

A+

# Student Handbook

Appleton City High School



Joe Dunlap, Superintendent  
Jim Gurney, Principal  
Stephani Beckett, A+ Coordinator

## **Rationale**

The A+ Program was established in 1993 as part of the Outstanding Schools ACT (OA) by the Missouri State Legislature to enhance educational opportunities for high school students. Schools that apply have three years to align curriculum and set standards for A+ before being designated as an A+ School. Once designated as an A+ School, Appleton City High School graduates who meet specific A+ criteria 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 for two years.

This manual is provided to students, parents, faculty and staff to explain the guidelines and policies of the A+ Program. It is the responsibility of the Appleton City School District to follow these policies to ensure A+ designation is earned during the 2009-2010 school year and is maintained. Accurate certification of students is crucial to the integrity of the program and A+ Schools designation.

**It is the responsibility of the students and parents to read this manual carefully to understand the guidelines and regulations that are a part of the A+ Program.**

## **Eligibility**

To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Programs (free tuition and general fees), a student must be certified as an A+ student by the Appleton City High School. To qualify for certification, the student must meet the following criteria:

- Enter into a written agreement (Statement of Intent) prior to graduation and have attended an A+ designated school for at least three consecutive years;
- Graduate from high school with a cumulative unweighted grade point average of 2.5 or higher (GPA averages cannot be rounded up);
- Have at least a 95% cumulative attendance record;
- Perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring of younger students through a school sponsored program;
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and alcohol; and
- 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 A+ eligibility; however, all students must complete the FAFSA in January of the senior year, and a copy of the Student Aid Report (SAR) given to the A+ Coordinator.

## **Student Enrollment Guidelines**

- Students are encouraged to enroll in the program early in their sophomore year.
- Students may also enroll in their freshman year, but no later than the first semester of the senior year.
- An A+ Participation Agreement must be completed with all appropriate signatures and returned to the A+ Office/Counseling Office.
- Anyone requesting A+ enrollment after their freshman year must meet all criteria dating back to the beginning of their freshman year.
- Students may not request A+ financial incentives after the fifth week of the fall semester of their senior year.

- Eligible students must be enrolled in Appleton City High School no later than three weeks after the beginning of the school year of the students' sophomore year.

## **Student Incentives**

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

- Tuition and general fees to attend any public community college, state certified vocational or technical school in the state of Missouri for two years.
- 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.
- Tuition incentives will only be made available to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition and general fees after available federal financial aid 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 hours or more) 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 public vocational/technical school within four years of graduating from Appleton City High School.
- Financial need is not a factor in determining eligibility for the A+ Program.
- A list of local community colleges/technical schools that may accept A+ students are available in the back of this handbook.

## **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. The cumulative non-weighted GPA is applicable to all four years of a student's enrollment in high school. The official transcript will serve to document and certify that the GPA requirement has been met. GPA will not be rounded up.

## **Notification of A+ Status**

The A+ Coordinator will review all records of A+ students, and names of eligible students will be submitted to the principal for official certification upon graduation. Students and parents will be notified and the student's transcript will reflect A+ status.

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

## **Good Faith Effort**

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

- Parents must complete the file for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) prior to graduation. 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 on file in the A+ Office.
- The FAFSA is filed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Parents are encouraged to apply as soon as possible after October 1 of the graduating school year, and no later than April 1. Parents and students can receive assistance filing the FAFSA at financial aid workshops offered through the Counseling Office.
- Financial incentives will only be awarded to reimburse the unpaid balance of the costs of tuition and general fees after available federal post secondary student financial assistance funds have been applied to the costs.

## **Career Pathways**

Each student is required to declare a Career Path. Career Paths clusters of occupations/careers that are grouped because many of the people in them share similar interests and strengths. All paths include a variety of occupations that require different levels of education and training. Selecting a career path provides students with an area of focus for choosing courses that will be relevant to his/her chosen field of study after high school, along with flexibility and a variety of ideas to pursue. A Career Path may be changed at any time. More information about Career Paths is available in the Appleton City High School Program of Studies. The six Career Paths are:

- Health Services
- Arts & Communications
- Industrial & Engineering Technology
- Business, Management & Technology
- Natural Resources Agriculture
- Human Services

## **Attendance Requirements**

To be eligible for the A+ financial incentive, a student must have a 95% (approximately no more than 8.95 days absent per year) cumulative attendance record beginning with the freshman year. According to state A+ guidelines adopted by the Missouri State Board of Education, participating A+ school districts shall make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences.

Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes. 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+ financial incentive.

The following attendance guidelines are required of all students participating in the A+ Program:

- Students must attend Appleton City High School for three consecutive years prior to graduation. Early graduation is discouraged.
- 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 by the High School office. Students attending Clinton Technical School have their attendance reported to Appleton City High School.

