

A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM GOALS

The A+ Schools program is dedicated to the following goals:

- All students will graduate from high school.
- All students will complete a high school course of studies that is challenging and that has 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 and advancement opportunities.

Updated 12/2014

CONCORDIA⁺



High School

A+ Student Manual

Preface to the A+ School Program

When the Missouri State Legislature established the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993, they included the provisions for the A+ Schools Program. In an effort to enhance educational opportunities for high school students, the legislature provided that students who attend schools that meet specific criteria explained in the A+ Schools Program Grant Application, would be eligible for financial incentives, as State funds are available. Once designated an A+ School, Concordia R-2 High School graduates who meet specific A+ criteria will be eligible to receive paid tuition, books and general fees (as State funding allows) to attend any public community college, vocational or technical school in Missouri.

The purpose of this manual is to provide students, parents/ guardians, faculty and staff with the guidelines and policies of the A+ Schools Program. It is the responsibility of Concordia R-2 School District to follow these policies to ensure A+ designation is received and 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 in order to understand all guidelines and regulations required.

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Appeal of Citizenship-Probation/Removal Form

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Address: _____ Phone #: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

**This request is to appeal the following:
(Please check the appropriate boxes)**

- A+ Probation
- A+ Removal

Semester: Fall Spring School year: _____

Appeal will be: In Person In Writing

If appealing A+ removal, the appeal must be made in person by parent/guardian and student.

In the space below please indicate the basis of your appeal for the A+ School Program. If additional space is needed, please attach another sheet of paper.

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***Actual forms can be obtained from the A+ Coordinator's office in the high school.**

This form must be forwarded to the A+ Office within 15 days of the date of the probation/removal notification.

Student Eligibility

To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program (paid tuition, books and general fees, as State funds are available), a student must be certified as an A+ student by Concordia R-2 High School. To do so the student must meet the following criteria while in high school:

- Enter into a written agreement with their high school prior to April 15th of the semester of graduation and have attended a designated A+ school for three consecutive years (Students must have a 1st quarter grade for their Sophomore year to qualify).
- Graduate from high school with a four-year cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or higher.
- Have at least a 95% cumulative attendance record over a four-year period.
- Perform 50 hours of documented, unpaid tutoring/mentoring of younger students over four years, through the recognized Concordia High School Tutoring program. (ASAT – A+ Students As Tutors).
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful possession, use and distribution of drugs and alcohol throughout four years of high school.
- Make a good faith effort to first secure all available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment, such as the Pell Grant.
- Must score proficient or advanced on the state level Algebra I End of Course Exam.
Alternatives: ACT minimum math subscore of 17, COMPASS Pre-Algebra score of 43, COMPASS Algebra I score of 1.

Appeal of Absence Form

STUDENT NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Address: _____ Phone #: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

**This request is to appeal the school absence(s) for the following:
(Please check the appropriate boxes)**

Semester: Fall Spring School year: _____

Appeal will be: In Person In Writing

In the space below please indicate the date(s) of the absence(s) and the reason for the request to be reviewed. If additional space is needed, please attach another sheet of paper.

<u>Date of Absence</u>	<u>Reason for Absence</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This form must be forwarded to the A+ Office within 15 days of the date of the absence notification.
Parents will be notified of a hearing date scheduled within 10 days of the appeal notice.

- Students must attend Concordia High School, or another A+ approved 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 in the A+ Coordinator's office. Students attending Lex-La-Ray Area Vocational/Technical School will have their attendance reported to the high school attendance office.
- Each semester the A+ office will provide parents, guardians and students information that includes the student's attendance record.

Attendance Review Process

The state attendance requirements are very specific. The State Board of Education says no exceptions to the 95% attendance requirement. If a student is ill or injured, home schooling should begin immediately.

Following notification of excess absences, students and/or parents who disagree with the recorded attendance, will **have 15 calendar days to appeal** the student's attendance record with the A+ Coordinator. If an appeal is not filed within 15 calendar days of notification, a waiver for days missed will not be considered. Anyone making an appeal should use the "A+ Attendance Appeal Form" available from the A+ Coordinator. (A sample is included in this manual.)

The A+ Coordinator will convene the Attendance and Citizenship Review Team **within 10 days of receiving notice of an appeal.** The Attendance and Citizenship Review Team will include a guidance counselor, a principal, two teachers, an advisory board member, and the A+ Coordinator who will act as facilitator and a non-voting member of the Review Team. The Review Team will meet quarterly or as needed.

The A+ Coordinator will notify the student/parents by letter within **five calendar days** following a decision by the Attendance and Citizenship Review Team. If further appeal is necessary, due process guidelines must be followed, starting with the Superintendent.

