

BELLE HIGH  
SCHOOL

A+ SCHOOL  
STUDENT  
HANDBOOK

**A+ STUDENT HANDBOOK -TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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**Purpose of the Manual:**

The purpose of this manual is to provide students, parents, and staff with information about the guidelines and policies of the A+ Program at Belle High School. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that designation is achieved and maintained. It is the responsibility of the students and parents to read, understand, and comply with program requirements.

**Maries County R-II School District  
503 W. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Street  
PO Box 819  
Belle, MO 65013  
!-573-859-3800**

**Belle High School  
503 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
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Belle, Mo 65013  
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**A+ Office  
Alice Taylor  
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**“The A+ Schools program is a school-improvement initiative established by the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. The program is raising academic standards and opening new doors to higher education. The program provides incentives for local high school to reduce the dropout rate, raise academic expectations, eliminate “general track” courses, provide better “career pathways” for all students, and work more closely with business and higher-education leaders.” (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)**

### **GOALS of the A+ PROGRAM**

- **All students will graduate from high school.**
- **All students will complete high school studies that are challenging and that have identified learning expectations.**
- **All students will proceed from high school graduation to college, postsecondary vocational or technical school or a high wage job with opportunities for workplace skill development.**

### **State and Local Requirements for Student Eligibility**

Students who graduate from a designated A+ school may qualify for state-paid assistance to attend any public community college or career technical school in the state.

Students must meet the following requirements to be eligible for the tuition reimbursement:

- ✓ Enter into a written agreement with the school prior to high school graduation
- ✓ Attend a designated A+ school for three consecutive years prior to high school graduation
- ✓ Graduate from high school with an overall grade point average of 2.5 points or higher on a 4-point scale.
- ✓ Have at least 95% attendance record overall for grades 9-12
- ✓ Perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring for younger students
- ✓ Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol
- ✓ Attend a Missouri community college or postsecondary career technical school on a full-time basis and maintain a GPA of 2.5 points or higher
- ✓ The tuition incentives may be available only after the student has made a documented good faith effort to first secure all available federal postsecondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment
- ✓ All Individuals required to register under the United States Military Selective Service Act must show proof of registration
- ✓ Jobshadowing experience or alternative assignment third quarter of sophomore year

## **Tuition Benefits**

Students who successfully complete the requirements of the program are eligible to receive two years (six semesters) of tuition and general fees at any community college or vocational/technical school in Missouri subject to the availability of funds from the Missouri State Legislature.

Participants are under no obligation to use the A+ tuition benefit. The tuition benefit is earned by each individual and is not transferable to any other student.

Receipt of private scholarships will not affect any student's eligibility to participate in the A+ program.

A "good faith" attempt has been made when the student has completed and filed a copy of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with the college or vocational/technical institution.

"General fees" are defined as those fees that are paid by all students (parking and activity fees). Special program fees (laboratory, uniform, equipment) are not included in the A+ tuition benefit.

Financial need is not a factor in determining student eligibility for the A+ tuition benefit.

Participants will have up to four years (from the date of high school graduation) to access the A+ tuition benefit.

If a student graduates early they may access their A+ tuition benefits the next semester following their graduation as long as they have met all other program eligibility requirements and the DESE office has been notified.

To Maintain eligibility (at college), students must be enrolled as full-time students as defined by the post-secondary institution, enrolled in an approved program, and maintain a minimum (unrounded) GPA of 2.5

## **Program Eligibility for Belle High School**

A+ participation is voluntary. Students may participate in the program by signing an A+ agreement and returning it to the A+ Office. Agreements are available in the A+ Office and the counselors' offices.

Students are strongly encouraged to begin A+ participation during the spring of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.

Students may enroll for the A+ program at any time prior to the sixth week of the fall semester, senior year (unless there has been a previous violation of the A+ good citizen policy).

The A+ agreement must be completed in its entirety and **MUST** include the participant's social security number.

A file of active and inactive A+ agreements is maintained in the A+ Office.

### **Grade Point Requirement**

Eligible participants must graduate with a ***cumulative minimum GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 grade scale.*** For purposes of this program, GPA represents the actual figure and is not rounded (2.4999 is not 2.5).

It is the responsibility of each participant to monitor closely his/her grade point average.

### **A+ Attendance**

The A+ Attendance Policy has been reviewed and adopted by the Maries County R-II School District Board of Education.

A+ participants are expected to attend school regularly. Eligible participants must graduate with a ***minimum cumulative attendance rate of 95%.***

Four, 174-day school years equal 696 days of attendance. A student can miss no more than 34.8 days and still be eligible for the A+ tuition benefit.