## **Attendance Review Process**

1. After receiving attendance information, the parent/guardian will have 5 calendar days to file an appeal with the A+ Coordinator. If an appeal is not filed within 5 calendar days of notification, a waiver for days missed will not be considered.
2. Anyone making an appeal should use the “A+ Attendance Appeal Form” available in the A+ Office. A sample is included in this handbook.
3. The A+ Coordinator will convene the Attendance Review Committee within 5 calendar days of receiving the notice of appeal.
4. An A+ Review Committee will be composed of a counselor, a building principal, and two business leaders from the community to review stated grounds of the appeal. The A+ Coordinator will act as a facilitator and a non-voting member of the review committee.
5. After the Attendance Review Committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents by letter within 3 calendar days. The decision of the Review Committee will be considered final.

## **Attendance Waiver Guidelines**

Anyone submitting a request for an A+ attendance waiver for days missed shall provide the A+ Coordinator with the following official documentation:

- Doctor or Dentist (written excuse presented to principal within 5 days of absence)
- Chronic health problems (letter from doctor and school nurse)
- Hospitalization (letter signed by doctor)
- Court dates (court letter)
- Funeral (funeral program)
- Religious holiday (letter from minister)
- Exchange student/study abroad for one or more semesters (documentation from agency)
- Personal/family calamity such as fire, flood, etc.(letter from principal)
- Catastrophic illness—long term (letter signed by principal and/or doctor)
- Intermittent home bound (letter signed by principal and/or doctor)

## **No student will receive a waiver if the absences are due to any of the following:**

- Personal/family vacation
- Suspension from school for any reason
- Truancy
- Skipping classes
- Transportation problems (unless on a late school bus)

Attendance requirements for A+ are not to be confused with general attendance requirements as stated in the Appleton City High School Student Handbook.

## **Tutoring**

In order to qualify for the A+ financial incentive, students are required to perform at least 50 hours of unpaid school-based tutoring/mentoring of younger students. The tutoring activities must:

- Involve A+ students with students from lower grades in the district;
- Provide, as an ultimate goal, encouragement to students in lower grades to get motivated, stay in school and strive for good grades;
- Students seeking A+ financial incentive must meet the following qualifications prior to beginning a tutoring experience:
  1. Have a 2.5 GPA, 95% attendance, good citizenship status and a signed A+ statement of participation.
  2. Commit to 50 hours of tutoring.
  3. Sign a tutoring agreement and have a tutoring permission form on file in the A+ Office.

## **Policies of the Tutoring/Mentoring Program**

- Tutoring must be school sponsored.
- Students may obtain a Tutoring Log Sheet in the A+ Office. These sheets must be completed and turned into the A+ Office to receive credit for tutoring.
- Log sheets must be turned into the A+ Office before the end of the semester during which tutoring occurred to be included in the semester report to parents.
- It is the student's responsibility to maintain his/her tutoring log record and turn it into the A+ Office upon completion.
- A+ student cannot tutor a sibling or family member unless in a group setting.
- Tutoring may be done during the school year or during summer school.
- Tutoring must be done on school premises.
- Failure to follow the tutoring guidelines may result in disciplinary action, and/or dismissal from the A+ Program.
- No financial compensation may be accepted for tutoring/mentoring activities.
- A+ students will be academically ineligible and not allowed to tutor if he or she has earned one (or more) grades of "F." Academically ineligible students may regain eligibility at the end of the next designated grading period (mid-term or quarter). A statement must be signed by the participant and on file in the A+ Office that the participant understands the tutoring guidelines.

## **Citizenship Requirement**

Participation in the A+ Program is an honor and a unique privilege for Appleton City High School students. Students pursuing the A+ financial incentive must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and alcohol. Certification of good citizenship will be based on the official discipline record maintained in the high school office. The principal will assign consequences for infractions of the discipline code, and the principal is responsible for certifying the accuracy of the students' discipline record.

# ***Code of Conduct Policy***

## **For A+ Participation**

Students should conduct themselves as responsible representatives of the school. A+ participants must always serve as exemplary examples of high ethical character. As recognized representatives of their school, members are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior on and off school grounds and to conform to and support existing state laws. All participants begin each school year with good citizen status. Good citizen status equals 0 points.

### **ISS/OSS**

- Each disciplinary referral that results in an in-school or out-of-school suspension takes away from good citizenship status. In-school suspension results in a 3-point penalty for each day assigned. Out-of-school suspension results in a 5-point penalty for each day assigned.
- The accumulation of 21 points during any one school year will result in the revocation of the participant's good citizenship status and his/her removal from the program with no opportunity for reinstatement.

### **Chemical Abuse**

- In accordance to state A+ rules, all student use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, or possession or use of non-prescribed controlled substances or paraphernalia for their use will not be tolerated, and the violator will be subject to removal from the A+ Program.
- Rule enforcement will be consistent and immediate. School officials are not expected to police off-campus, non-school activities unless the violation is brought to public attention by city, state, county, or federal officials.
- The Administration will be notified of all violations of the A+ Code of Conduct and the consequences of the infraction which is immediate dismissal from the A+ Program with no opportunity for reinstatement. In addition to the A+ Program penalty, such infractions will also be subject to appropriate Board of Education disciplinary policies.