Attendance Waiver Guidelines

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

REASON FOR ABSENCE

Hospitalization
 Chronic health problems
 Personal/Family calamity (fire, flood, etc)
 Catastrophic illness (long term)

DOCUMENTATION

Letter signed by the doctor
 Letter from doctor & school nurse
 Principal's letter
 Principal's/Doctor's letter (with recommendation for home bound instruction)

Reasons not allowable for waiver

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

- Truancy/Skipping classes/school
- Taking school time for any personal activity not included in waiver guidelines
- Out of School suspensions for any reason
- Personal/family vacation
- Transportation problems

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

Citizenship Requirement

Participation in the A+ Schools Program is a unique privilege for Concordia High School students. According to the **A+ School's Administrative Guide**, students pursuing the A+ incentives must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the possession, use and distribution of drugs and alcohol.

Certification of good citizenship will be based on the official discipline record maintained in the high school office. The principal assigns consequences for infractions of the discipline code and is responsible for certifying the accuracy of the student's discipline record.

PROBATION WHILE A 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+ Incentive is a privilege and should be treated as such. Students who are designated A+ 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 90 school days for the following infractions:

1. More than two In-School Suspension referrals
2. Any referral for Out-of School Suspension

- Tutoring/mentoring may be done before or after school, during the school year or during summer school.
- Failure to adhere to tutoring guidelines may result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the A+ Program.

TUTORING ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE

1. Tutoring junior high students before or after school.
2. Tutoring elementary students before or after school.
3. Special tutoring arrangements may be made with the A+ Coordinator.
4. A+ Tutoring Class.

No financial remuneration may be accepted for tutoring/mentoring activities.

Attendance Requirement

To be eligible for the A+ Schools Program Tuition Reimbursement Incentive, a student must have a 95% accumulated attendance record (no more than 35 days absent/8.75 days per year) for four years beginning with the 99-00 school year. **Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes.** From this requirement 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+ Tuition Incentive. The following attendance guidelines will be followed:

CAREER PATHS

Each student will be required to declare a career path. Career paths are designed to give each student a selection of courses that will be relevant to his/her chosen field of study after high school. A career path may be changed at any time. Students may choose from the following career paths:

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

More information about career paths is available from the counseling department.

TUTORING/MENTORING

A+ students are required to perform at least 50 hours of school-based tutoring/mentoring. The tutoring/mentoring activities must:

- Involve A+ students with other students within the district, at all levels.
- Provide encouragement to younger students to get turned on to school and strive for good grades.
- Be school-based and/or under the direction of a district staff member.
- Students will be required to sign a tutoring agreement and have a tutoring permission form on file in the A+ office.
- Students may obtain a Tutoring Log Sheet from High School Room 42 (A+ Coordinator's Office). These sheets should be completed as tutoring is done. **Log sheets must be turned in to the A+ Coordinator's office every two weeks with the final log sheet turned in 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 log record and turn it in to the A+ Coordinator in a timely manner.**

If the 90-day probation is not completed during the current school year, it will carry over into the beginning of next school year. If the student is a graduating Senior, probation will be terminated the last day of school.

If no further misdeeds occur, the student will be returned to full A+ status following his/her probation. Any student who receives two semesters of probation during his/her high school career will have his/her disciplinary record reviewed by the A+ Attendance and Citizenship Review Team for continued probation or possible dismissal from the program.

REMOVAL FROM THE A+ PROGRAM

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

1. Within the semester while on probation, the student commits another offense that would result in another probationary action.
2. After two semesters of probation, a review by the Attendance and Citizenship Review Team shows that earlier disciplinary consequences did not positively affect the student's behavior.
3. 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.
4. Three or more misdemeanor convictions (other than for moving traffic violations not involving alcohol or illegal drugs) that are verifiable and a matter of public record.

Any student, who commits an offense involving drugs or alcohol or which falls under the Safe Schools Act, will be immediately dismissed from the program.

UNLAWFUL POSSESSION, USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL

An A+ student will not sell, possess or use any controlled substance or drug paraphernalia as defined by law and stated in the CHS Student-Teacher Handbook. The use of prescription medicine is allowed under Board Policy when administered by authorized school personnel. Students and parents are responsible for understanding and following these guidelines.

The following offenses reported to school authorities and substantiated, will result in immediate removal from the A+ program:

- Possession, use or distribution of alcohol, drugs or narcotics.
- Possession of drug paraphernalia.
- Criminal activity as defined by the Safe Schools Act:
 - First and second degree murder
 - First and second degree burglary
 - First and second degree assault
 - Distribution of drugs
 - Distribution of drugs to a minor
 - Voluntary/involuntary manslaughter
 - Forcible rape or sodomy
 - Felonious restraint
 - Kidnapping
 - Robbery
 - First degree arson
 - Sexual assault
 - Property damage
- Possession of a weapon (under provision of Ch. 571 Mo. Revised Statutes)
- Assault on a student
- Intimidation or physical threat of staff
- Vandalism/theft
- False fire alarm/bomb threats and misuse of emergency equipment
- Serious sexual misbehavior/exposure
- Possession of dangerous items
- Dangerous behavior

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 and guidance office for official certification prior to graduation. Students and parents will be notified and the student's transcript will reflect A+ status.

