



Purpose of A+ Manual

In an effort to enhance educational opportunities for high school students, the Missouri state legislature established the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 which includes provisions for the A+ Schools Program. The purpose of this manual is to provide a clear understanding of the various aspects of the A+ Schools Program. There are many guidelines established by the law that Stanberry High School must implement and follow. These policies are explained in this handbook.

Stanberry High School is working towards designation and will receive designation during the 2012-2013 school year. This gives students in the Stanberry's graduating class of 2013 the opportunity to participate in the A+ School Financial Incentive Program. The funding for financial incentives is dependent upon SHS gaining re-designation each year and the availability of state appropriations from the Missouri General Assembly.

It is the responsibility of the A+ Schools Coordinator to administer the program in a fair and consistent manner. All A+ Students will be treated fairly and equitably. Accurate certification of students is crucial to the integrity of the program. It is the responsibility of the students and parents to read this manual carefully to understand all the guidelines and regulations before signing the Student Participation Agreement.

Any questions about this manual or the A+ Schools Program should be directed to Karla McQueen at Stanberry High School, (660) 783-2163 or kmcqueen@sr2.k1.2mo.us.

Goals of the A+ Program

The A+ School concept is designed to achieve the three basic goals that are set forth in the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. The three goals of the A+ Schools Program are

- All students will graduate from high school;
- All students will complete a selection of high school studies that is challenging and has identified learner outcomes; and
- All students will proceed from high school graduation to a college or post-secondary vocational or technical school or high wage job with work place skill development opportunities.

All projects and efforts of the A+ Schools program in Stanberry R-II School District are designed to achieve the three basic objectives listed above.

Student Benefits

Stanberry High School graduates can be eligible for

- Two years of tuition, fees, and up to 50% of books expenses to a community college or public Missouri vocational/technical school of their choice.

These incentives will be made available by the State of Missouri only after the student has made a good faith effort to secure all available federal post secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. A student must be considered a full-time student by the post-secondary institution and maintain a 2.5 GPA to continue receiving the incentive. These incentives will expire at the earliest of the following: 48 months after the student's date of graduation from Stanberry High School, receipt of an associate's degree, or completion of 105% of the hours required for the program in which the student is currently enrolled. Incentives depend on continued funding by the Missouri General Assembly and annual re-designation of Stanberry High School by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Basic Requirements

To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ School Program, a student must be certified by Stanberry High School. As the official representative of the Department of Education of the State of Missouri, the A+ Schools Coordinator has the responsibility to certify if a SHS graduate has met the criteria of certification. The High School Principal will verify all qualifications and documentation. To be certified as an A+ Student, an individual must complete the following requirements by the date of graduation:

- Sign an A+ School Agreement and attend an A+ School for three consecutive years prior to graduation
- Hold a 95% attendance record for 9-12 years
- Maintain at least a 2.5 grade point average during high school.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs/alcohol
- Perform 50 hours of unpaid, academic tutoring for younger students (25 % of those hours may include job shadowing).
- Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra 1 EOC (End of Course) Exam
- Make a good faith effort to first secure all available federal post secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.
- Register with Selective Services if applicable

Signing the A+ Agreement

An A+ School Agreement must be completed with all the appropriate signatures. The agreement simply states that the student and parents/guardians are aware of the A+ Schools Program requirements and incentives. All students are encouraged to enroll during their Freshmen year.

To be eligible, each student must enter into a written agreement with the school anytime during the last three (3) years prior to high school graduation. Regardless of when the A+ Agreement is actually signed and turned in, the student must meet all criteria dating back to the beginning of his/her freshmen year.

Enrolling in an A+ School

If a student withdraws from Stanberry or transfers to a non-A+ School after the beginning of his/her sophomore year, the student will not be considered eligible for the A+ Schools Program.

If a student transfers to Stanberry after the beginning of the sophomore year, the student may only participate in the program if the school she/he transferred from was a designated A+ School.

Maintaining the A+ GPA

The student must graduate from high school with a minimum GPA of 2.50 on a 4.00 scale. The cumulative GPA 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 GPA must be at least 2.50; 2.49 or less renders the student uncertifiable.