The A+ attendance policy provides for relief in cases where the absence was beyond the control of the participant. Requests for Attendance Waivers must be filed in accordance with established policy. Guidelines. Each participant should carefully read and understand the attendance policy.

Students who are participants in the Learning Center program are eligible for the tuition benefit **ONLY** if they have satisfied all established criteria **AND** their diploma is awarded by Belle High School

It is the responsibility of each participant to **monitor closely** his/her attendance.

A copy of the A+ attendance policy is included in this manual. Participants and their parents should familiarize themselves with this policy.

## **A+ Good Citizenship**

The criterion of the A+ Schools Program requires a student to maintain a good citizenship record. Students participating in the A+ Schools Program must do so to qualify for post-secondary financial assistance. Receiving the A+ incentive is an honor and should be treated as such. Students who are designated as A+ students should demonstrate distinctive qualities and be role models for other students. Their character and ethics should be of the highest standards.

Citizenship certification will be the primary responsibility of the Citizenship Committee (Superintendent, High School Principal, A+ Coordinator, Counselor) Each student's discipline record will be reviewed each year. For the purpose of the A+ Schools Program what is meant by good citizenship and the avoidance of unlawful drugs is that a student must have 5 or fewer days of suspension cumulatively and abstain from the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Students disciplined for using these substances by school officials would lose A+ eligibility.

**Appeals** will be addressed through the Citizenship Committee. Parents/guardians will have 30 days to appeal any decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing on the appeal form which may be obtained in the A+ office or the counselor's office. Upon receiving a written appeal, the A+ Coordinator will convene the A+ Citizenship Committee. After the committee has reviewed the appeal and reached a decision, the A+ Coordinator or the Counselor will notify the parent/guardian by letter.

## **A+ Tutoring and Jobshadowing**

A+ participants must perform a minimum of 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring. For purposes of the program, community service is not considered an acceptable substitute for tutoring.

Tutoring must be a part of an approved program (approved by the A+ Coordinator) and performed under the direct supervision of a certified employee of the Maries County R-II School District. Tutoring must be performed in one (or more) of the public school buildings in the district with Maries County R-II School District students.

Tutoring time **must** be documented on the official A+ Tutoring Log. These logs are available in the A+ office and in the Counselor's office. Each entry on the tutoring log must be verified by the signature of the supervising teacher(s). Unverified time will not be credited. The participant is responsible for maintaining his/her tutoring log accurately, obtaining the necessary signatures, and for submitting the log to the A+ Office in a timely manner. No credit will be awarded for logs that are misplaced or stolen.

Jobshadowing is a local requirement in conjunction with the objectives of the A+ Program and is set up as part of the Language Arts II Curriculum objectives. Students will be asked to jobshadow during third quarter of their sophomore year (See Jobshadowing Form for further information).

## **Selective Service Registration**

Participants who are required by the laws of the United States to register with the selective service system must register or forfeit their eligibility for the A+ tuition benefit.

## **Federal Student Aid Requirement (FAFSA)**

A good faith effort has been made when the participant and his/her parents have completed and filed the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** with the government. The information found on the FAFSA is required by postsecondary institutions to complete the enrollment process. FAFSA forms are available in the counselor's office or online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. Participants may submit the FAFSA anytime after midnight, January 1, of the year in which they will graduate.

## **Accessing Tuition Benefits**

**It is critical to the integrity of the A+ Schools Program that participants pay strict attention to all the guideline, rules and policies that govern the program.**

Some control is given to local districts in establishing policy and administering the A+ Program. Most of the rules, however, are found in state statutes and are not subject to local amendment. The tuition benefit is not automatically bestowed on students who have successfully completed their A+ agreement. To be eligible for the tuition benefit, the following guidelines must be followed:

- 1) Graduating participants must complete and submit the **Request for A+ Tuition Benefits/Intent to Access** form. The window for submitting this document is May 1-15 of the year of graduation. This form is available in the A+ office and the Counselor's office.
- 2) All parts of the form, including the participant's social security number, must be completed.
- 3) If an attendance waiver has been requested, an **Attendance Waiver Request** form together with the required documentation and signatures must accompany the **Request for Tuition Benefits**.
- 4) A committee of teachers and administrators (High School Principal, A+ Coordinator, High School Counselor, FBLA teacher, FFA teacher, FACS teacher, and one additional high school teacher) will compare the status of each participant to the requirements of the program and certify each participant who has successfully completed all program requirements.
- 5) Participants will be notified as to their certified or non-certified status. Non-certified participants will be provided with the reason(s) why they were denied certification.
- 6) The names and social security numbers of A+ eligible graduates will be forwarded to the appropriate local and state agencies.