Concordia R-2 High School is to received A+ designation 2002. Students from other A+ schools may transfer their A+ status to CHS and vice versa.

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 and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA summary report must be sent to the community college or public Vocational/ Technical School that the student is planning to attend.
- The FAFSA form is available from the counseling office in December the year of graduation. Parents are encouraged to apply as soon as possible after January 1 of that school year.
- The website to electronically fill out the FAFSA form is [HTTP://WWW.FAFSA.ED.GOV/](http://WWW.FAFSA.ED.GOV/)
- Tuition incentives will only be awarded to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition, books and general fees after available federal post-secondary student financial aid funds have been applied to these costs.

2. If a student transfers from another school after the beginning of his/her sophomore year, the student may only participate in the A+ Schools Program if the school from which he/she transferred is a designated A+ school. Students must have a 1st quarter grade for their Sophomore year to qualify.
3. Enrollment may be done during designated A+ student enrollment opportunities or directly through the A+ Coordinator.
4. An A+ Student Agreement must be completed with all appropriate signatures and filed with the A+ Coordinator. (A sample is included in this booklet.)
5. Any student requesting A+ incentives after the beginning of his/her freshman year must meet all criteria dating back to the beginning of his/her freshman year.

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 (grade averages will not be rounded). The cumulative GPA is applicable to all four years of student's enrollment in high school. The official transcript will document and certify that the GPA requirement has been met.

Monitoring of A+ 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. If these are not resolved they should be directed to the High School Principal and then Superintendent.

A+ Citizenship Probation Appeal Process

Students and parents or guardians may appeal an A+ disciplinary decision using the following process:

Students and parents/guardians **will have 15 calendar days to appeal** a decision that is made dealing with discipline or probation using the A+ Appeal of Citizenship form available from the A+ Coordinator. The appeal must be made in writing through the A+ Coordinator. (A sample is included in the back of this handbook.)

Within 10 days of receiving a written appeal, the A+ Coordinator will convene the A+ Attendance and Citizenship Review Team. The team will be composed of a guidance counselor, a principal, two teachers, and one advisory committee member. The parent/guardian and students **must appear in person before** the Review Team.

The A+ Coordinator will act as facilitator and a non-voting member of the Attendance and Citizenship Review Team. After the team reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents/guardian by letter within **five calendar days**. If further appeal is necessary, due process guidelines must be followed, starting with the Superintendent.

AGREEMENT

Concordia R-II A+ Schools Program

Student _____

Social Security # _____

Year of Graduation _____

A student who qualifies according to the following criteria and continues an education at a Missouri public community college or vocational-technical school can be eligible for state reimbursed tuition and general fees, provided State funds are appropriated by the legislature and subject to State funding approval, for up to two years. Each student should enter into a written agreement with the school during the last three years prior to high school graduation and, to be eligible, must have:

1. Attended a designated A+ School for three consecutive years prior to high school graduation.
2. Graduated from high school with a GPA of 2.5 or higher.
3. Maintained at least a 95% attendance record for the three year period.
4. Performed 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring for other students.
5. Maintained a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful possession, use and distribution of drugs and alcohol.
6. Made a documented, good faith effort to secure all available Federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.
7. Register for Selective Service, if applicable.
8. Class of 2015 and beyond: Must score proficient or advanced on the State level Algebra I End of Course Exam.

The student financial incentive will be available to a period of four years after high school graduation. To maintain eligibility during that time, each participating student must enroll and attend a Missouri public community college or vocational-technical school on a full-time basis and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

Do you wish to participate in the A+ Schools program? YES NO

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

A+ Schools Coordinator

High School Counselor

Date

PAID TUITION, BOOKS & GENERAL FEES, AS STATE FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE, TO ATTEND ANY PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE, VOCATIONAL OR TECHNICAL SCHOOL IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS OR SIX SEMESTERS.

After meeting the criteria for eligibility at the local district students must:

- Make a documented effort to first secure all available post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.
- Be aware that all tuition incentives will be available only for the purpose of applying toward the remaining cost of tuition, books and general fees after available federal post-secondary student financial funds have been applied to these costs.
- Maintain a 2.5 GPA in the post-secondary setting to continue to receive the A+ funding.
- Take advantage of **TWO YEARS** of financial incentives within **FOUR YEARS** of graduation from Concordia R-2 High School, as State funds are available.
- Be aware that funding is dependent on legislative support.

Student Enrollment

1. Students are encouraged to enroll in the Concordia High School A+ Program prior to or early in their freshman year. **Enrollment must be completed prior to April 15th of the semester of graduation.**