

STOVER HIGH SCHOOL



A+

Financial Incentive HANDBOOK 2011-2012

~The Bulldog Way~
Striving for the best,
We rise above the rest.

A+ Schools Program

~A Brief Explanation~

All of the specifics are covered in the A+ Handbook and contract.

What is A+?

- A+ pays for tuition to a Missouri public community college or technical/vocational school;
- A+ pays for general fees charged by the school.

A+ does NOT pay for transportation, room and board, supplies, and books or program-related fees.

What type of Schools will A+ pay for me to attend?

Schools that are

- Located in Missouri;
- Public (Funded with Missouri tax money);
- Two-year community colleges, technical colleges or vocational/technical schools.

A+ does NOT pay for four-year colleges or schools out of state or private schools.

What do I have to do?

- Sign an A+ Agreement;
- Attend an A+ High School for three years immediately prior to graduation;
- Have a 2.5 or higher GPA in grades 9-12;
- Have an attendance rate of 95% in grades 9-12;
- Do 50 hours of tutoring during grades 9-12;
- Have a record of good citizenship—stay out of ISS and OSS and be drug and alcohol free;
- Senior year your parents must complete the FAFSA;
- Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, the student must pass the Algebra I EOC with a Proficient or Advanced score.

Ask your A+ Coordinator for a complete explanation.

You may contact the school for information regarding the SHS A+ Schools Program at 573-377-2218, Ext. 260.

STOVER HIGH SCHOOL A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM

MISSOURI'S A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Benefits and requirements of the Missouri A+ Schools Program are subject to change at any time. All program changes are made by the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

A+ funds are dependent upon Missouri General Assembly appropriations and is NOT the responsibility of the Morgan County R-I School District.

SHS A+ Program Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Stover High School A+ Schools Program is to prepare today's students for tomorrow's opportunities.

Goals of the SHS A+ Program

The three primary goals of the A+ Schools Program are:

1. All SHS students will graduate from high school.
2. All SHS students will complete a selection of rigorous coursework and for which there are identified learning expectations.
3. All SHS students graduating will be prepared for post-secondary education or productive occupations.

BENEFITS OF THE A+ PROGRAM

Any students who successfully completes and meets the eligibility requirements as outlined by the A+ Schools Program may receive a financial incentive for tuition and general fees to any Missouri public community college or technical or vocational school. All funding is subject to legislative appropriation.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program, a student must be certified as an A+ Student by Stover High School. The A+ Coordinator, as the official representative of the A+ Schools Program, has the responsibility to certify whether a graduate of Stover High School has met all the requirements of the program.

For Graduating Classes of 2012-2014

To be certified as an A+ Student, the individual must do the following over a four-year period:

- Sign an A+ Student Agreement;
- Attend an A+ designated high school for three years immediately prior to graduation;
- Maintain a 2.5 or higher grade point average on a 4.0 scale;
- Maintain at least a 95% attendance record for grades 9-12;
- Perform 50 hours of unpaid school-sponsored tutoring/mentoring for other students;
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol;
- Apply for federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment by submitting a FAFSA form between January 1 and April 1 of the student's senior year;
- Register with the Selective Service at age 18 for males or as required by law;
- Be a U.S. citizen;
- When enrolling in college or technical school, the student must declare a major or course of study.

For Graduates Beginning with the Graduating Class of 2015

To be certified as an A+ Student, the individual must do the following over a four-year period:

- Be a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or otherwise lawfully present in the U.S.
- Sign an A+ Student Agreement prior to high school graduation;
- Attend an A+ designated high school for three years immediately prior to graduation;
- Graduate with a 2.5 or higher GPA;
- Have a 95% or higher attendance record for grades 9-12;
- Perform 50 hours of unpaid school-sponsored tutoring or mentoring;
- Score proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I EOC
 - If a student does not meet the requirement for Algebra I EOC then the student must complete the first semester at a postsecondary institution with a minimum of twelve (12) hours or the equivalent and a 2.5 GPA to receive A+ tuition reimbursement.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol;
- Apply for federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment by submitting a FAFSA form between January 1 and April 1 of the student's senior year;
- When enrolling in college or technical school, the student must declare a major or course of study.

