



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Missouri A+ Scholarship Program

A+ Program Handbook

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What is the A+ Program?

The A+ Program was established by the Missouri General Assembly in 1993 in an effort to make college or vocational education available to every Missouri high school graduate. The program provides scholarship funds to eligible graduates of A+ designated high schools who attend a participating community college or technical school. Additionally, some four-year Missouri colleges and universities offer an equivalency scholarship to eligible A+ students.

Further information about the state's A+ Scholarship Program can be found on the [Missouri Department of Higher Education website](http://www.dhe.mo.gov) (www.dhe.mo.gov)

Please see each SJSJ high school's A+ Program website page at the link below for further information, to access the forms and documents for the A+ Program, and for contact information for each building's A+ Coordinator.

- Benton: <https://www.sjsd.k12.mo.us/bhsaplus>
- Central: <https://www.sjsd.k12.mo.us/chsaplus>
- Lafayette: <https://www.sjsd.k12.mo.us/lhsaplus>

Enrollment in the Program

A+ enrollment is voluntary. Students may participate in the program by completing and returning a signed Participation Agreement Form to their high school's A+ Coordinator. The student is then confirmed as an active A+ participant.

Once enrolled in 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. The A+ Scholarship is earned, and students must continually verify their eligibility for the program, turn in all tutor/mentor hour logs, and complete all requirements for eligibility. Throughout their high school years, students are encouraged to check their status in the program by contacting their building's A+ Coordinator.

What are the Participation Requirements?

- The high school from which the student graduates must meet and maintain all the requirements for A+ Schools designation.
- State funding must be available. As with any State program, the A+ Schools Program is subject to the political process of sustaining and maintaining a budget.
- The student must meet all the criteria outlined in the A+ Schools Program and the participation agreement in which the student and parent/guardian will sign.

Eligibility Requirements for A+ Tuition Benefit

- Enter into a written agreement with your high school stating your intent to participate in the A+ program.
- Be a US Citizen or Permanent Resident of the United States (as required by FAFSA).
- Attend a designated A+ high school for two years prior to graduation.
- Graduate with a cumulative high school grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale (non-weighted).
- Maintain a 95% or higher average attendance record for grades 9-12 (attendance average is not rounded up).
- Perform 50 documented hours of approved and unpaid tutoring and/or mentoring. 25% of hours can be obtained through job shadowing.
- Establish a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Make a good faith effort to secure all available federal financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This is checked by the post-secondary institution.
- Achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I end of course exam or attain a qualifying score on an approved standardized test.

* **High School Seniors:** If you meet all of the eligibility requirements except the end-of-course exam score, you may establish eligibility by achieving a combined ACT math sub-score and high school GPA in accordance with the scale on the next page. 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.

ACT and GPA Requirements

- 17 ACT math sub-score **and** 2.5 GPA
- 16 ACT math sub-score **and** 2.8 GPA
- 15 ACT math sub-score **and** 3.0 GPA
- Meet any additional eligibility requirement set out in state law.

Eligibility Report

By June 30th of each year, the A+ Coordinator will submit a list of the names of all graduating, certified A+ students eligible to receive financial assistance. The final high school transcripts of these students will be marked accordingly. A+ Scholarship eligibility may continue until 48 months after the graduation date documented on the high school transcript.

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. It is the responsibility of each A+ participant to closely monitor his/her attendance. Please check with your A+ Coordinator to verify your overall attendance average at any time throughout your four years of high school.

The A+ Attendance Policy includes information where a student may file an appeal 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 including the criteria for filing an attendance appeal.

Final determination of A+ eligibility cannot be made until an A+ participant graduates and his/her final overall average attendance is calculated.

Citizenship Requirement

To be eligible for the A+ Program financial incentives a student must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol. The following offenses **may result** in 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
- Distribution of drugs
- Possession of a weapon (under provision of Ch. 471 Mo. Revised Statutes)
- Serious sexual misbehavior/exposure
- Possession of dangerous items
- Dangerous behavior
- Other offenses as indicated by the Citizenship Review Committee

There is an appeal process for any student that feels they have been unfairly dismissed from the program. Each A+ participant should read and understand the citizenship policy including the criteria for filing a citizenship appeal.

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. Final determination of A+ eligibility cannot be made until an A+ participant graduates and his/her final GPA is calculated.

Tutoring/Mentoring Requirement

A+ participants must perform fifty hours of unpaid mentoring/tutoring. It is important to make a plan to complete tutoring hours and see your A+ Coordinator to verify your tutoring plan is approved. Tutoring time should be documented on the official A+ Tutoring Log. This log may be turned in at any time to the A+ Coordinator who will then review and record any approved hours for the participant.

Do not wait until the end of senior year to turn in all hours. If any hours are not approved, a student could find themselves lacking the total number of hours necessary to meet the requirement.

Examples of Tutoring/Mentoring options may be found on each high school's A+ Program page.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid Requirement (FAFSA)

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 and must be completed each year the student is enrolled at their postsecondary school.

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

Participants are encouraged to complete the FAFSA as early as possible beginning October 1st of their senior year. Students and Parents must first create their separate FAFSA IDs at <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index>. The FAFSA may then be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov

Receipt of Funds at Participating Community Colleges and Technical Schools

1. In order to receive A+ financial assistance, an eligible student must:
2. Make a good-faith effort to secure all sources of federal funding that could be applied to tuition reimbursement.
3. Be admitted and enrolled at a participating institution on a full-time basis in accordance with the law unless the student is enrolled in all the available hours applicable to the student's program of study in a given term, the student is participating in a required internship, or the student is enrolled in prerequisite courses that do not require full-time enrollment.
4. Not be enrolled in or intend to use the award to enroll in a course of study leading to a degree in theology or divinity.
5. Not have a criminal record preventing receipt of federal Title IV student financial aid.
6. Meet the institution's definition of satisfactory academic progress as determined by the institution's policies and law.
7. Meet the course completion standards as required by law.

SJSD A+ Program and Counseling Department

The SJSD A+ Program in conjunction with the SJSD Counseling Department maintain records regarding the following:

1. Student demographics and enrollment.
2. Student completion and performance of coursework.
3. The number of students who continue their education at four-year colleges and universities, community colleges and career/technical schools.
4. The number of students who enter the labor force.
5. The number of students who enter military service.
6. A+ Schools Program outcomes.
7. The relationship of the partnership plan to student success.
8. Student eligibility for A+ financial incentives.

An advisory committee made up of various community members and school personnel meets each year to review the A+ program, its procedures and outcomes.

Contact Information for the A+ Coordinator of each high school can be found on each high school's A+ program page.