based on their ability to meet specific requirements with one of those requirements being: “a student must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.”

The following criteria and procedures have been established to determine student compliance with the citizenship requirement:

- Any student who engages in the unlawful possession, transfer, use, or sale of drugs/drug paraphernalia or alcohol at school or in the community will be dismissed by the A+ Citizenship Committee and will not be eligible for A+ financial incentives.*
- Any student convicted of a felony or criminal activity as defined by the Safe Schools Act will be dismissed by the A+ Citizenship Committee and will not be eligible for the A+ financial incentives.
- Students enrolled in the A+ Schools Program must follow the Student Code of Conduct (district discipline policy) as stated in the Knox County R-I High School Student Handbook, the regulations of the Safe Schools Act Good and Creditable Citizenship Policy. The A+ Citizenship Committee will review

violations on an individual basis and will:

- Issue a verbal and/or written warning; (and/or) Place the student on A+ disciplinary probation for the rest of the current semester, or for an indefinite period of time, and/or the following semester if the violation occurs during the second or fourth quarter. Students who are placed on probation twice in the same semester or more than two times within four years will be dismissed from the A+ Program; (and/or)
- Dismiss the student from the A+ Program. The student and his/her parents/guardians will be notified by mail of a student's dismissal from the program. Students/parents have the right to appeal dismissal from the program and loss of A+ eligibility.
- The A+ Citizenship Committee shall be composed of: the High School Principal, High School Counselor, High School A+ Coordinator, Two High School Teachers
 - The assigned/elected teachers will serve one-year terms.

*For purposes of paragraph 1, "engages in" shall include any one or more of the following:

- Convictions under the criminal law applicable to adults;
- Adjudications of guilt under juvenile law;
- Any and all guilty pleas, pleas of nolo contendere (no contest and/or Alford pleas);
- Any and all criminal or juvenile proceedings that result in suspended imposition or suspended execution of sentences;
- Admissions by students that they have engaged in the conduct prohibited in paragraph 1;
- Any finding or decision by the Superintendent and/or Board of Education that results in the student's suspension or expulsion pursuant to the District's discipline policy for conduct prohibited in paragraph 1. (Students who have been suspended by the Superintendent shall retain the right to appeal the disciplinary suspension to the Board in accordance with District policy. In the event of such appeal, the Committee's final decision regarding A+ eligibility shall not be made until the board has issued its decision regarding suspension under the District's discipline policy.)

STUDENT APPEAL PROCESS—CITIZENSHIP

1. The student and his/her parents/guardians will be notified by mail of the student's dismissal from the program.
2. The student and his/her parents/guardians may appeal the student's dismissal from the program by submitting written notice of the appeal to the Superintendent of Schools no later than ten (10) school/business days (excluding weekends and holidays when school is not in session) of receipt of the letter notifying the student of his/her dismissal from the program.
3. The student and his/her parents/guardians will be notified by mail of the Superintendent's decision.
4. If the Superintendent upholds a student's dismissal from the program, the student and his/her parents/guardians may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Knox County R-I Board of Education for a final decision.
 - a. The student and his/her parents/guardians may appeal the Superintendent's decision by submitting written notice of the appeal to the Board of Education no later than ten (10) school/business days (excluding weekends and holidays when school is not in session) of receipt of the letter notifying the student of the superintendent's decision.
 - b. The student and his/her parents/guardians may submit the written notice in the form of a letter.

The original appeal will be submitted to the Board of Education.

5. The appeal will be considered at the next regularly scheduled board meeting following receipt of the written appeal. The appeal will be conducted in accordance with policies set forth by the Board of Education. The decision of the Board will be final.

STUDENT APPEAL PROCESS—NON-CITIZENSHIP

In cases of appeal, other than citizenship:

1. The student and his/her parents/guardians may appeal the student's loss of eligibility from the program by submitting written notice of appeal to the Appeals Committee no later than ten school/business days (excluding weekends/holidays when school is not in session) of receipt of the letter notifying the student of his/her loss of eligibility from the program.
2. If the Appeals Committee upholds the loss of eligibility from the program, the student and his/her parents/guardians may appeal the decision by submitting written notice of the appeal to the Superintendent of Schools no later than ten (10) school/business days (excluding weekends and holidays when school is not in session) of receipt of the letter notifying the student/parent of the Appeals Committee decision.
3. The student and his/her parents/guardians will be notified by mail of the Superintendent's decision.
4. If the Superintendent upholds the loss of eligibility from the program, the student and his/her parents/guardians may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Knox County R-I Board of Education for a final decision.
5. The student and his/her parents/guardians may appeal the Superintendent's decision by submitting written notice of the appeal to the Board of Education no later than ten (10) school/business days (excluding weekends and holidays when school is not in session) of receipt of the letter notifying the student of the Superintendent's decision.
6. The appeal will be considered at the next regularly scheduled board meeting following receipt of the written appeal. The appeal will be conducted in accordance with policies set forth by the Board of Education. The decision of the Board is final.
7. The Appeals Committee shall be composed of the following: High School Principal, High School Guidance Counselor, High School A+ Coordinator, Two High School Teachers
 - a. The assigned/elected teachers will serve one-year terms.

GOOD FAITH EFFORT TO SECURE FUNDING

This section of the manual explains the requirement of students/parents to first make a good faith effort to secure all available federal postsecondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.

- Students/parents must complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The student must request that the FAFSA information be sent to the Missouri public community college or vocational/technical school that the student is planning to attend.
- The FAFSA application form is available online at <https://studentaid.gov>. Students/parents are encouraged to apply as early as possible, not before January 1st, but submitted by April 1st of the year of the student's graduation.
- Students are to provide proof of attempt to secure all available federal financial assistance funds.