REQUIREMENT 1 ENROLLMENT

In order for a student to meet the requirement of enrolling in and attending an A+ designated high school for three consecutive years before graduation, the following criteria must be met:

- The student may enroll in the A+ Program at any time between the beginning of his/her Freshman year and beginning of the senior year. However, the earlier the enrollment the easier it is to complete the tutoring requirements.
- The student should be enrolled and attend SHS by the 20th day of the fall term of the student's sophomore year or transfer in from an A+ designated school.
- If a student withdraws or transfers from SHS after the beginning of his/her sophomore year, the student will not be considered eligible for the A+ Schools Program unless he/she re-enrolls in an A+ designated school. If a student transfers back to SHS from an A+ designated school, he/she may continue to participate in the A+ Schools Program.

REQUIREMENT 2 GRADE POINT

The A+ student must graduate with an accumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better on a 4.0 scale. Grade point average is calculated at the end of each semester and is cumulative for all four years. Averaging or rounding up to the next highest grade point is not allowed.

Students enrolled in the SHS Alternative School are not eligible for the A+ Schools Programs.

The student's official transcript will serve as evidence of the grade point average for A+ certification and for enrollment into a Missouri public community college, vocational, or technical school. Meeting the requirements of the A+ Program does not automatically guarantee entrance into a community college and/or a vocational/technical school.

REQUIREMENT 3

Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The administrative rule set by the Coordinating Board of Higher Education states to qualify for the A+ funds. "...make a good-faith effort to secure all federal sources of funding that could be applied to tuition reimbursement..." This applies even if the student does not plan to use the financial incentive right after high school.

Those who do NOT complete the FAFSA will NOT be A+ eligible.

If a student does NOT qualify for any federal funds, the student IS still eligible for A+ funds. The student still must submit the completed FAFSA.

A+ is a program funded by the Missouri Legislature. Before the legislators spend state money on the education of an A+ qualified student, they want to make sure that the student is not eligible for other "free" or non-repayable money from the *Federal Government*.

To meet this A+ Schools Program requirement, the PARENTS must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form *regardless of whether they think they will qualify for federal funds or not*.

FAFSA information is based on income tax information from the year prior to enrollment in a post-secondary school. For example, if a student wants to enroll in summer or fall courses in 2012, the FAFSA information would come from the 2011 tax return.

FAFSA forms are available online at <http://www.fafsa.edu.gov>

It is recommended that the FAFSA be filled out as soon as possible between January 1 and April 1 of the year the senior is to graduate. Some educational institutions have an earlier cut-off date than the April 1 so the student should check with the post-secondary institution he/she plans to attend for the deadline date.

Many types of financial aid (scholarships, grants, and loans) use FAFSA information to determine a student's financial need.

While at a post-secondary school the student/parents or guardians must continue to fill out the FAFSA annually in order to continue to access A+ funds.

REQUIREMENT 4 ATTENDANCE

A participant in the A+ Program must comply with the attendance requirement that is separate and different from the general attendance policy in the high school handbook. The A+ Program participant is required to maintain a higher standard of attendance in order to earn the privilege of continued participation in this program. **Each A+ student is expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes.**

Required 95% Attendance Rate

This calculates to no more than 8 days absent a year or 32 days over the four years of high school.

The attendance rate must be 95% or better from the student's freshman year until graduation. Rounding up of attendance percentage is not allowed. **Saturday School/detention or Summer School cannot be counted for attendance in the A+ program.** Partial-day absences will count toward the attendance rate calculation.

Accumulative attendance information will consist of the official attendance record kept by the high school office. Parents and each student of the A+ Program will receive an attendance update at least twice annually.

Extenuating circumstances such as serious health problems or accident-related injuries may cause a student to miss long periods of school. These days may be waived with proper documentation. Students on homebound instruction are allowed to be counted for school attendance.

- Any student with specific health histories must make sure that the medical documentation of chronic or long-term health related problems are on file with the school nurse and such health related problems should be considered in a possible review situation.
- **Each student and his/her parents are responsible to document any absence which may later need to be appealed.**
- Documentation must include specific dates accompanied by the signature of the appropriate persons.

