

Wellington-Napoleon  
High School  
A+ Handbook



A Handbook for Students, Parents,  
and District Patrons

# The A+ Schools Program

The Wellington-Napoleon R-IX School District had its designation review for A+ during the 2007-2008 school year. The A+ Program is designed to improve the education offered to Missouri high school students, insure that all students graduate from high school and offer two years of additional education and training after high school at any Missouri public community college or vocational/technical school (based on state legislative funding).

## What is the A+ Schools Program?

The A+ Schools Program was established in 1993 when the Missouri Legislature passed the Outstanding Schools Act (also known as Senate Bill 380). The Legislation offered competitive grants to high schools that would seek to implement the three goals established by the Legislature, which are:

- All students graduate from high school;
- All students complete a selection of high school studies that is challenging and for which there are identified learning expectations;
- All students proceed from high school graduation to a college or postsecondary vocational, technical school or high wage job with workplace skill development opportunities.

In simpler words, an A+ School strives to be a high school from which all students graduate; a school in which students take a challenging course of studies leading to graduation; and a school in which students proceed from high school graduation to additional training or education in college (either a two-year or four-year school) or enter directly into a high-paying job.

## What is the rationale for the A+ Schools Program?

The legislation that created the A+ Schools Program is intended to significantly reduce the dropout rate among high school students in Missouri, create a more challenging high school curriculum and better prepare students to be productive citizens and workers.

The theory behind the A+ Schools Program is that all students will ultimately enter the workforce after high school. Regardless of whether students plan to attend a two-year or four-year college, a vocational/technical school or directly enter the workforce upon graduation from high school, all students should be prepared to be intelligent, productive members of society. The A+ Schools Program is designed to prepare students for a career, regardless of whether they plan to begin working immediately after high school or after first seeking additional education and training. For those students seeking additional education after high school, the A+ Schools Program can provide financial assistance.

## What must a school do to achieve designation as an A+ School?

There are a number of criteria used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to determine whether or not a high school should be awarded status as an A+ School. Schools must secure a commitment from their Board of Education to achieve the three A+ Schools Program goals. Schools must align their curriculum with the Show-Me Standards, the curriculum guidelines developed by a state-wide committee of parents, teachers, businesspersons and school administrators and approved by the Missouri Legislature. High Schools must identify what each student should know and be able to do for each course offered.

Schools must eliminate the “general track” of courses by providing career exploration opportunities and guidance to students. Schools must also develop a Partnership Plan involving parents, students, business and industry leaders, community leaders, teachers, administrators, and representatives from area vocational school and community colleges. The Partnership Plan outlines methods for identifying and offering services to students at-risk of dropping out of school and determining ways to involve more members of the community in the life of the school.

### **How can WNHS students benefit from participating in the program?**

In an age of increasing postsecondary education costs, the A+ Program represents a tremendous opportunity for the young people of Wellington-Napoleon. For example, the cost to attend one of the Metropolitan Community Colleges for two years amounts to approximately \$6,500 for tuition. The state covers these costs for those WNHS graduates who have met the A+ Schools Program requirements (as funds are available).

### **What are the requirements for a student to receive the A+ Tuition Benefits?**

The requirements students must meet in order to receive the tuition benefits under the A+ Schools Program (known as the A+ Student Financial Incentives) are set forth in the legislation which established the A+ Schools Program—the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. In order to qualify for the A+ Student Financial Incentives, a student must:

1. Have attended an A+ School for three consecutive years prior to graduation.
2. Maintain a 2.5 grade point average over four years.
3. Maintain a 95% attendance average over four years.
4. Perform a total of 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring (helping) of younger students over four years.
5. Maintain a record of good citizenship while in high school.
6. Avoid the unlawful use of drugs, including alcohol.
7. Apply for all Federal Financial Aid.
8. Score Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra I EOC (Class of 2015 and beyond)

Once a school has received designation as an A+ School, and presuming continued funding by the state legislature, student participants who have met the requirements listed above can receive up to two years paid tuition to attend any public community college, vocational or technical school in the state of Missouri. Following high school graduation, a student has four years in which to use their A+ Student Financial Incentives.

### **How do I sign up to participate in the A+ Schools Program?**

To participate in the A+ Schools Program the first step is to complete an A+ Student Participation Agreement (an A+ Participation Agreement is the last page of the handout). Students can also request an A+ Participation Agreement from their seminar teacher. Completing and turning in a Participation Agreement is very important, so that we can communicate all details of the program and begin to document each student’s participation in the program.

Students wishing to participate in the A+ Schools Program should discuss it with their parents. The student and parents should sign the agreement, detach it from this handout and return the form to Mr. Shannon, the A+ Coordinator.

## **What happens when a student signs an A+ Participation Agreement?**

By signing and submitting an A+ Participation Agreement, a student and his/her parents are simply indicating their interest in participating in the program, a desire to access the Student Financial Incentives, and indicating that they understand the requirements that will qualify them for the program.

