

LINN COUNTY R-I HIGH SCHOOL



2013-2014

A+ STUDENT HANDBOOK

"Putting the pieces together for a successful future."

**Linn County R-I
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**Approved By
The
Board of Education
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COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE A+ PROGRAM

Does signing an A+ Participation Agreement restrict a student's choices?

Signing the A+ contract does NOT in any way restrict a student's educational choices. The A+ Schools Program is designed to provide greater opportunities for our students. Signing this agreement will not restrict the options available to a student while enrolled at Linn County R-I High School or upon graduation from Linn County R-I High School.

What if my GPA upon graduation is 2.495 and/or my attendance average is 94.9%, will I qualify?

No, you must have at least a 95% attendance and at least a 2.5 grade point average on a 4 point scale. In certain instances (serious illnesses or a major accident that impedes your health) you may appeal to the school's A+ Appeals Committee. This appeal has specific time limits as outlined in this booklet.

What are the guidelines for tutoring, when can I begin, do I have to tutor only at school?

Remember these basic points: Tutoring should be academic in nature and always supervised by school personnel. If you have questions, ask before you begin. Tutoring may be for younger, older, or of the same age as the student doing the tutoring, and may be completed before, during, or after school at the school. All activities are to be unpaid. Verification of activities is required and completion of all forms is the responsibility of the student. Tutoring forms will be provided by the A+ Coordinator.

What if I sign an agreement and later choose to attend a four-year college or university?

Many students will develop plans to attend a four-year institution upon graduation from high school. The tuition reimbursement provided through the A+ Program may not be applied to a four-year college or university. A few colleges offer incentive scholarships to A+ qualifying students. However, qualifying students may choose to attend, for example, a community college for two years, earn an Associate's Degree, or simply earn basic credit hours and then transfer those credits to a four-year college at the end of those two years. The A+ Schools Program will provide financial assistance in this process.

What does signing the "A+ Participation Agreement" mean?

By signing and submitting the A+ Participation Agreement, a student and his/her parents are simply indicating an interest in participating in the A+ Financial Incentive Program, and that they understand the requirements that will qualify the student for that program.

How do I renew A+ funding each year after graduating from high school?

Student must be admitted as a regular student and enroll in and attend on a full-time basis a participating institution. Student must maintain satisfactory academic progress, 2.5 GPA and complete the FAFSA by pertinent deadlines in order to maintain/renew A+ funding.

When does my A+ expire?

Student eligibility for A+ expires at the earliest of the following: 48 months after completion of 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. Calculations include all known hours completed at any institution, regardless of whether those hours are accepted in as transfer or whether the student received A+ reimbursement.

What other stipulations impact my A+ funding?

Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2015, students must achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I (or higher level math) end of course exam, or complete the first semester at a postsecondary institution with a minimum of 12 hours and a 2.5 GPA prior to receiving A+ tuition.

A+ STUDENT QUALIFICATIONS

- Signed written A+ Agreement (signed by student, parent(s), A+ Coordinator/Counselor, and High School Principal). A copy of the A+ agreement is attached.
- Be a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or lawfully present in the United States.
- 95 percent attendance (average of all four high school years).
- Graduate from an A+ designated high school with an overall unweighted grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring (over the four years of high school).
- Maintain a record of Good Citizenship (over the four years of high school) and avoided unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol. Student must not have a criminal record preventing receipt of federal Title IV student financial aid.
- Three years of consecutive attendance at an A+ designated school ending with graduation. Students may transfer in or out of an A+ Designated School and continue in the A+ Program.

Other Requirements:

Students should complete and file the FAFSA form before graduation; the most desirable date is by April 1st. Students may file an estimated FAFSA when conditions prevent them from submitting actual numbers. Student information should be sent, by the A+ Coordinator, to the A+ State Office no later than two weeks after graduation. The final date for submission is June 30th with the exception of citizenship issues relating to court cases—these student names must be submitted no later than August 1st.

Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2015, students must achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I (or higher level math) end of course exam, or complete the first semester at a postsecondary institution with a minimum of 12 hours and a 2.5 GPA prior to receiving A+ tuition.

A+ ATTENDANCE POLICY

To be eligible for the A+ Schools Program Tuition Reimbursement Incentive, a student must have a 95 percent accumulated attendance record for their four years of high school. Students are expected to attend school regularly. Therefore, the student will acquire the habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. A student who does not meet the 95% attendance requirement will not be eligible for the A+ Tuition Incentive as approved by the Missouri Legislative Group, the State School Board of Education, and the Missouri Department of Higher Education (the Linn County R-I School is not responsible for any tuition reimbursements). The following attendance guidelines will be followed:

- Students must attend an A+ designated school for three consecutive years prior to graduation.
- An accumulative attendance record will be kept from the beginning of the A+ student's freshman year until graduation.
- The official cumulative attendance record is figured within the student information system.
- At the end of each semester, the A+ student requirement status will be recorded on the student's grade card.
- Students who may become injured in an accident or sustain a one-time illness, either of which preclude the student from meeting the required 95 percent attendance and which are beyond his/her control, have the right to make application for homebound instruction. Once the student can be counted for Average Daily Attendance, the homebound instruction may be counted toward the required 95 percent attendance rate.

A+ UNWEIGHTED GPA REQUIREMENT

To be eligible for the A+ Schools Program Tuition Reimbursement Incentive, a student must graduate from an A+ designated high school with an overall unweighted grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale for their four years of high school. GPA records will be maintained in the student information system. Students/parents will be notified each semester on the student grade card of their unweighted cumulative GPA. Weighted grade points are not figured into the A+ GPA, in compliance to the requirements set forth by the Missouri Department of Higher Education.

