

NEOSHO HIGH SCHOOL



A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Guidelines and Agreement Form

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A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The student and parent signatures on an A+ Agreement indicate the intention of meeting all the requirements of the A+ Schools Program at Neosho High School by the time the student graduates. Students may sign up any time prior to their final semester in high school. Please read this handbook carefully to learn about the A+ benefits and requirements.

Benefits

- Upon graduation and completion of all requirements, the student will earn benefits to cover the cost of tuition and fees to any public Community College or Technical School in the state of Missouri for two full years or six semesters including summers. To use this money, the student must be enrolled as a full-time student and maintain a 2.5 G.P.A. (grade point average) on a 4.0 scale while in college or technical school. Benefits may vary from one fiscal year to the next, depending on state appropriations. Effective October 2015, the A+ financial incentive is available only to U.S. Citizens or permanent residents.

Requirements

In order to qualify for the A+ Program benefits, a student must graduate from high school while meeting the following requirements:

- Attend a designated A+ School for the last three years of high school
- Graduate with a cumulative **2.5 GPA** or higher on a 4.0 unweighted scale
- Graduate with at least a 95% attendance rating (A student may have no more than 35 days absent during four years in high school. If a student elects to seek early graduation or part time attendance his/her senior year, the maximum days absent are pro-rated between 30 days and 35 days.)
- Complete 50 hours of school supervised, unpaid tutoring of other students
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs/alcohol
- Score proficient or advanced on the Algebra 1 or Algebra II End of Course Exam (EOC) or have a combined ACT math score and GPA according to the following scale:
ACT-Math 17 & GPA 2.5+; ACT-Math 16 & GPA 2.8+; ACT Math 15 & GPA 3.0+
- File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) between October and February 1 (priority deadline) of their senior year. (www.fafsa.ed.gov)
- Male students must register with the selective service upon their 18th birthday (www.sss.gov)

GPA

A student's grade point average must be **at least 2.5** on a 4.0 unweighted scale by graduation date. A low GPA is very difficult to raise and students should be aware of the need to do their best in all classes every semester.

Attendance Policy

Even though a student must graduate with a 95% attendance rating, it is important to keep track of the total number of days a student has missed. The best estimate is that a student may not miss more than 35 days over four years in high school to graduate with a 95% attendance rating (excluding students opting for early out or part time attendance). Students who graduate early cannot miss more than 30 days of school. Part time attendance is pro-rated based on the number of released hours.

When figuring the 95% attendance data, all absences are counted except school related activities. Absences prior to homebound instruction will not be counted provided the absences are a result of what brought the homebound status. Students or parents can check with the A+ Coordinator for attendance status at any time.

Citizenship

To qualify for the A+ Schools Program, a student must maintain good citizenship. Good citizenship is a measure of the quality of conduct in school and away from school, and participants in the A+ Program are expected to exhibit standards of behavior which will bring credit to the student, the A+ Program, the school and the community. Good citizenship requirements are for all four years of high school regardless of when a student enrolls in the A+ Program.

Guidelines for good citizenship for an A+ student should include the following:

- No violations of the Neosho School District's policy on drug/alcohol/substance abuse*
- Minimal discipline violations.* An accumulation of 4 or more days of OSS over 4 years for any reason will disqualify a student from the A+ Program.
- Violation of local, state, or federal criminal laws may render a student ineligible for the A+ program.

*The district's guidelines for good citizenship are stated in the NHS Student Handbook. Refer to the "Student Conduct" section of these guidelines.

If violations of the Good Citizenship Policy occur, the student and the student's parents/guardians will be notified. Violations may result in a probationary period for the student and/or removal from the A+ program.

Tutoring Hours

A+ students must complete 50 hours of tutoring before they graduate. Students should begin tutoring as soon as possible after signing the A+ Agreement. Opportunities for tutoring are available before and after school in the Neosho School District and during summer school. Some school clubs and organizations also have tutoring activities that will apply. Students may also receive credit for tutoring hours if they participate in the cadet teaching program as a senior. Students must complete an application process to be admitted into this program. Cadet Teachers will earn 1 credit toward graduation and the 50 tutoring hours required for A+.

All tutoring activities must be sponsored and coordinated through the Neosho School District and supervised by a Neosho teacher. Students must maintain a tutoring log that is verified by the teacher. Job shadowing and community service hours are not accepted toward the tutoring requirement. The focus for Neosho High School is academic tutoring.

Students are encouraged to have a plan for completing tutoring hours during their freshman and sophomore years. As students enter their junior and senior years, they become more involved in activities and may begin working which may make it more difficult to find time to complete the tutoring hours.

Math Requirement

All students must meet a pre-determined score set by the Missouri Dept. of Higher Education on one of the following state or federal math assessments.

- Score proficient or advanced on the Algebra I or Algebra II End of Course Exam (EOC)
- Score at least 17 on the ACT Math sub-score and have unweighted GPA of 2.5
- Score at least 16 on the ACT Math sub-score and have unweighted GPA of 2.8
- Score at least 15 on the ACT Math sub-score and have unweighted GPA of 3.0

Once a student meets one of the above criteria, the student is considered to have met this requirement regardless of previous or subsequent scores received on any of the other options. If a student fails to reach the above criteria, it is the student/parent's responsibility to schedule any retakes on the above tests and provide verification of scores to the A+ Coordinator. Fees may be applicable. Contact your counselor for additional information.