A+ eligible graduates **must** inform the post-secondary institution to which they have made application of their intent to use the tuition benefit. The institution will prepare necessary paperwork and bill the State of Missouri.

**A+ Forms/Policies**

*Participation Agreement*

*Good Citizen Policy*

*Attendance Guidelines*

*Intent to Access Form*

*Request for Attendance Waiver*

*A+ Tutoring Log*

*Jobshadowing Forms*





## Belle High School A+ Attendance Guidelines

Expectation: Belle High School A+ participants will attend school regularly.

**General Provisions:** To qualify for tuition reimbursement, A+ participants must maintain a minimum attendance rate of 95% during the four years of high school enrollment.

The 95% minimum is a cumulative figure reflecting the total attendance for four years. Based upon 174 attendance days, a participant could miss no more than 8.7 days of instruction per year (four years + 34.8 days). And still retain his/her eligibility for the A+ tuition benefit.

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

Students who attend Learning Center will be eligible for the A+ tuition benefit **only** if all established A+ criterion are satisfied and the student graduates with a diploma from Belle High School.

No distinction will be made between excused and unexcused absences.

Beginning in the fall of 2005, all A+ participants will receive a quarterly A+ status report that includes student attendance information.

**Attendance Waiver Guidelines:** Documentation to support a request for an A+ attendance waiver must accompany the participant's Intent to Access Tuition Benefit form when the form is submitted to the A+ Coordinator's office. Documentation must include specific dates accompanied by the signatures of the appropriate persons.

### Reason for Absence

### Documentation Required

Hospitalization

Physician's Letter

Chronic health problems

Physician's letter and/or school nurse letter

Court appearance

Court Letter

Funeral

Principal's Letter

Religious holiday

Religious Leader's Letter

Personal/family calamity (fire, etc.)

Principal's Letter

Catastrophic illness/injury

Principal'/Physician's Letter

Waivers will not be granted for the following:

Truancy, avoiding class/school

Suspensions

Personal/family vacations

Transportation problems (unless late bus is involved)

**Attendance Appeals:**

The following steps in the appeals process will be strictly adhered to:

1. The participant has seven (7) calendar days from the date of notification to file a written appeal with the A+ Coordinator
2. Within three (3) calendar days of receiving the appeal, the A+ Coordinator will convene an Attendance Review Committee (composed of the principal, the counselor, a classroom teacher, and the A+ coordinator) to review circumstances surrounding the appeal.
3. The A+ Coordinator will serve as non-voting chairperson of the committee.
4. Within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the appeal, a copy of the committee's decision will be forwarded to the participant.
5. The decision of the committee is final.

Approved by the Marietta County R-II School District Board of Education May, 2005

# INTENT TO ACCESS BENEFITS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
(LAST) (FIRST) (MI)

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. All items *must* be completed
2. *Correct* Social Security Number is required
3. Sign the form at the bottom
4. If necessary, attach a waiver of attendance request and copies of all supporting documentation
5. **Intent form must be returned to the A+ Office by the end of the first school day in May**

My signature indicates that when I graduate I will have successfully completed my A+ Agreement by:

- ❖ Attending an A+ school for three consecutive years immediately prior to graduation
- ❖ Graduating with a GPA of not less than 2.5 (unrounded) out of 4.0
- ❖ Graduating with an attendance rate of not less than 95%
- ❖ Avoiding the unlawful use of illegal drugs and alcohol
- ❖ Being a good citizen at school and in the community
- ❖ Performing a minimum of 50 hours of tutoring/mentoring
- ❖ Registering with the selective service (if required by law)

My signature further indicates that I will make a good faith attempt to secure all federal education funds that do not require repayment by completing and filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

It I my intention to access my A+ tuition benefit.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ My attendance is less than 95% and a Request for Attendance Waiver and the supporting documentation are attached.

-----  
*Intent to Access Tuition Benefit Form was received on* \_\_\_\_\_ .

