



Lexington High
School
A+ Information
Guide

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Welcome to the Missouri & Lexington High School A+ Program!

If you have already decided to enroll in the A+ Program, congratulations for you, you have made a wise decision! If you have not yet decided to enroll in the program, I strongly advise you to consider the many benefits A+ can offer you both in high school and as a means of helping fund your post-secondary education.

A+ offers students a wide array of benefits and advantages. Of course, the financial benefits are enormous – tuition and fees at a Missouri public community college or technical school. That alone can amount to several thousand dollars. Other benefits include:

A+ looks great on a resume. Employers, scholarship committees, and college admissions offices know that A+ students are dedicated and serious students who are very likely to succeed in whatever path they choose.

If you have no plans for after high school, A+ benefits will wait for you to decide. You have up to four years after graduation to use the benefits.

You may be planning to attend a four-year institution and think you won't need A+ benefits. Plans often change. Enroll in A+ and satisfy the A+ requirements as insurance for a change of post-secondary plans. Studies and experience indicate that college students often change career and college plans.

Many four-year colleges and universities in Missouri offer substantial institutional scholarships annually for certified A+ graduates.

While you are in high school, A+ keeps you on the right path. As an A+ student, you will be part of a group of students whose grades, attendance, and citizenship we watch very carefully and encourage to succeed. We want every one of our students – especially our A+ students – to find success, and we will help in every way possible.

As an A+ student, you will have an opportunity to serve your school and community through tutoring/mentoring and service. A+ students regularly comment that the tutoring and service activities were not only beneficial to those they helped but also to the students themselves through a sense of fulfillment, accomplishment, and experience. Tutoring/mentoring and service are "win-win" situations for all involved.

Lisa Nevels

LHS A+ Coordinator

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Program Goals

In an effort to make college or vocational education available to every Missouri high school graduate, the Missouri General Assembly established the A+ schools program as a part of the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993.

Graduates of designated A+ schools, who successfully complete the requirements of the program, may be eligible to receive the unpaid balance of your tuition and general fees after all available non-loan federal financial assistance, such as the federal Pell grant, has been applied to your account to a designated public community college, vocational or technical institution in Missouri. All funds are subject to Missouri General Assembly allocating monies for the A+ Program.

The goals of the A+ program are:

- ❖ All Students will graduate from high school.
- ❖ All students will complete high school studies that are challenging and that have identified learning expectations.
- ❖ All students will proceed from high school graduation to college, post-secondary vocational or technical school or a high wage job with opportunities for workplace skill development.

Participation Requirements

The following must be met to be eligible for program participation:

- ❖ 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 must sign.

Eligibility Requirements

High School Students

- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Enter into a written agreement with your high school prior to graduation.
- Attend a designated A+ high school for 3 years immediately prior to graduation.¹
- Graduate with an overall grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale.
- Have at least a 95% attendance record overall for grades 9-12.
- Perform at least 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring, of which up to 25% may include job shadowing prior to graduation. ²
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol while in grades 9-12.
- Have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end of course exam or a higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the field of mathematics.³

Initial Postsecondary Students

- Enroll and attend full-time at a participating public community college or vocational/technical school, or private two-year vocational/technical school. (Students who have a disability as defined by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and are unable to enroll full time because of their disability but are enrolled in at least six credit hours may be considered to be enrolled full time.)
- 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 have a criminal record preventing receipt of federal Title IV student financial aid
- Make a good faith effort to secure all available federal financial aid by completing the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#). If you are attending a school that does not participate in Title IV programs you must complete the [FAFSA4caster](#), which is a tool for estimating your 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 in order 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.

Renewal Students

- Continue to meet the eligibility requirements for initial students, except for the 2.0 CGPA fall semester requirement.
- Maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale and otherwise maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by your school.
- Make a good faith effort to secure all available, non-loan federal financial aid by completing the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) each academic year. If you are attending a school that does not participate in Title IV programs you must complete the [FAFSA4caster](#), which is a tool for estimating your level of need for federal financial aid.
- Beginning with the Fall 2016 term, complete 12 semester credit hours or the equivalent (6 hours during the summer term) each term in which you receive an A+ award in order 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.