Any student who has met all A+ requirements except the minimum level of math proficiency will have the option to pay for the first semester of college tuition and meet the guidelines of the college institution in order to acquire A+ certification for the following semesters. A qualifying score on the ACT must still be obtained. A+ will not reimburse the student for the coursework taken as part of this probationary enrollment period. Students that satisfy the program's renewal requirements will become eligible for A+ reimbursement for subsequent semesters. Documentation must be provided to the high school A+ Coordinator. The A+ Coordinator will provide proper notification to the state and make adjustments to the high school transcript. All other requirements of the A+ Program (GPA, tutoring, attendance, and citizenship) will have to be met at the high school level before the college option will be made available.

FAFSA

Students should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) between October and February of their senior year. This form may be completed free of charge online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. FAFSA provides money to students for tuition and fees from the Federal Government which does not have to be paid back. If a student qualifies for FAFSA money, which is equal to the cost of tuition and fees for two years to a Community College or Technical School in the state of Missouri, he/she will not receive A+ money also. The A+ Schools Program ensures that if a student meets all requirements, he/she will receive two years (six semesters) of tuition and fees to any participating Community College or Technical School in Missouri. These funds will come from FAFSA, the State of Missouri, or a combination of the two. (A+ funding is contingent annually on state appropriations.)

Selective Service

All males are required by law to register with selective service. This may be completed on line at www.sss.gov thirty days prior to their 18th birthday. Proof of registering must be filed with the A+ office before graduation. Summer birthdays will be required to show proof of registration to the post-secondary institution.

Student Transfers

A student must complete his/her final three years at an A+ designated high school.

- If a student transfers to Neosho High School after the beginning of his/her sophomore year, he/she must be transferring from an A+ designated high school; otherwise, he/she will be unable to participate in the A+ Program.
- If a student transfers from Neosho to another high school after the beginning of his/her sophomore year, he/she must be transferring to an A+ designated high school; otherwise, he/she will not be allowed to participate in the A+ Program.
- If a student withdraws from Neosho High School and officially enrolls in a non-designated school, even if it is for just one day, and then re-enrolls in Neosho High School, he/she will be ineligible to participate in the A+ Program. Before a student and parents decide to move a student to another high school, they should consider the effect it will have on the student's opportunity to participate in the A+ Program.

Appeals Policy

A student has the right to appeal if he/she becomes ineligible for the A+ Program due to citizenship violations or extenuating circumstances regarding attendance. All appeals must be made in writing and submitted to the A+ Coordinator who will set up a meeting with the A+ Appeals Committee. The decision concerning each appeal will be made within 30 days of the date the appeal is made and no later than the last day of the school year for seniors. If a parent or student is not satisfied with the decision of the A+ Appeals Committee, he/she may appeal the decision following the Board approved grievance procedure for the school district.

Checking on A+ Status

Students/parents will receive a letter at least once a year concerning a student's A+ status. The goal through this communication is to assist students in meeting the requirements of the A+ Schools Program. Seniors will also receive additional updates by mail or in conference with the A+ Coordinator throughout their final year of school.

Eligible Institutions

A current list of Missouri Community Colleges and Technical Schools that are eligible to receive money from the A+ Program can be provided by the A+ Coordinator. In addition, many state universities in Missouri are now offering scholarships to students who meet A+ requirements. Therefore, even if a student does not plan to attend a community college or technical school, he/she can still benefit from the A+ Program.

Some Final Thoughts

It is the intent of this manual to provide students and parents with specific information about the A+ Schools Program that would assist students in meeting the requirements of the program. It is our hope that every student who signs an A+ Agreement will be able to meet all the requirements and upon graduation receive the financial incentives of the program if he/she chooses to use it.

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

If you have any questions regarding the A+ Schools Program, please contact Neosho High School A+ Coordinator, Mrs. Cindy Aldrich, or one of the high school counselors.



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Enroll in A+! Sign below and return to A+ OFFICE

A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM AGREEMENT NEOSHO HIGH SCHOOL

Student (Full Name): _____ Graduation Year: _____

A part of the A+ Schools Program is the student financial incentive. This incentive provides state reimbursed tuition and fees to qualified students who continue their education at a Missouri public community college or Missouri vocational/technical school.* To be eligible, each student must enter into a written agreement with the school during the four years prior to high school graduation and:

- Attend an A+ school for the last three years of high school
- Graduate with a cumulative 2.5 GPA or higher on a 4.0 scale
- Graduate with at least a 95% attendance record for the four year period (It is estimated that a student may not be absent more than 35 days from grades 9-12; early graduates have a total of 30.5 days and part-time graduates will have a pro-rated total between 30 and 35 days.)
- Complete 50 hours of school supervised, unpaid tutoring of other students
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs/alcohol
- Score proficient or advanced on the Algebra I or II EOC or have a combined ACT math score and high school GPA according to the following scale: (ACT-Math 17 & GPA 2.5+; ACT-Math 16 & GPA 2.8+; ACT Math 15 & GPA 3.0+)
- File a completed FAFSA
- Male students must register with selective service

Students may seek tuition reimbursement for up to 2 years of attendance during the 4 year period immediately following high school graduation. To maintain eligibility, each student must do the following during the 4-year period of incentive availability;

- Enroll and attend on a full-time basis a Missouri public community college or vocational/technical school
- Maintain a grade-point average of 2.5 or higher on a four-point scale.**

To participate in the A+ Schools financial incentive program, please sign below and return to the A+ Office

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

NHS Principal

A+ Coordinator

Date

* The Neosho School District must attain the three A+ School goals and complete the program requirements or make significant progress to maintain the A+ status. Therefore, the student financial incentive program is dependent upon meeting these required qualifications and state appropriations from the Missouri General Assembly.

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

*** A+ funds are not available to students who are not U.S. Citizens or permanent residents.

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