Meeting the A+ Tutoring Requirements

The A+ Schools Program requires that students complete 50 hours of academic tutoring (25% of these hours can include job shadowing). Before beginning this requirement for A+ certification, a student must have a signed A+ contract on file in the A+ Coordinator's office.

The following guidelines are to be used for all tutoring experiences:

- Tutoring/job shadowing must be approved by the A+ Coordinator
- An A+ Tutoring/Job Shadowing Log must be kept by the student and turned in at the end of each semester. The school sponsor who supervises the tutoring time must sign this log.
- All tutoring must be done on school premises. The opportunities to complete this requirement are summer school, before and after school tutoring at the high school or elementary, including preschool.
- Students are expected to behave responsibly while tutoring. This includes notifying the tutoring supervisor before absences, being on time, and making contact with site supervisor. It is important to the success of the programs involved that A+ students remain dedicated to their responsibility.
- No financial payment may be accepted for tutoring/job shadowing activities.

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in a conference with A+ Coordinator, a letter to parents/guardians and dismissal from the A+ Program.

Algebra I EOC Requirement

Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I EOC (End of Course) Exam is required. If a student does not score proficient or advanced on the Algebra I EOC, he/she may still graduate as an A+ student, BUT the first semester at a post-secondary institution must be completed with a minimum of 12 hours or the equivalent and a 2.5 GPA achieved prior to receiving A+ tuition.

Meeting the Attendance Requirement

In order to qualify for the A+ student financial incentives, Stanberry High School students must maintain a four-year attendance rate of 95 percent or higher (approximately no more than 8 days per year). It is the expectation of the Stanberry School and its community partnership that, in almost all cases, this 5% attendance allowance should take care of absences due to illness, doctor's appointments, funerals, family emergencies, driver's exam and other unavoidable absences. Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes. From this requirement the student will acquire the habits of punctuality, self-discipline and responsibility. A student who does not meet the 95 percent attendance requirement will not be eligible for the A+ tuition incentive. The following attendance guidelines will be followed:

- Students must attend a designated A+ High School for three consecutive years prior to graduation.
- A cumulative attendance record will be kept from the beginning of the A+ student's freshman year until graduation.
- The official record of attendance is kept in the high school principal's office.
- Each semester the school will provide parents/ guardians and students information that includes the student's attendance record.

A student who will be missing school for a long period of time due to hospitalization, illness, etc. may call the school and request homebound instruction, which helps the student maintain academic growth and avoid absences. Only absences involving school sanctioned field trips and homebound students will be excused for A+.

The parent, guardian, or student will have 30 days to file an appeal with the A+ Schools Coordinator. If an appeal is not filed within 30 days of notification, a waiver for days missed will not be considered. Anyone making an appeal should use the “A+ Attendance Appeal Form” available in the A+ office.

No student will receive a waiver if absences are due to any of the following: truancy, skipping classes, personal/family vacation, transportation problems (unless late on a school bus), suspension from school, employment or work purposes.

Being an A+ Citizen

Participation in the A+ Schools Program is an honor and a unique privilege for Stanberry High School students. Students who participate in the program are expected to conform to a higher standard of conduct than is applicable to non-participants. Students pursuing the A+ Incentive must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use, possession, and distribution of drugs and alcohol.

Certification of good citizenship will be based on the official discipline record maintained in the Principal Offices at Stanberry High School. Consequences for infractions of the discipline code are assigned by the principal and that administrator is responsible for certifying the accuracy of the student’s discipline record. The student is responsible for maintaining all of the requirements under the A+ program on a year round basis, from the first day of school of his/her freshmen year until his/her date of graduation from high school.

An A+ student will not possess, sell, transfer, distribute, or use any drug (1) on school property, (2) at school events or activities away from campus, or (3) off-campus during non-school or school hours. In other words, drug possession, sale, transfer, distribution or use is not permitted regardless of location and time of day. For purposes of this rule, the term “drug” includes any illegal drug, alcoholic beverage, illegally possessed prescription drug, controlled substance, drug paraphernalia, or item which by markings or by representations made, is represented to be a drug.