- Tuition incentives will only be made available to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition, subject to legislative appropriation paid to attend after available federal post secondary financial assistance funds have been applied to these costs.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

It is the responsibility of Missouri public community colleges and vocational/technical schools to verify that students participating in the A+ Schools Program of financial incentives maintain eligibility after high school graduation.

Initial Eligibility Students:

An A+ certified student must:

- Be enrolled full-time at an A+ eligible postsecondary institution. The period of eligibility is for two years during the four years immediately following graduation from an A+ designated high school.
- Be seeking a degree or certificate at the school in which you are enrolled.
- Not be pursuing a degree or certificate in theology or divinity.
- Not having a criminal record prevents receipt of federal Title IV student financial aid.
- Make a good faith effort to secure all available federal aid by completing the FAFSA. Students attending a school that does not participate in Title IV programs must complete the Federal Student Aid Estimator, a tool for estimating the level of need for federal financial aid.
- Achieve at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point on a 4.0 scale at the end of the fall semester (or at the end of the initial payment period for non-semester-based programs) and otherwise maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by your school.
- Complete 12 semester credit hours or the equivalent (6 hours during the summer term) each term in which you receive an A+ award to maintain eligibility for the next term. Students in clock hour programs must complete 90% of the clock hours required for the applicable federal payment period.

Continuation of Eligibility (Renewal) Students:

An A+ renewal student must:

- A renewal student is someone who has received an A+ payment or was eligible but whose award was reduced to zero after federal, non-loan aid was applied to tuition and fees in a prior academic year.
- If this is the first academic year in which you have received an A+ payment, you are not subject to the 2.5 minimum GPA requirement, but you must achieve at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA by the end of the fall term, or the end of the initial payment period for non-semester based programs.
- Continue to meet the eligibility requirements for initial students (SEE ABOVE REQUIREMENTS).
- **Maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale and otherwise maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by your school.**

Appendix

KNOX COUNTY R-1

A+ Participation Agreement

I, _____, have been fully informed of the conditions for eligibility for the A+ Student Financial Incentives in accordance with the A+ Schools Program at Knox County R-I High School. I understand that to be eligible for the financial incentives offered by the State of Missouri's A+ Schools Program, I must meet the following requirements:

1. Be a US citizen or permanent resident.
2. Attend a designated A+ School for two (2) consecutive years prior to graduation.
3. Graduate from high school with a grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale.
4. Have at least a 95% attendance record for the four years of high school.
5. Perform fifty (50) hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring.
6. Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid unlawful use of drugs/alcohol/tobacco.
7. Achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end of course exam (or higher level DESE approved end of course exam in the field of mathematics) OR achieved a combined ACT math subscore and high school GPA in accordance with the following scale:

ACT Math Score	17 or greater	16 or greater	15 or greater
High School Cumulative Unweighted GPA	2.5 or greater	2.8 or greater	3.0 or greater

8. Make a good faith effort to first secure all available postsecondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. (Required submission of Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA) Be it understood that in exchange for meeting or exceeding the stated criteria the above-named student may be eligible for reimbursements as established in the *Outstanding Schools Act of 1993***. Said reimbursements are the responsibility of the Missouri General Assembly and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and not the Knox County R-1 School District. Reimbursements are described as***: **The cost of tuition is subject to legislative appropriation to attend any public community college, vocational, or technical school in the State of Missouri for any eligible student who has made a good faith effort to secure all available sources that can be applied. The period of eligibility shall be for two years during the four years immediately following graduation. To maintain eligibility (after graduation), each eligible student, during the four years of incentive availability, must:**

1. Have enrolled and attended on a full-time basis a Missouri public community college or vocational-technical school and
2. Maintain a grade point average of 2.5 points or higher on a 4.0 scale

_____ I WILL be participating in the A+ Schools Financial Incentive Program and authorize the Office of Juvenile Court Services to provide information concerning me/my child to the Knox County R-I School District to be used to certify the good citizenship and unlawful use of drugs/alcohol requirement.

_____ I WILL NOT be participating in the A+ Schools Financial Incentive Program.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

A+Coordinator Signature

Date

High School Principal Signature

Date

Sample Log Sheet for Mentoring

Student: _____ Month: _____

Day of the month	Time of arrival	Time of departure	Teacher Initials
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GOOD AND CREDIBLE CITIZENSHIP POLICY

Because students are representatives of their school district and their community, the district requires that all students maintain themselves as good and creditable citizens.

Good and creditable citizenship requires that students agree to accept their obligations to attend school on a regular basis and to comply with the District's discipline code as outlined in Policy 2610 and Regulation 2610.

Good and creditable citizenship also requires that students accept their responsibility to contribute to providing a safe and positive school environment and community; that students fulfill their responsibilities at school and in the community in an honorable and trustworthy manner; and that students comply with standards of good discipline so as not to bring discredit to themselves, their school, or their community.

Standards of good discipline include, but are not limited to: orderly, lawful conduct; self-control; honesty; integrity; and accountability. Behavior that would not conform to the standards of good discipline includes, but is not limited to; possession or use of tobacco products; possession or use of alcohol; possession or presence under the influence of a controlled substance; sale of a controlled substance or substance to be a represented controlled substance; use of physical force with the intent to do bodily harm; possession of a weapon; intentionally causing or attempting to cause a fire or explosion; unwanted physical touching of others; intimidation of others; disruptive behavior; theft; vandalism; truancy; use of obscene or vulgar language; and defiance of authority