### **Safe Schools Act**

- Any violation of the Safe Schools Act is grounds for immediate and permanent dismissal from the A+ Program with no opportunity for reinstatement.

### **Procedures**

1. All reports of violations of the Code of Conduct are to be made to the A+ Coordinator and to the Principal.
2. The A+ Coordinator will contact the student and parents/guardians to inform them on the violation and procedures to be followed. If requested, a meeting will be scheduled within 3 school days. This meeting includes the A+ Coordinator, Principal, Superintendent, the student, and his or her parents/guardians.
3. The A+ Coordinator and Principal will determine the course of action. The student and his/her parents/guardians will be notified of the decision immediately.
4. Any student who violates the guidelines will be terminated from the A+ Program with no opportunity for reinstatement.

## **Due Process**

A student and his/her parents/guardians may appeal a decision by writing a letter to the A+ Coordinator, with a copy to the Principal, within 3 days following notification of dismissal. This letter should state a request for a hearing with the school administration.

Within 5 school days after the letter is received, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents and the participant of the time and place of the appeal hearing. The superintendent, principal, A+ coordinator and a board of three A+ Program committee members will hear both sides of the case and will take action, which they consider to be in the best interests of the student and the A+ Program. During the time between the original decision and the hearing, the principal has the authority to waive the action that has been taken.

## **Probation while 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+ financial incentive 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:

1. More than 2 in-school suspensions in a semester.
2. 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. Any student who is placed on probation two times in one semester will be automatically removed from the program. A student who receives two semesters of probation during his/her high school career will have his/her disciplinary record reviewed by the A+ Review Committee for continued probation or possible dismissal from the program.

## **Removal from the A+ Program**

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

- Within the semester while on probation, the student commits another offense that would result in another probationary action.
- After two semesters on probation, a review by the A+ Review Committee shows that earlier disciplinary consequences did not positively affect a student's behavior.
- Any student who commits a serious offense involving drugs or alcohol or which falls under the Safe Schools Act will be immediately dismissed from the program. Offenses which fall under the Safe Schools Act include:
  - Possession, use, sale or transfer of alcohol, drugs or narcotics
  - Possession of drug paraphernalia
  - Criminal activity as defined by the Safe Schools Act
  - Possession of a weapon (under provisions of Chapter 571 MO Rev. Statutes)
  - Assault on a student
  - Physical threat to staff member
  - Vandalism/theft
  - False fire alarm/bomb threats and misuse of emergency equipment
  - Sexual misbehavior/exposure
  - Possession of dangerous items
  - Dangerous behavior

## **Unlawful use of Drugs/Alcohol**

An A+ student will not sell, possess, or use alcohol, controlled substances or drug paraphernalia as defined by law and stated in the Appleton City Student Handbook. The use of prescription medication is allowed under Board Policy. Students and parents/guardians are responsible for understanding and following those guidelines.

## **A+ Citizenship Probation Appeal Process**

Student and parents/guardians may appeal a disciplinary decision using the following process:

1. Students and parents/guardians will have 5 days to appeal a decision that is made dealing with discipline or probation.
2. Anyone making an appeal should use the A+ Appeal of Citizenship form available from the A+ Coordinator.
3. Within 5 days of receiving a written appeal, the A+ Coordinator will convene the A+ Review Committee. The Committee will be composed of a guidance counselor, a principal, and two business leaders.
4. The parent/guardian and student should appear in person before the committee. The A+ Coordinator will act as facilitator and a non-voting member of the A+ Review Committee. After the committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents/guardians by letter within 3 days. The decisions of the Review Committee will be considered final.

# Appleton City High School A+ Attendance Appeal Form

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

This request is to appeal the school absences of my son/daughter for the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1st Semester          \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd Semester          \_\_\_\_\_ School Year

Appeal will be:          \_\_\_\_\_ In Person          \_\_\_\_\_ In Writing

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

This form must be forwarded to the A+ Office within 5 days of the date of the absence notification. Parents/guardians will be notified of a hearing date scheduled within 5 days of the appeal notice.

# Appleton City High School

## A+ Citizenship/Probation Appeal Form

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

This request is to appeal A+ Citizenship/Probation for my son/daughter for the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1st Semester                      \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd Semester                      \_\_\_\_\_ School Year

Appeal will be:                      \_\_\_\_\_ In Person                      \_\_\_\_\_ In Writing

In the space below, please indicate the basis of your appeal concerning the citizenship and/or probation status of your son/daughter and the reason for the request to be reviewed. If additional space is needed, please attach another sheet of paper.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

This form must be forwarded to the A+ Office within 5 days of the date of the citizenship/probation notification. Parents/guardians will be notified of a hearing date scheduled within 5 days of the appeal notice.