

Revised 9/2014

La Plata High School



A+ Schools Program Student/Parent Manual

Welcome to the A+ Schools Program

As a student at La Plata High School, there are many opportunities you should consider as you begin to plan your future after you graduate. By choosing the A+ Schools Program, you are embarking on a journey as a lifelong learner.

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 will be eligible for financial incentives. Pending legislative approval each year, La Plata High School graduates will be eligible to receive tuition and general fees to attend any public community college, vocational or technical school, as well as possible scholarships to four year institutions in Missouri.

The purpose of this manual is to provide students, parents/guardians, faculty and staff with the guidelines and policies of the A+ program. It is the responsibility of the La Plata R-II School District to follow these policies to ensure A+ designation is 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 and follow all guidelines and regulations that are part of the A+ program.

Welcome and congratulations on being accepted into the A+ program. I look forward to working with you as you achieve your educational career goals.

For more information concerning the A+ program, please feel free to contact me at 660-332-7001 or by email ajackson@laplata.k12.mo.us.

Andy Jackson, A+ Coordinator

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La Plata High School
A+ School Programs
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Student Eligibility

To be eligible for financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program a student must be certified as an A+ student by the La Plata R-II School District. To do so, the student must meet the following criteria while in high school:

- Attend a designated A+ high school for three years immediately prior to graduation.*
- Graduate with an overall grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale or the equivalent on another scale.
- Have at least a 95 percent attendance record overall for grades 9-12.
- Perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring, of which up to 25 percent may include job shadowing.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of alcohol and drugs.
- Achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I end-of-course exam or a higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the field of mathematics (Algebra II or Geometry EOC; 17 ACT Math w/2.5 GPA; 16 ACT Math w/2.8 GPA; 15 ACT Math w/3.0 GPA).
- Prior to graduation enter into a written agreement with the district to participate in the A+ program
- Perform all other duties and obligations required by state law to be eligible for and receive the benefits of the A+ program.

*Students who are active duty military dependents and students who are dependents of retired military personnel who relocated to Missouri within one year of the date of retirement from active duty are excused from this provision if the student attends a designated A+ school in the school year immediately preceding graduation and has met all other eligibility requirements.

Student Incentive

As an A+ designated school, La Plata High School graduates meeting the qualifications explained in this handbook may be eligible to receive the following financial incentives:

Paid tuition, general fees to attend any public community college, vocational or technical school in the state of Missouri for a period of 48 months following high school graduation or completion of an Associate's Degree/completion of 105% of the hours required for the program in which the student is enrolled, pending state legislative approval annually.

La Plata High School

A+ Timeline

Freshman & Sophomore Years

- Learn about the A+ program by reading the A+ handbook
- Make sure you understand the A+ attendance, GPA, and good citizenship requirements
- Sign an A+ agreement form and return to the principal's office
- Maintain good grades and good attendance

Junior Year

- Sign an A+ agreement form and return to principal's office if not done prior
- Get started on the A+ mentoring requirement (remember, all mentoring must be done under the supervision of a district employee. To receive credit for mentoring, all hours must be logged on the official A+ mentoring log. Logs are available in the principal's office & guidance office)
- Be aware of your current A+ status (Attendance, GPA, and Citizenship)

Senior Year

August

- Sign-up for A+ mentoring if you have not completed this requirement

September

- Meet with the A+ coordinator/counselor to arrange tutoring if needed
- Begin mentoring and recording hours

November

- A+ Agreements due (**The second Friday of November** is the absolute last day for seniors to sign-up to participate in the A+ program.)

February

- Schedule a final review meeting with the A+ Coordinator to make sure you have met all A+ requirements
- Complete the FAFSA (The Department of Higher Education's deadline is April 1)

May

The following forms are due in the A+ office the **FIRST FRIDAY in May**. All forms are available in the A+ office.

- Intent form to use A+ funds
- Attendance waivers
- Mentoring logs
- Finally, complete a transcript request to have your final transcripts sent to the college you are going to attend

Student Enrollment

- ⇒ Students are encouraged to enroll in the A+ program prior to or early in their freshman year. **Enrollment must be completed no later than the second Friday in November of a student's senior year.**
- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ An A+ agreement and intent to participate must be completed with all the appropriate signatures and filed with the A+ coordinator by the deadline(s) set.
- ⇒ 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.

Monitoring of A+ Status

At the end of every grading period, students will receive notification of their A+ status.

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. Students and parents will be notified and the student's final transcript will reflect A+ status.

LA PLATA R-II SCHOOL DISTRICT A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM AGREEMENT

I wish to participate in the A+ Schools Program.

If state funds are available and our high school continues designation as an A+ School prior to my graduation, I may receive reimbursement for college expenses determined by the Missouri General Assembly while attending a Missouri public community college or public vocational/technical school on a full-time basis. This financial assistance is on the condition that I meet the requirements that include:

- enrollment in and attendance at a designated A+ school for at least three (3) consecutive years immediately prior to high school graduation.
- written agreement with designated A+ High School
- graduation from a designated A+ school with at least a grade point average of two and five tenths (2.5) points on a four (4) point scale, or equivalent on alternate grading system
- at least a ninety-five (95) percent attendance record overall..
- at least fifty (50) hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring services for students, of which up to 25% may include job shadowing.
- maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs/alcohol.
- achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I end-of-course exam or a higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the field of mathematics.