The following offenses will result in immediate removal from the A+ school program:

- Possession, use, sale or transfer of alcohol or drugs
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Criminal activity as defined by the Safe Schools Act

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. Probation is designed to recognize this characteristic in young people. However, receiving the A+ incentive is a privilege and should be treated as such. Students who are designated A+ should demonstrate distinctive qualities and be role models for other students. Their character and ethics should meet high standards.

Therefore, a student will be placed on probation for 87 days for the following infractions

- any student who, in the opinion of school administrators, exhibits a continuous pattern of disruptive behavior as recorded in his/her discipline record will be placed on probation; and
- any student placed in a short-term (10 school days or less) out of school suspension will be placed on probation for the first offense. A second short-term suspension will immediately remove the student 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 semesters of probation during his/her high school career will have his/her disciplinary record reviewed by the A+ Appeals Committee for continued probation or possible dismissal from the program. Furthermore, any senior who has been placed on probation for his/her final semester of school will be considered in good standing in the A+ program at the end of his final semester if no further misdeeds occur prior to graduation.

Removal from the A+ Program

A student may be removed from the A+ Program when:

- 1) Within the semester while on probation, the student commits another offense that would result in another probationary action.
- 2) After two semesters of probation, a review by the A+ Appeals Committee shows that earlier disciplinary consequences did not positively affect the student's behavior.
- 3) Convicted of a felony that is verifiable and is either a matter of public record or is communicated to school officials in compliance with the Safe Schools Act.
- 4) Convicted of three or more misdemeanors (other than for moving traffic violations not involving alcohol or illegal drugs) that are verifiable and a matter of public record.

Any student, who commits a serious offense involving drugs, alcohol or which falls under the Safe Schools Act, will be immediately dismissed from the program.

A+ Citizenship Appeal Process

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

Students and parents/guardians must notify the A+ Coordinator of their intent to appeal a decision that is made dealing with discipline or probation within 10 school days of the reported decision, using the A+ Appeal of Citizenship form available from the A+ Coordinator. The A+ Coordinator shall then convene the A+ Appeal Committee for consideration of the appeal within 10 school days of the written intent to appeal. The committee shall hear the appeal and return its decision to the student and parents/guardians within 5 school days.

A+ Appeal Committee

The A+ Appeal Committee will be composed of a guidance counselor, a principal, and three teachers.

Making a Good Faith Effort

A+ students are required to make a good faith effort to secure all available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. The following steps must be taken each year to show this good faith effort:

- Students must 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.
- The FAFSA forms are available in the Guidance Office in December of each year, or online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Students are encouraged to apply as early as possible after January 1 each year. Since the FAFSA is based on each family's income tax return, parents and graduating Seniors are encouraged to file their income tax return as early as possible.
- Students may be asked to do additional paperwork by the college or vocational/technical school they plan to attend.
- A+ tuition incentives will only be awarded for the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition and standard fees after available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds have been applied to these costs.

Monitoring and Certifying of A+ Students

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. Any questions or concerns about the information reported should be directed to the A+ Coordinator.

At the end of each school year, the A+ Coordinator will review all records of A+ students, and the names of eligible students will be submitted to the Principal and Guidance Counselor for official certification prior to graduation. A+ incentive information will be given to students within two weeks of graduation.

After graduation, a list will be sent to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education notifying it of all Stanberry R-II A+ graduates.

A+ Attendance Appeal

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Parents Name: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Cell/Work Number: _____

This request is to appeal the school absence(s) for the following:

Semester: _____ Fall _____ Spring

School Year: _____

In the space below, please indicate the date(s) and the reason for the request to be reviewed. If additional space is needed, please attach another sheet of paper.

Date of Absence

Reason

A+ Citizenship Appeal

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Parents Name: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Cell/Work Number: _____

This request is to appeal the citizenship certification for the following:

Semester: _____ Fall _____ Spring

School Year _____

In the space below, please indicate the basis of your appeal concerning the good citizenship certification for the A+ School Program. If additional space is needed, please attach another sheet of paper.