What if I don't meet the Math EOC/Math ACT requirements?

If you meet all of the eligibility requirements except the end of course exam requirement, you may establish eligibility by achieving a combined ACT math subscore and high school GPA in accordance with the following scale. 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.

<u>ACT Math Score</u>		<u>High School GPA</u>
17 or greater	and	2.5 GPA or greater
16	and	2.8 GPA or greater
15	and	3.0 GPA or greater

How much can I receive?

The scholarship will reimburse, within the limits described in the following paragraph, the unpaid balance of your tuition and general fees after all available, non-loan federal financial assistance, such as the federal Pell grant, has been applied to your account. This may result in a zero award if your Pell grant is sufficient to cover all tuition and general fee charges. General fees are fees that are charged to all students and do not include fees specific to an individual program or group of students.

The tuition amount eligible for reimbursement is capped at the published standard per credit hour tuition rate charged by State Technical College of

Missouri. The reimbursement cap is subject to change annually as tuition rates change. The maximum reimbursement rate is announced in late spring or early summer each year. For the 2017-18 academic year, the maximum rate is \$166.00 per credit hour or \$4.50 per clock-hour.

The amount reimbursed may be reduced if there are insufficient state appropriations. The following factors may also affect the amount you are eligible to receive:

- Reimbursement will be made for completed coursework, including remedial coursework, for which a standard grade was assigned and that is required by your school for the completion of the degree or certificate. For A+ Scholarship purposes, a grade of Incomplete is considered a standard grade.
- Coursework that is part of a higher level certificate or degree program taken after receipt of a certificate will be reimbursed if it is related to the original certificate.
- The amount of reimbursement paid for coursework for which a standard grade was not assigned (dropped coursework), including coursework from which you officially or unofficially withdrew, will not be reimbursed if you complete 12 semester credit hours (6 in summer). Dropped coursework will be reimbursed if you complete fewer than 12 semester credit hours (6 in summer) because you will be ineligible for A+ until the dropped hours are completed. For example, if you enroll in 15 hours but only complete 12, A+ will not pay for the 3 hours that were dropped. If you enroll in 15 hours but only complete 9, A+ will pay for all 15 hours but you will be ineligible for A+ until you have completed at least 3 hours (9+3=12 hour completion requirement).
- Repeat coursework, which includes courses for which you have already received a grade (including a failing grade), will not be reimbursed.

How can I apply?

You do not have to complete a paper A+ Scholarship application for the MDHE. Check with your community college or vocational/technical school to see what materials they require in order to confirm your A+ eligibility. In most cases your school will require at least an A+ seal/stamp on your high school transcript.

In addition, you must complete the [FAFSA](#) each year. If you are attending a school that does not participate in Title IV programs you must complete the [FAFSA4caster](#), which is a tool for estimating your level of need for federal financial aid.

The MDHE receives electronic FAFSA records for Missouri residents directly from the federal government. Late filing may jeopardize your payment as well as eligibility for other state aid programs.

For the summer term, check with the school you are attending to see which academic year (July 1 to June 30) contains the summer term. For example, if the 2018 summer term is part of the upcoming academic year (called a "header"), you would need to file a 2018-19 FAFSA in order to receive a summer award. If the 2018 summer term is part of the prior academic year (called a "trailer"), a 2017-18 FAFSA is required.

Although you must file a FAFSA for the correct academic year based on your school's academic year, the MDHE will always provide funding for the summer term after July 1, even if your school considers summer to be a trailer to the previous academic year.

How long can I receive an award?