Once an agreement has been signed by all parties and returned, a file will be established for that student that will be housed in the A+ Coordinator's office. This file will denote the student's active participation in the A+ program and will contain all pertinent information needed to document the student's completion of the requirements to access the A+ Student Financial Incentives.

A student also receives an A+ Student Tutoring Packet, "Tigers in the Classroom" when he or she turns in the Participation Agreement. The Tutoring packet explains the tutoring component of the A+ program outlines tutoring opportunities available to students and provides placement for students who wish to begin tutoring.

## **When do most students sign up to participate in the A+ Program?**

It is advised that students sign up at the beginning of their freshman year, with some students participating in the tutoring program that year as well. A student may, however, sign up for the program at any time up to December 1 of their senior year. Signing up this late is not advised, however, as many of the program requirements are over a student's four-year high school career. The later a student signs up to participate in A+, the greater the chances that they may fail to meet the program requirements concerning attendance, grade point average and tutoring.

## **What if I sign the Participation Agreement but decide not to attend a community college or vocational-technical school?**

Signing the Participation Agreement will in no way restrict a student's post-high school career or educational options. It will have no bearing on a student's application for or ability to receive student financial aid. Once a student has met the A+ Program requirements while in high school, they have four years after graduation in which to use the A+ Student Financial Incentives. If they choose to go directly to work after graduation or attend a four-year college instead, they simply forego the A+ Financial Incentives.

If, however, a student attends a four-year college for a year after high school graduation, drops out of college and works for a year, for example, they would still have two years in which to utilize the A+ Student Financial Incentives, should they decide to enroll full time in a Missouri public community college or vocational/technical school.

## **What are the details of the A+ Attendance and Good Citizenship requirements?**

### **A+ Attendance Policy (Approved by the A+ Advisory Committee)**

In order to qualify for the A+ Student Financial Incentives, Wellington-Napoleon High School students must maintain a four-year attendance rate of 95 percent or higher.

A student absent from school to attend a school-sanctioned activity will not be counted as an absence for purposes of computing a student's attendance percentage. Absences from school for all other reasons, including illness, will be counted against a student's attendance percentage.

Students absent from school due to a catastrophic illness or similar event may appeal their absences to the A+ Attendance Committee.

### **Appeals Process**

To request a waiver of the absences resulting from a catastrophic illness or event, a student and their parent(s) must submit the request, in writing, to the A+ Appeals Committee, within 10 days of receipt of their notice of ineligibility, requesting a hearing for consideration of reinstatement to the A+ Schools Program.

The A+ Coordinator shall convene a meeting of the A+ Appeals Committee within ten days of receipt of the written request. The Committee shall hear the request for a waiver and return its decision to the student and parent(s) within five days. A majority vote of the A+ Appeals Committee will be required to render a decision.

At the conclusion of each semester the A+ Coordinator will review the Attendance Policy status of all A+ Schools Program participants. The Coordinator will convene a meeting of the Appeals Committee, as needed, to hear appeals.

### **A+ Appeals Committee**

The A+ Appeals Committee is composed of the following:

- Counselor
- School Administrator
- Teacher representative (2) from the Attendance Review Committee
- A+ Advisory Committee Member

### **A+ Citizenship Policy (Approved by the A+ Advisory Committee)**

Expectation: Wellington-Napoleon High School A+ participants are expected to be good citizens at school and in the community.

- Maximizes his/her education opportunities
- Recognizes and accepts responsibility in and beyond the school environment
- Sets a positive example for all to follow at school and in the community

## **Guidelines:**

Each disciplinary referral that results in a Saturday School, detention, or out-of-school suspension takes away from good citizen status.

Consumption, use, or possession of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs can result in immediate removal from the A+ Program.

Criminal conviction of any offense, which constitutes a serious misdemeanor, aggravated misdemeanor, or felony can result in immediate removal from the A+ Program.

Students may, for good cause, appeal the dismissal.

## **Appeals Process**

The A+ Coordinator will notify students and their parents in writing if a student is disqualified from participation, explaining the reason(s) for their disqualification.

Students have the right to appeal their loss of eligibility. The student and parent must notify the A+ Appeals committee in writing, within 10 days of their receipt of their notice of ineligibility, requesting a hearing for consideration of reinstatement to the A+ Schools Program.

The A+ Coordinator shall then convene, within 10 days, an A+ Appeals Committee meeting to rule on the student's request for reinstatement. The Committee shall hear this appeal and return its decision to the student within five days. A majority vote of the A+ Appeals Committee will be required to render a decision.

At the conclusion of each semester the A+ Coordinator will review the good citizenship status of all A+ participants. The A+ Appeals Committee will be convened as needed to hear appeals from students who have been declared ineligible to participate in the A+ Schools Program.