A+ TUTORING GUIDELINES

The A+ School Student Requirements include that the participant perform fifty (50) hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring. The following will serve as a set of guidelines for the completion of this requirement. Should questions or other circumstances arise, do not hesitate to contact the A+ Coordinator.

- All tutoring must be supervised by an adult employed by the school district (teacher, principal, counselor, etc.) who will verify all activities.
- Students are responsible for maintaining records of tutoring activities and securing the verification (log sheets are available from the A+ Coordinator, and should be returned by the student to the A+ Coordinator's office upon completion).

- A student must complete 50 hours of tutoring during their four high school years.
- All activities are to be unpaid and completed at the school.
- Tutoring may include younger students or students of the same age group.

A+ CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT

Student eligibility for the A+ school financial incentives is based on their ability to meet the A+ requirements during a four-year period prior to graduation from high school with one of those requirements being: “A student must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs and alcohol.”

In an effort to set forth for the parameters of good citizenship, Linn County R-I High School A+ participants should understand that the following guidelines will be followed in establishing good citizenship standings:

- If a student receives a two OSS offense during the same school year, that student will be expelled from the A+ program with the opportunity to appeal to the A+ Advisory Committee.
- Good citizenship outside the school setting is of equal importance. Therefore, any actions for which legal information is available to the school district will be used in evaluating the citizenship of the applicant. Applicants will be evaluated by the Linn County R-I Advisory Committee to determine A+ eligibility.
- A student must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol.

A+ APPEALS PROCESS

The A+ Appeals Committee shall be composed of the following: *Linn County R-I High School Superintendent, Linn County R-I High School Principal, Counselor/A+ Coordinator, One Linn County R-I Teaching Staff Member, The Linn County R-I Student Council President and Two A+ Committee Members*

- The student must notify the A+ Coordinator in writing of their intent to appeal, within 10 school days of the notification of a citizenship/attendance infraction.
- The A+ Coordinator will then convene an A+ Appeals Committee Meeting for consideration of the appeal within 10 school days after the date of notification of the appeal.
- The A+ Advisory Committee will hear the appeal and return its decision within 5 school days after the committee’s decision is reached.
- The student and parents have the option, within 10 school days, to appeal to the Linn County R-I School Board if they choose not to accept the A+ Appeals Committee’s decision. However, the school must also adhere to the Missouri Department of Higher Education A+ Program Requirements.

A+ APPEAL CERTIFICATION FORM

The student must notify the A+ Coordinator in writing of their intent to appeal, within 10 school days after notification of a citizenship/attendance infraction. The A+ Coordinator will then convene an A+ Appeals Committee Meeting for consideration of the appeal within 10 school days after the date of notification of the appeal. The A+ Advisory Committee will hear the appeal and return its decision within 5 school days after the committee's decision is reached. The student and parents have the option, within 10 school days, to appeal to the Linn County R-I School Board if they choose not to accept the A+ Appeals Committee's decision. However, the school must also adhere to the Missouri Department of Higher Education A+ Program Requirements.

Student Name: _____ Today's Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

This request is to appeal the CITIZENSHIP and/or ATTENDANCE Certification of my son/daughter for the following school year: _____ (circle one or both of the above).

In the space below, please indicate the basis of your appeal concerning the citizenship and/or attendance qualifications. If additional space is needed, please attach another sheet of paper.

[illegible]

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date received by the Appeals Committee:

Linn County R-I A+ Program

A+ Participation Agreement

I, _____, have read and agree to the following eligibility provisions as established in the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. * To claim eligibility under the A+ Schools Program I will:

- Attend a designated A+ School for a minimum of three (3) consecutive years prior to graduation.
- Graduate from high school with an unweighted grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale.
- Have at least a 95% attendance record for the four years of high school.
- Perform fifty (50) hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and alcohol.

Be it understood that in exchange for meeting or exceeding the stated criteria that the above named student may be eligible for reimbursements as established in the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 or DESE A+ Rule 5 CSR 50-350.040. ** Said reimbursements are the responsibility of the Missouri General Assembly and the Missouri Department of Higher Education and NOT the Linn County R-I School District.*** Reimbursements are described as:

The tuition incentives will be made available, subject to legislative appropriation, only after the student has made a documented good faith effort to first secure all available federal postsecondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. The tuition incentives will only be made available to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition subject to legislative appropriation after the federal postsecondary student financial assistance funds have been applied to these costs. The period of eligibility shall be for a period of 48 months after completion of high school, prior to receipt of an associate's degree and prior to completion of 105% of the hours required for the degree program in which the student is currently enrolled in, to institutions approved by the State of Missouri, and the student must 1.) have enrolled and attended on a full-time basis a Missouri public community college or vocation-technical school and 2.) maintain a grade point average of 2.5 points or higher on a 4.0 scale.

Hereby signed and **AGREED** to on the _____ day of _____, _____.

Hereby signed and **DECLINED** on the _____ day of _____, _____.

Student Signature: _____ SSN: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Address: _____ Expected year of graduation: _____

A+ Coordinator/Counselor Signature: _____ HS Principal Signature: _____

Review Dates: Sophomore _____ Junior _____ Senior _____

* The tuition incentive will be made available only after the student has made a documented good faith effort to first secure all available postsecondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. The tuition incentive will only be made available to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition, books, and fees.

** Eligibility requirements may be subject to change by the Department of Higher Education

*** The student financial incentive program is dependent upon Linn County R-I School maintaining designation as an A+ School and state appropriations from the Missouri General Assembly.