Your eligibility expires when the earliest of the following occurs:

- 48 months after the graduation date documented on your high school transcript.
 - Students providing service to any branch of the U.S. armed forces can defer their eligibility (see "Can the scholarship be deferred?" below).
 - Students graduating from high school in mid-year may be eligible for a spring award if their high school transcripts indicate the mid-year graduation date.
- Receipt of an associate's degree
- Completion of 105% of the hours required for the program in which you are currently enrolled

105% includes the following:

- All hours, including developmental/remedial hours, taken at your current A+ eligible school
- All known hours, including developmental/remedial hours, taken at any other A+ eligible school
- Hours taken at any non-eligible A+ school, including out-of-state schools, that your current school accepts in transfer

105% excludes the following:

- Hours earned for work performed before high school graduation, including (but not limited to): dual credit, dual enrollment, technical education articulation, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate
- Hours from a non-eligible school not accepted in transfer by your current school

If you complete a certificate and progress to a higher-level certificate or degree in a related field, the 105% calculation will include:

- Hours earned at any institution (A+ eligible or non-eligible) prior to receipt of the initial certificate that transfer into the new program
- Hours taken at any A+ eligible school, including your current school, after receipt of the initial certificate. This includes any developmental/remedial hours completed.
- Hours taken at any non-eligible A+ school, including out-of-state schools, after receipt of the initial certificate and that your current school accepts in transfer.

After receipt of an initial certificate, the 105% will not include:

- Hours earned for work performed before high school graduation, including (but not limited to): dual credit, dual enrollment, technical education articulation, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate
- Hours completed at any institution (A+ eligible or non-eligible) before receipt of the initial certificate that do not transfer into the new program.
- Hours taken at any non-eligible A+ school, including out-of-state schools, after receipt of the initial certificate and that your current school does not accept in transfer.

Grade Point Requirements

Eligible participants must graduate with a cumulative minimum unweighted, unrounded grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 grade scale. For purposes of this program, grade point average represents the actual figure and is not rounded (2.499 is not 2.5).

It is the responsibility of each participant to closely monitor his/her grade point average. Final determination of A+ eligibility cannot be made until an A+ participant graduates and his/her final GPA is calculated.

Attendance Requirements

A+ participants are expected to attend school regularly. A+ participants must graduate with a minimum cumulative (grades 9-12) attendance rate of 95%. The A+ Program makes no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Attendance is calculated in minutes therefore coming to school late will affect a student's overall attendance percentage.

It is the responsibility of each A+ participant to closely monitor his/her attendance. A+ participants can check their attendance percentage with the Attendance Secretary or the A+ Coordinator.

The A+ attendance policy allows relief in cases where the absence was beyond the control of the A+ participant. Lexington High School provides such a process for a student to submit a request for an appeal to meet the attendance requirements. (See the Appeals section for more information)

Tutoring Requirements

A+ participants must perform a minimum total of 50 hours of unpaid academic tutoring or mentoring. For purposes of the program, community service is not considered to be an acceptable substitute for tutoring.

Tutoring must be performed in one (or more) of the public school buildings that are part of the Lexington R-V School District in an approved program. Tutoring must be performed with Lexington public school students and must be supervised by a district employee. The tutoring assignment must be approved by the A+ Coordinator prior to starting. Preference will be given to teachers of core subjects before elective/special subjects.

Tutoring time must be documented on the official A+ Tutoring Log. These logs are available in the LHS Activity Office. No other record will be accepted. The participant is responsible for maintaining his/her tutoring log accurately, obtaining the necessary signatures and for submitting the log to the A+ Coordinator in a timely manner. No credit will be awarded for logs that are misplaced or stolen - no exceptions.

Citizenship Requirements

An important component of the A+ Schools Program is the fostering of good citizenship in our district's students. A student demonstrates good citizenship by showing respect for self, law, property and the rights of others. Students have not demonstrated good citizenship if they have:

- Pled guilty or no contest to, received a suspended imposition of sentence or suspended execution of sentence for, or been convicted or found guilty of a misdemeanor or felony.
- Unlawfully used or possessed drugs, drug paraphernalia or alcohol on or off school property during the three-year period immediately prior to graduation.