Student Signature	Date	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
A+ Coordinator Signature	Date	Principal Signature	Date

PLEASE PRINT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle _____

Street Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Parent e-mail address _____ Date of Birth _____ Age _____

Anticipated Graduation _____ Home Phone Number _____

Student Social Security Number: _____

**The financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program are dependent upon La Plata R-II School District's continued designation as an A+ School and state appropriations from the Missouri General Assembly. They are not the funding responsibility of the La Plata R-II School District.*

LA PLATA R-II SCHOOL DISTRICT A+PROGRAM CITIZENSHIP GUIDELINES

Students participating in the A+ Schools Program must maintain a record of “good citizenship” to qualify for post-secondary financial assistance. Good citizenship is demonstrated by respect for school, community, and self. Any student who participates in the A+ Schools Program must be a creditable citizen and be judged so by the proper school authority certifying the list of students for participation. A student whose character or conduct reflects credit upon him/herself and/or his/her school is considered a creditable citizen and is therefore eligible to participate in the A+ Schools Program. His/her conduct shall be satisfactory in accord with the standards of good discipline.

During second semester of the student’s senior year, a “Citizenship Eligibility Report” will be presented to the appropriate principal. The principal will determine eligibility by indicating on the form whether or not the student has maintained “good citizenship.” If the student’s citizenship record is acceptable, a form will be placed in the student’s A+ folder. An A+ Citizenship Appeals Committee will be assembled to rule on exceptions or unique situations.

DISQUALIFICATION:

The parent will be notified by the A+ Schools Office if disqualification results from any of the following:

- I. Suspension due to chronic discipline violations and/or suspension resulting in ten (10) or more days and/or with additional days added by the superintendent.
- II. Possession, use, sale or transfer of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, or any substances represented to be such.
- III. Possession of drug paraphernalia
- IV. Assault
- V. False fire alarm/bomb threats and misuse of emergency equipment
- VI. Criminal Activity as defined by the Safe Schools Act:

- First and second degree murder
- Kidnapping
- First and second degree assault
- Forcible rape and sodomy
- First and second degree burglary
- Robbery
- Distribution of drugs
- First degree arson
- Voluntary/involuntary manslaughter
- Sexual assault
- Felonious restraint
- Property damage
- Possession of a weapon (under weapon provisions of Chapter 571 Missouri Revised Statutes)
- Child molestation
- Deviate sexual assault
- Sexual misconduct involving a child
- Sexual abuse

VII. Academic Dishonesty

Note: A warning statement could be issued if a minor violation occurs to put the student on “probation” to hopefully help avoid future situations that could result in disqualification from the program.

DISCIPLINARY APPEAL PROCESS:

The following process may be used by students/parents to appeal a disciplinary decision that may affect the student’s A+ qualification:

- I. Students/parents may appeal a disqualification decision that is made dealing with discipline or probation. Anyone making an appeal should use the “A+ Appeal of Citizenship Form” available from the A+ Schools Coordinator.
- II. The basis of the appeal must be submitted in writing through the office of the A+ Schools Coordinator. The students/parents may make the appeal in writing or make a presentation before the A+ Citizenship Appeals Committee.
- III. Upon receiving a written appeal, the A+ Schools Coordinator will convene the A+ Citizenship Appeals Committee composed of the following:

The A+ Student’s Guidance Counselor

The disciplining Principal

A teacher from the high school

A central office administrator

The A+ Coordinator will act as facilitator and a non-voting member of the A+ Citizenship Appeals Committee unless the decision results in a tie vote. After the A+ Citizenship Appeals Committee reaches a decision, the A+ Schools Coordinator will notify the parents. If the appeal decision is not acceptable to the parent, additional appeals must be in writing to the Superintendent and then to the Board of Education.

Tutoring/Mentoring

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

- Involve students within the La Plata School District
- Provide encouragement to students within the La Plata School District
- Be school-based and/or under the direction of a district staff member

Students must:

- Participate in training for tutors. Students will learn how to tutor, fulfill A+ tutoring requirements, and fill out necessary forms.
- Obtain a Tutoring Log Sheet from the principal's office. Log sheets must be turned in to the principal's office in a timely manner so that accurate A+ tutoring hours can be included on grade reports. It is the student's responsibility to make sure these are turned in to the principal's office in a timely manner.
- Tutoring/mentoring can be done before/after school, during the school year or during summer school.

NOTE: Failure to adhere to tutoring guidelines may result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the A+ Program.

Tutoring opportunities that will be available:

- Elementary School mentoring. Students are assigned to classrooms or one-on-one tutoring. Daytime or after school.
- After School program. Monday - Friday, from 3:30 - 6:00 p.m.
- Preschool program. Monday – Friday, from 7:30 – 8:00 a.m.
- Tutoring underclassmen before and/or after school and during RTI at the high school. (for qualified applicants)
- District approved job shadowing outside of school hours can account for 10 (25%) of the 50 mentoring hours required.