## **A+ Appeals Committee**

The Appeals Committee shall be composed of the following:

- School Administrator
- Counselor
- Two (2) High School Teachers from the Attendance Review Committee
- A+ Advisory Committee Member

## **Wellington-Napoleon R-IX School District A+ Good Citizen Policy**

Wellington-Napoleon A+ participants are expected to be good citizens at school and in the community.

1. A good citizen:
  - Maximizes his/her educational opportunity.
  - Recognizes and accepts responsibility in and beyond the school environment.
  - Sets a positive example for all to follow at school and in the community.
  
2. Good Citizen Guidelines:
  - All participants begin each school year with good citizen status. Good citizen status equals zero points.
  - Each discipline referral that results in a Saturday School or out-of-school suspension takes away from good citizen status. Saturday School suspension results in a three point penalty for each day assigned. Out-of-school suspension results in a four-point penalty for each day assigned.
  - The accumulation of twenty-one points during any one school year will result in the revocation of the participant's good citizen status and hi/her removal from the program.
  
3. In accordance with the state A+ rules, involvement with illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco will result in immediate removal from the A+ program with no opportunity for reinstatement.
  
4. Students may, for good cause, appeal their dismissal. In the Wellington-Napoleon School District, three levels of appeal are recognized:
  - 1-High School Principal
  - 2-Superintendent of Schools
  - 3-Board of Education

**WELLINGTON-NAPOLEON R-IX SCHOOL DISTRICT  
A+ APPEAL OF CITIZENSHIP/PROBATION FORM**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Citizenship Certification**                       **Probation**

**Semester:**  **Fall**     **Spring**                      **School Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Wellington-Napoleon R-IX School District A+ Attendance Guidelines**

A+ Participants will attend school regularly.

**To qualify for an A+ certification, participants must have attended a designated A+ high school for three consecutive years prior to graduation.**

In order to meet the state A+ attendance certification requirement, A+ participants must maintain a minimum cumulative attendance rate (grades 9-12) of 95%.

According to state A+ rules, as adopted by the Missouri State Board of Education, participating A+ districts shall make no distinction between absences that are excused and absences that are unexcused.

Participant attendance is based on Monday through Friday when school is in regular session, from the district's official beginning hour and minute to the district's official ending hour and minute. Only days and times that are used for calculating the district's Average Daily Attendance (ADA) will be used to determine the 95% A+ attendance requirement.

Participant A+ attendance percentages will be calculated using the data found in the district's data management system. For A+ attendance purposes, participants attendance data, as entered in/maintained by the district's data management system is presumed to be correct and accurate. ALL claims of error in the data management system MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT CLAIM(S).

### **Attendance Appeal Procedures**

The following steps will be strictly adhered to:

1. The participant has five calendar days from the date of notification to file a written appeal (clearly stating the grounds of the appeal) with the A+ Coordinator.
2. Within three calendar days of receipt, the A+ Coordinator will convene a meeting of the Attendance review Committee, composed of a building administrator, a counselor, and a classroom teacher, to review the stated grounds of the appeal.
3. Within three calendar days of the meeting of the Attendance Review Committee, a copy of the committee's decision will be forwarded to the participant.
4. The decision of the committee shall be final.

# A+ ATTENDANCE WAIVER REQUEST

A+ participants with attendance percentages that fall below the state required 95% but who have extenuating circumstances as described in Board approved A+ attendance guidelines, may apply for a waiver of attendance.

Senior attendance waiver requests MUST BE ACCOMPANIED by the appropriate/required documentation to support the request. All senior attendance waiver requests (with attached supporting documentation) must be submitted to the A+ office no later than 3:00p.m. on May 1 of their graduating year.

## The following situations are recognized by Board of Education guidelines:

Reason for Absence:

\*Recommended Documentation:

Hospitalization .....	Attending Physician's letter
Chronic Health Problem.....	Physician's/school nurses letter
Catastrophic Illness .....	Physician/school nurse/Principal's letter
Accident Injury.....	Attending Physician's Letter
Court Appearance .....	Court Document/Principal's letter
Funeral .....	Note from School Attendance Secretary
Religious Holiday.....	Letter from Church Official
Personal/Family Calamity (fire, etc) .....	Letter from Principal

## Attendance waivers will not be considered for any of the following:

Truancy, avoiding classes/school, suspensions, personal/family vacations, transportation problems (unless late bus is involved). A+ attendance requirements should not be confused with regular school attendance requirements as printed in the Wellington-Napoleon R-IX School Student Handbook.

\*Recommended documentation does not exclude other forms of documentary evidence to support the request for attendance waiver. Because of the possibility of state audit of local A+ records, **NO REQUEST FOR WAIVER CAN BE CONSIDERED UNLESS SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION IS ATTACHED TO THE WAIVER REQUEST FORM.**

A+ Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

### DATE/S OF ABSENCE

### REASON FOR ABSENCE

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

A+ Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