WAIVERS WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Truancy
- Skipping Classes
- Personal/Family Vacation
- Transportation problems (unless late bus is involved)
- Suspension from class or school for any reason

Absences that may be “Waived” with the approval of the A+ Attendance Review Committee

Any student submitting a request for a waiver of days missed shall provide the A+ Coordinator with official documentation of the following:

<u>Reason for Absence</u>	<u>Documentation from</u>
1. Doctor/Dentist Visit*	Doctor/Dentist*
2. Hospitalization	Physician
3. Chronic Health Problem	School Nurse
4. Court Dates	Court Official
5. Funeral	Copy of memorial & Principal or Counselor
6. Religious Holiday	Religious Leader
7. Personal/Family Calamity	Principal or Counselor or School Nurse
8. Catastrophic illness/injury	Physician or Principal or Counselor or School Nurse

*Doctor/Dentist visits must be appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of the regular school day. This allowance is not intended for routine appointments or for the student's/parent's convenience, but, rather, for exceptional situations.

REQUIREMENT 5

TUTORING/MENTORING REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for the A+ incentive the student must perform 50 hours of unpaid, school-sponsored tutoring/mentoring. Listed below are the A+ Schools guidelines for tutoring/mentoring.

- Complete an A+ Schools Program Agreement.
- Commit to 50 hours of service.
- Complete tutor/mentoring training.
- Complete a tutoring log sheet.
- Turn in time sheet to A+ Coordinator in order to receive credit.
- Complete tutoring/mentoring hours before the student's graduation.

Policies of the Tutoring/Mentoring Program

- Tutoring/Mentoring must be school sponsored.
- Tutoring/Mentoring must be approved by the A+ Coordinator.
- An official time sheet must be kept by the student and signed by the school official in charge of the student. The time sheet **MUST** be turned in at the end of the semester in which the tutoring/mentoring takes place.
- Tutoring/mentoring must be completed during the school year or summer school.
- Tutoring/mentoring must be completed at a school-approved site.
- Notify the supervising teacher if unable to fulfill an assigned task.
- Work with a positive attitude and willingly assume assigned tasks.
- Wear appropriate clothing.
- Treat the students and supervisor with respect.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the students.
- Respect the principle of confidentiality
- Report any concerns to the supervising teacher or A+ Coordinator.
- Scheduled times for tutoring/mentoring are important and absences should occur only in case of emergency or illness.
- **NO** financial remuneration may be accepted for tutoring/mentoring activities.
- **Inappropriate behavior may cause a student to be disciplined and/or be removed from the tutoring/mentoring assignment and/or also be removed from the A+ Program.**

Tutoring Opportunities

- Bulldog Hour—20 minute session each day, usually each Tuesday and Thursday
- A+ Class—a semester class
- Before and after school—special assignments approved by the A+ Coordinator.
- Summer School

As freshman tutoring opportunities may be limited during his/her first year in high school in order to successfully make the transition into their high school career.

REQUIREMENT 6 GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Participation in the A+ Schools Program is an honor and a privilege. A student who participates in the program is expected to conform to a higher standard of conduct than that applicable to non-participants. The student must adhere to a code of behavior (as specified in the SHS Student Handbook) which will demonstrate respect for authority, faculty, school, property, and their fellow students.

Any student pursuing the A+ Schools Program must maintain a record of good citizenship both in and out of school and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and alcohol. Any student wishing to be eligible for the A+ financial incentives will not sell, possess, or use any controlled substances as defined by law unless prescribed by a licensed physician. Violation of this policy will result in removal from the A+ Schools Program. Certification of good citizenship will be based on the official discipline record of the district. Consequences for infractions of the discipline code are assigned by the Principal who is responsible for certifying the accuracy of the student's discipline record.

Loss of financial incentive eligibility will result if a student is convicted 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.

General Offenses

Realizing that students at this age are progressing toward adulthood and may make wrong choices, a "second chance" may be given. Offenses that do not require immediate removal from the program, but require disciplinary actions will result in one of the following:

- A warning may be issued to the student and the parents/guardian will be notified of the incident and stating the student has received a warning and may be placed on A+ Financial Incentive Probation if another violation occurs. This notification will be placed in the student's file.
- The student may be placed on probation and a letter of notification will be issued to the student's parents/guardian stating the student is on A+ Financial Incentive Probation for a period of 87 school days and during that time no additional violations may occur or the student will lose the A+ Financial Incentive. This 87 day period may extend into the next school year. This notification will be placed in the student's file.
- If further violations occur the student may be removed from the A+ Program and the parents/guardian will be notified in writing that the A+ Agreement is no longer in effect, and the student is no longer eligible for the A+ financial incentive. This notification will be placed in the student's file. The student/parents may file for an appeal.