Attendance Requirement

To be eligible for the A+ Schools Program Tuition Reimbursement Incentive, a student must have a 95% accumulated attendance record for four years beginning his/her freshman year. Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes. (95 % translates to ~35 days absent over four years). 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:

- Students must attend La Plata High School for three consecutive years prior to graduation. It is possible to maintain you're A+ status if you transfer to La Plata High School from another A+ designated school in Missouri OR if you transfer from La Plata High School to another A+ designated school in Missouri (all attendance, GPA, and tutoring information transfers with you for A+ purposes).
- 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 on the School Information System (SIS) in the high school office and the principal's office.
- Cumulative attendance information will be recorded and given to students at the end of each grading period.

Attendance Appeal/Waiver

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

Following notification of excessive 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 principal's office. (A sample is included in this handbook)

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 consists of the La Plata High School Principal, the A+ Coordinator and may include the La Plata R-II Schools Superintendent, a member of the La Plata R-II Board of Education, and the high school counselor. The A+ Coordinator will act as facilitator and a non-voting member of the review team.

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 the student decides to appeal the decision of the Attendance and Citizenship Review Team to the La Plata R-II Board of Education, it will have to be done by the July Board of Education meeting. All decisions of the Board of Education are final and will be made by August 1st. If a student's A+ status is changed, they are to be re-instated in the program immediately. Appeals cannot be made after a student has graduated from high school.

Attendance Waiver Guidelines

Anyone submitting a request for an A+ waiver of days missed shall provide the A+ Coordinator with the following official documentation to accompany the Request for Attendance Waiver form (a copy is included with this handbook):

<u>Reason for Absence</u>	<u>Documentation</u>
Doctor/Dentist Appt.	Doctor's Excuse
Chronic Health Problems	Note from Doctor/School Nurse
Hospitalization	Note/Documentation from Doctor
Personal/family calamity (Fire, flood, etc.)	Principal's letter
Funerals	Principal's letter
Court Date	Letter From the Court
Catastrophic illness/injury (long term)	Principal's/doctor's letter (with recommendation for homebound instruction)

Reasons Not Allowable for Waiver

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

- Truancy
- Skipping classes
- Taking school time for any personal activity not included in waiver guidelines
- Suspended from class or school 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 La Plata High School Student Handbook.***

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A+ REQUEST FOR ATTENDANCE WAIVER

All information must be provided. Each request must include the specific date, the reason for the absence, and appropriate supporting documentation with signature.

LAST NAME: _____ FIRST NAME: _____

DATE: _____

<u>Reason for absence</u>	<u>Documentation Required</u>
Hospitalization	Physician's letter
Chronic health problems	Physician's letter
Court appearance	Court letter
Religious holiday	Minister's letter
Personal/family calamity	Parent and counselor's letter
Catastrophic illness/injury	Principal's/physician letter
Funeral	Parent letter & copy of death certificate, obituary or memorial pamphlet

ATTACH:

- List of specific dates missed.
- Written description of specific reason for absences.
- Required supporting documentation.

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

Citizenship Requirement

Participation in the A+ Schools Program is a unique privilege for La Plata R-II High School students. According to the A+ Schools Administrative Guide, students pursuing the A+ incentives must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use 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.

Citizenship Violations

According to La Plata R-II Schools Board Policies, a student has not demonstrated good citizenship if he/she have:

- Pled guilty or nolo contendere (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.
- Had an out-of-school suspension.
- Violated the district's rules governing academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.)

A+ Citizenship Appeal Process

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

Students and parents or guardians will have **15 calendar days** to appeal a decision that is made dealing with citizenship 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)

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 consists of the La Plata High School Principal, the A+ Coordinator and may include the La Plata R-II Schools Superintendent, a member of the La Plata R-II Board of Education, and the high school counselor. The A+ Coordinator will act as facilitator and a non-voting member of the review team. The parent/guardian and student **must appear in person** before the Review Team.

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 the student decides to appeal the decision of the Attendance and Citizenship Review Team to the La Plata R-II Board of Education, it will have to be done by the July Board of Education meeting. All decisions of the Board of Education are final and will be made by August 1st. If a student's A+ status is changed, they are to be re-instated in the program immediately. Appeals cannot be made after a student has graduated from high school.

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A+ SCHOOLS CITIZENSHIP APPEALS REPORT FORM

CITIZENSHIP APPEAL

State Law requires student avoidance of unlawful use of alcohol, drugs or acts of violence. If a student chooses to appeal, it must be done within 15 calendar days following notification of dismissal by the A+ Coordinator.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Graduation Year: _____

NATURE OF AND REASON FOR APPEAL

Please attach the following documentation supporting the appeal:

- A letter from the student requesting consideration of the appeal
- Any documentation which will help the A+ Review Committee understand the nature of the appeal.

A student's entire discipline record will be reviewed at the time of the citizenship appeal.

I acknowledge receipt of the Appeal Process Procedure.

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Date