

# Kearney A+ Program



**Missouri's Outstanding Schools Act** of 1993 established provisions for the implementation of a grant award program to institute A+ Schools and improve the education of high school students within the State of Missouri. Beginning in 1997, the A+ Schools Program has provided financial incentives to students in Missouri's public school districts that demonstrate a commitment to ensure that the program's goals are met in their high schools. The goals of an A+ School are to ensure that:

1. All students graduate from high school.
2. All students complete a selection of high school studies that is challenging and has identified learning expectation.

3. All students proceed from high school graduation to a college, post-secondary vocational technical school, or a high wage job with workplace skill development opportunities. High schools that seek designation must outline a plan that includes innovation activities to make progress toward achieving these three goals and the eleven requirements of the A+ Schools Program. Kearney High School will be eligible for designation in 2012. The students who graduate from Kearney High School in 2012 and each succeeding year will be eligible to participate in the A+ School Financial Incentive Program. The funding for the financial incentives is dependent upon Kearney High School maintaining its A+ Schools status and the availability of state appropriations from the Missouri General Assembly.

The student financial incentive of the A+ Schools Program provide for applicants who meet the A+ student responsibilities to be eligible for the total cost of tuition while attending any Missouri public community college or post-secondary vocational or technical school as a full-time student. These costs will be reimbursable only after secured federal financial assistance funds that do not require repayment have been applied. The incentive is good for six (6) semesters within four(4) years.

**Purpose of Student Handbook** is to provide a clear understanding of the various aspects of the A+ Schools Program as established by the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. There are many aspects of the law that established the A+ Schools Program that require the Kearney School District to establish guidelines and policies. It is

the responsibility of the A+ School Coordinator to administer the A+ Schools Program in a fair and consistent manner. All A+ students must be treated fairly. The first step of participation in the A+ Schools Program is the signing of the A+ Schools Application by the student, parent and A+ Coordinator. After all signatures are obtained, the student is considered to be an A+ student at Kearney High School. It is then the responsibility of the student to continue to meet the responsibilities to be certified as an A+ student upon high school graduation.

Once designation is achieved, the Kearney School District has a responsibility to maintain the status of an A+ School. It is the responsibility of the A+ School Coordinator to certify to the State of Missouri the students who have achieved this status upon graduation. It is realized that some students will not be able to meet the requirements as set forth in the A+ Schools Program. It will be the responsibility of the A+ School Coordinator to notify the student and parents immediately if it is determined that a student is not eligible for A+ student status. This handbook is designed to present in a clear and consistent manner, the guidelines and policies to be followed by the A+ School Coordinator.

Please read this handbook carefully. It is provided for parents, students, and employees of the Kearney School District so that a clear understanding of the requirements for becoming an A+ student is achieved.

**STUDENT ELIGIBILITY....To be**

eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program, a student must be certified as an A+ student by Kearney High School. As the official representative of the A+ Schools Program with the Department of Education of the State of Missouri, the A+ School Coordinator has the responsibility to certify that a graduate of Kearney High School has met the criteria of certification. To be certified as an A+ School Student, an individual must:

- ✓ Sign an A+ Student Application.
- ✓ Attend Kearney High School for three consecutive years prior to graduation.
- ✓ Maintain at least a 2.5 accumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale.
- ✓ Maintain at least a 95% cumulative attendance record.
- ✓ Perform 50 hours of unpaid, district supervised tutoring during high school.
- ✓ Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs.
- ✓ Make a good faith effort to first secure all available federal post-secondary student financial assistance.
- ✓ Apply to the selective service if applicable

**REQUIREMENT 1: Enter into a written agreement with the high school to participate in the A+ Schools Student Financial Incentive Program.**

A student may enter into this written agreement at any time during his/her high school career. However, due to the requirement to accumulate tutoring hours, it is recommended that the agreement be signed before the second semester of their senior year. It is also beneficial to the student to indicate his/her intent to participate in the program to allow for beneficial monitoring by the A+ Coordinator.

**REQUIREMENT 2: Attend a designated A+ School for three consecutive years prior to high school graduation.**

Students must attend Kearney High School as a full time student beginning the first day of their sophomore, junior, and senior years. The student financial incentive is dependent upon Kearney High School being designated as an A+ School before the applicant graduates and the availability of state appropriations from the Missouri General Assembly.

If a student withdraws or transfers from Kearney High School after the beginning of his/her sophomore year, the student **will not** be considered eligible for the A+ Schools Program, even if that student reenrolls at Kearney High School before graduation.

**REQUIREMENT 3: Graduate from high school with a cumulative grade point average**

**(GPA) of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale.**

This average will represent the applicant's cumulative GPA, which includes all four years of high school. A student with a 2.499 or lower GPA **will not** qualify for A+ status.

The student's official transcript will serve as evidence of grade point average for admission into a public community college or public vocational/technical school.

**REQUIREMENT 4: Maintain at least a 95% cumulative attendance record.**

The student must maintain a 95% or better average attendance record for all four years of high school. A student with a 94.999 or lower average will not qualify for A+ status. Students are expected to attend class regularly and be on time for classes. There are no excused or unexcused absences as set forth in the law of the A+ Schools Program.

The cumulative attendance information obtained by the A+ School Coordinator will come from the official attendance records of the Kearney School District. A+ participants may submit a request for a waiver of days missed to the A+ Coordinator with appropriate, required documentation. Waivers will be considered for hospitalization, chronic health problems and other long term illnesses. An official Waiver Request must be submitted along with a letter signed by the attending doctor. "Return to School" notes are not acceptable documentation. Waiver Request forms

can be obtained from the A+ Coordinator.