- Had an out-of-school suspension during the three-year period immediately prior to graduation.
- Violated the district's rules governing academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.).
- Citizenship will be based on a point system.
- All A+ students begin each school year with good citizenship status and zero (0) citizenship infraction points.
- A student who accumulates nineteen (19) citizenship infraction points during any one semester will have his or her good citizenship status revoked and that student will be removed from the LHS A+ Program.
- Citizenship infraction points are assigned in the following manner:
 - After-school Detention – 1 point each
 - In-school Suspension – 2 points per day assigned/served
 - Out-of-school Suspension – 4 points per day assigned

Lexington High School has an appeal process for a student to submit a request for an appeal to meet the citizenship requirements. (See the Appeals section for more information)

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

A+ eligible graduates must make a "good faith" effort to secure all available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment. A "good faith" effort has been made when the participant and his/her parents have completed and filed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with the U.S. Government.

The FAFSA form is available at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Participants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible after January 1 of the year in which they will graduate. The FAFSA summary report must be sent to the community college or public vocational technical school the student is planning to attend. The information found on the FAFSA is required by post-secondary institutions to complete the enrollment process.

Tuition incentives may only be awarded to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition and general fees after available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment have been applied.

Additional information regarding the FAFSA is available in the LHS Counseling Office.

Selective Service Registration

A+ participants who are required by the laws of the United States to register with the selective service system must register or forfeit their eligibility for the A+ Tuition benefit. The State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has ruled that all males age 18 or over at the time of graduation must register for the selective service in order to be declared A+ eligible. This can be accomplished online at <http://www.sss.gov/>.

Appeals Policy and Procedures

In accordance with Missouri state guidelines, the Lexington R-V Schools provides a process for a student to submit a request for an appeal to meet one of the following A+ requirements: Attendance or Citizenship.

There is no state appeal process. The State of Missouri will not address any local school issues regarding a student's A+ eligibility.

The purpose of an attendance appeal is to help the students meet the state requirements for A+ when extreme and unusual situations occur, such as:

- Catastrophic Illness
- Hospitalization for surgery or emergency treatment
- Catastrophic family crisis
- Chronic issues that require regular medical treatment and for which the student has a 504 accommodation plan on file or for which the student could be eligible for a 504 accommodation plan.

It is the responsibility of the student to closely monitor their attendance percentage and citizenship standards. The A+ Coordinator will notify students during the spring semester if they are at risk of not meeting the requirements for attendance or citizenship. The student will need to complete an Appeals Report form and submit all supporting documentation to the A+ Coordinator by April 15th.

A Review Committee comprised of the Administration, Counselors, and A+ Coordinator meets and reviews each student appeal within one week after April 15th. The student/parent is notified in writing of the committee's decision within fifteen (15) days of the review.

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM AGREEMENT

The Missouri Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 established the "A+ Schools Program" within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to be administered by the Commissioner of Education.

Requirements:

- Be a U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident.
- Enroll in and attend an A+ designated high school for at least THREE (3) years prior to high school graduation and enter into a written agreement by February 1st of the senior year.
- Graduate from an A+ designated high school with at least an unweighted cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 based on a 4.0 scale.
- Graduate from high school with at least 95% attendance average for all four years.
- Perform and document a minimum of fifty (50) hours of unpaid, academic-based tutoring within the School District and supervised by a School District employee, as approved by the A+ Coordinator.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship at school and in the community. Avoid the use of drugs and alcohol and acts of violence (as outlined in the Student Handbook and School District policy).
- Score Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra I EOC or a higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the field of mathematics (or meet exception requirements).
- Complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) the senior year.
- Register for the selective service (male U.S. citizen over the age of 18).

Students are eligible for the financial incentive for up to 48 months after high school graduation. To remain eligible for benefits, the student must attend on a full-time basis and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale. The Missouri legislature may revise the benefits of this program and the financial incentive is dependent upon State appropriations from the Missouri General Assembly.

Last Name _____ First Name _____

SS# _____ - _____ - _____ Date Of Birth _____

Year of Graduation _____

- I understand the terms listed above and agree to follow the guidelines set forth by the State of Missouri and the Lexington R-V School District/Lexington High School to be an A+ eligible student and to have the option of using the tuition incentives provided that the State funds are appropriated by the legislature. Student and parents/legal guardians must sign the A+ Schools Program Agreement to enroll in the A+ Schools Program.

Student Signature Date Parent/Legal Guardian Date

A+ Coordinator Signature Date