REQUIREMENT 7 SELECTIVE SERVICE

All males must register for the Selective Service at the age of 18 or as required by law. To register go to <http://www.sss.gov>

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

A+ funds may be available from the state of Missouri for eligible SHS graduates who choose to attend a Missouri state public community college, vocational or technical school. These incentives could be for the cost of tuition and general fees. At the present time the incentive for textbooks is not available.

To continue to qualify for the A+ financial incentives at the post-secondary level a student must:

1. Enroll as a full-time student at a participating post-secondary institution;
2. Make a good faith effort to secure all federal sources of funding that could be applied to tuition reimbursement—FAFSA;
3. Maintain satisfactory academic progress—2.5 or higher GPA;
4. Not have a criminal record.

A+ funding expires at the earliest of the following:

1. Forty-eight (48) months after completion of high school coursework;
2. Completion of one hundred five (105) percent of the hours required for the program in which the student is currently enrolled;
3. Receipt of an associate's degree.

A+ funding

1. Will not pay for repeat coursework;
2. Will not pay for a course of study leading to a degree in theology or divinity;
3. Will be reduced for future semesters, if a student does not receive a standard grade for coursework. This includes incomplete or withdrawn courses;
4. **Is based upon legislative appropriation from the Missouri General Assembly**

When enrolling in college or technical school, the student must declare a major or course of study in order for A+ funds to pay for tuition.

Stover High School is not responsible for the terms and conditions of the A+ Schools Program or any change in program content. This financial incentive is conditional upon Stover High School maintaining A+ status.

APPEAL PROCEDURES

Attendance

Appeal of Attendance Process

Each year (grades 9-12) that the A+ student's attendance rate drops below the required 95 percent the student and/or parent must request an appeal to the A+ Attendance Committee. Reviewing the attendance and accepting the documentation the same year of occurrence allows for more accurate tracking of the attendance. It also allows the student and parent to know from year to year (grades 9-12) the student's A+ status.

The Parents/student should use the Appeal of Absence form available in the A+ office. The parents and/or student will be notified of the appeal date.

The review committee for attendance appeals will be composed of the following:

- Administrator
- High school guidance counselor
- Three high school teachers
- A+ Coordinator as a non-voting facilitator

After the review committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents/student by letter.

If the A+ Schools Attendance Appeals Committee makes a decision adverse to the student, then the parents/student will have 10 days from the receipt of the decision to appeal the committee's decision to the Board of Education. The appeal to the Board of Education shall be in writing, and the parent or student's written appeal will be reviewed by the Board of Education in a manner determined by the Board of Education.

Any student who does not have the accumulative 95% attendance rate after waivers have been adjusted will not be designated an A+ student and will not be eligible for A+ financial incentives.

Citizenship Appeal

Appeal for Waiver of Good Conduct Violation

The student/parents/guardian will have 10 days to file an appeal with the A+ Coordinator after receiving written notification of violation of the citizenship requirement. If an appeal is not filed within 10 school days of notification, it will not be considered.

The required Appeal of Good Citizenship Violation form is available from the A+ Coordinator. The student/parents may also choose to make a brief presentation to the A+ Appeals committee.

Upon receiving the written appeal, the A+ Coordinator will convene the A+ Good Citizenship Appeals Committee composed of:

- Administrator
- HS Counselor
- 3 teachers
- A+ Coordinator, as non-voting facilitator

After the A+ Good Citizenship Appeals Committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents/student by letter. The parents/student will have 10 days from receipt of that letter to appeal the Board of Education in writing. The appeal to the Board of Education shall be conducted in a manner determined by the Board at its discretion. All probations and appeals processes must be concluded by May 1 of the year in which the student graduates in order for the student to receive A+ certification.

Parents/student should note that this review process is not intended to allow participants to avoid removal for actual violation of the program standards or to seek leniency when an appropriate consequence has been imposed for conduct that has actually occurred. The review process is simply designed to prevent removals from being based upon inaccurate or incomplete information.