**REQUIREMENT 5: Perform and document at least 50 hours of district supervised, unpaid tutoring.**

The A+ Coordinator in determining this requirement will use the following policies:

The student must sign a confidentiality form prior to tutoring

The A+ Coordinator must approve tutoring. Tutoring activities may occur before, during, or after the school day. Tutoring may be done during the school year or during summer school. The student is expected to be present at the agreed upon day and time for tutoring.

If an absence must occur, the A+ student is expected to notify the adult in charge of the A+ tutoring experience.

Failure of notification may result in removal from the tutoring program.

A tutoring log form must be kept by the student and A+ Coordinator and signed by the school staff member of the activity.

It is the responsibility of the A+ Student to make sure that all completed tutoring log forms are turned into the A+ Coordinator.

Only activities that have been verified with a time sheet signature by the tutoring supervisor, and filed in the A+ office, will be counted toward the 50-hour requirement.

**REQUIREMENT 6: Maintain a**

**record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs.**

The Kearney School District believes that creditable school citizens are those citizens whose conduct, both in and out of school, will reflect positively upon themselves and the school. Students who are designated A+ students should demonstrate distinctive qualities and be role models for other students.

Certification of good citizenship will be based on the official discipline record maintained in the Administrative Office of the high school. The Principal in charge of discipline assigns consequences for infractions of the discipline code, and that administrator is responsible for certifying the accuracy of the student's discipline record.

**Avoidance of drug use:**

Student use or possession of illegal drugs, as evidenced by civil conviction or suspension from school, will disqualify a student from accessing tuition reimbursement funds. For purposes of these guidelines, illegal drugs will include those items that are considered illegal for the entire population with no consideration of age.

**Record of Good Citizenship:**

Students may be disqualified from accessing tuition reimbursement funds based on the following guidelines:

1. Each disciplinary referral that results in an in-school or out-of-school suspension takes away from good citizen status.

- In-school suspension results in a three-point (3) penalty for each day of ISS.
- Out-of-school suspension results in a five-point (5) penalty for each day assigned.
- **The accumulation of 50 points at any point during an A+ student's high school career** will result in the revocation of the participant's good citizen status and the participant's removal from the A+ Program.

2. Immediate withdrawal from the A+ program will result from any of the following actions:

- Conviction of a felony that is verifiable and either a matter of public record or communicated to school officials in compliance with the Safe Schools Act.
- 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
- Assault on a student/teacher/staff
- False fire alarm or bomb threat or misuse of emergency equipment
- Serious sexual misbehavior/exposure

Students may, for good cause, appeal their dismissal through the A+ Review Committee.

### **faith effort to secure federal postsecondary student financial assistance funds.**

Parents must complete and send in the free application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA information must be sent to the community college or approved vocational/technical school that the student is planning to attend. The FAFSA application form is available in the Guidance Office of Kearney High School.

Parents are encouraged to apply as early as possible, but not before January 1 or after June 30 of the year of the student's high school graduation.

Receipt of submission of the FAFSA form must be shared with the A+ Coordinator.

### **MILITARY STELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION.....**

In order to receive an A+ Scholarship, male students must register under the United States Military Selective Service Act and show proof of such registration.

**PARENT NOTIFICATION....**The A+ School Coordinator will provide every parent/guardian with an update of the continued progress of his/her student toward A+ School status.

A status report will be sent after the completion of each semester of the school year.

A copy of each student's respective A+ Status Report will also be on file in the A+ office.

### **REQUIREMENT 7: Make a good**

Parents are encouraged to call the A+ Coordinator for status updates during the school year.

**PROCESS OF APPEAL....**A student (and/or parent) has the right to appeal when he/she becomes ineligible for the A+ financial incentive. In cases of appeal, the student/parent must notify the A+ Coordinator in writing of his/her intent to appeal. An Appeals form can be obtained from the A+ Coordinator.

Students may appeal their disqualification from the A+ program to a special appeals committee composed of five members of the A+ Advisory Committee as appointed by the A+ Coordinator. Appeals must be made in writing by May 1<sup>st</sup> of graduation year. Upon receiving a written appeal, the A+ Coordinator will convene the A+ Appeals Committee. The student/parent will be notified in advance of a hearing date and can choose to meet in person with the committee or submit their appeal in writing. The A+ Coordinator will act as facilitator and a nonvoting member of the Appeals Committee.

After the Appeals Committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the student/parents by letter. Any and all appeals will be conducted following policies set by the Board of Education.

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY.....**

The student financial incentive will be available for up to two (2) years of attendance, during the four-year period (6 semesters) after the recipient graduates from high school. To maintain eligibility, the student must:

**1.)** Enroll in and attend on a fulltime basis a Missouri public community college or vocational-technical school. (Students must meet the fulltime requirement of 12 hours during the fall and spring or six hours in the summer. Students may attend any semester they choose but will not be reimbursed if he/she attends less than full-time.

**2.)** Maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale.

The specific guidelines of this student handbook for Kearney High School have been developed in accordance with Missouri Senate Bill 380. Participation in the A+ Schools Program and these guidelines have been approved by the Kearney Board of Education.

Any questions about this manual or the A+ Schools Program should be directed to the A+ School Coordinator at Kearney High School.

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