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



## REQUEST FOR ATTENDANCE WAIVER

***Requirement:***

***A+ participants will graduate with a minimum cumulative attendance rate of 95%.***

Attendance waivers are available for the following reasons:

| <u>Reason for Absence</u>             | <u>Documentation Required</u>                 |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Hospitalization                       | Physician's Letter                            |
| Chronic health problems               | Physician's letter and/or school nurse letter |
| Court appearance                      | Court Letter                                  |
| Funeral                               | Principal's Letter                            |
| Religious holiday                     | Religious Leader's Letter                     |
| Personal/family calamity (fire, etc.) | Principal's Letter                            |
| Catastrophic illness/injury           | Principal's/Physician's Letter                |

Instructions:

1. Complete the required information
2. Attach the appropriate documentation. Request will not be considered without the appropriate documentation.
3. Request for Waiver/documentation *must accompany* the **Intent to Access A+ Tuition Benefits** form.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance waiver(s) are requested for the following dates and reasons:

| Dates of absence: | Reason for Absence |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| _____             | _____              |
| _____             | _____              |
| _____             | _____              |

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

(Additional pages may be attached, if necessary)







## **SHADOWING POLICY FOR THE MARIES CO. R-II SCHOOL DISTRICT BELLE HIGH SCHOOL A+ PROGRAM**

Jobshadowing (or an alternative assignment from the teacher) is required for all sophomore A+ students. Each student is allowed to jobshadow a total of one day during third quarter of his/her sophomore year in conjunction with A+ and LA II course objectives [Communication Arts Grade-Level Expectations: Writing:3A (Write a personal narrative for real-life experience - jobshadowing experience, interview questions, research/questions about particular career requirements, etc.) and 3E (Compose texts for a variety of career and workplace communications)].

### **PROCEDURE**

The student will:

**BEFORE:**

- a. Utilize **Procedure to Schedule Shadowing Appointment** form (page 2) to contact employer and set up a shadowing appointment. If you have any questions about making your contacts, please be sure to ask for help from your English teacher.
- b. For your English class, create 10 appropriate job-related questions to ask the person you “shadow” during your jobshadowing experience to present to teacher for approval before shadowing experience.
- c. For A+ Office, complete and submit the **Student/Parent “Shadowing” Agreement** (page 3) to the A+ office at least one week **prior** to the shadowing date. (Must have both parent/guardian and English teacher signatures.)
- e. Fill out a field trip permission slip one week in advance (Check with teacher).

The student must have field trip eligibility to participate in the jobshadowing experience.

**DURING**

- a. Arrive on time and behave appropriately for the situation.
- b. Ask the person being shadowed as many of the previously written questions as possible.
- c. Fill out **Shadowing Information Sheet** (Page 4) and have signed by person being shadowed..

**AFTER**

- a. Within one week of Shadowing, submit completed and signed **Shadowing Information Sheet** (page 4) to the Principal’s Office/A+ Office.
- b. Answer questions created prior to shadowing experience and turn into English teacher.
- c. Write an essay or give an oral presentation (determined by teacher) narrating the shadowing experience to include a description of the job, what was learned about the job, reaction to the job, unexpected facts/experiences learned about the job, and any other interesting items. This will be turned into the English teacher.

***Students will be given a grade for completing the shadowing assignment. Failure to complete any of the above procedures will result in a failing grade and an unexcused absence.***

**PROCEDURE TO SCHEDULE SHADOWING APPOINTMENT**  
**(This page is not an assignment. It is to help you schedule a shadowing appointment.)**

1. Career Choice:

---

2. List potential employers to shadow with phone numbers and addresses

| Employer | Phone Number | Address |
|----------|--------------|---------|
| 1.       |              |         |
| 2.       |              |         |
| 3.       |              |         |

3. Use proper phone etiquette

Introduce yourself, explain your assignment, and set up date and time if agreeable (i.e. “Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a sophomore A+ student at Belle High School. Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ (teacher name) assigns each A+ student in his/her Language Arts II class to jobshadow for a day. I would like to shadow.(a nurse, an engineer, a teacher, etc.) at your place of business Would you be willing to allow me to shadow you for a day?”

If answer is NO, thank them for their time and politely say goodbye.

If answer is YES, “What would be a good day\* for you?”

\*Make certain that you will not be missing a major test or important day of class notes. It might prove helpful to have the school calendar handy as well. Be sure to make up any class work assigned in each class.

4. Once date and time have been secured, complete the **Student/Parent “Shadowing” Agreement** (page 3) and turn in to the Principal’s Office/A+ Office to be excused for the school day. *Don’t forget teacher approval on the form!!!!!!* (At least 1 week prior to appointment.)
- 5.

**5VERY IMPORTANT!!!!** Do not forget to complete the **Shadowing Information Sheet** (page 4) after shadowing appointment and turn in to Principal’s Office/A+ Office within one wek to receive credit.

**STUDENT/PARENT “SHADOWING” AGREEMENT**  
**(This is completed and turned in to the Principal’s Office/A+ Office**  
**at least one week prior to shadowing)**

\_\_\_\_\_, sophomore, has my  
(Please print student’s name)  
permission to be absent from school to attend a jobshadowing experience for A+ on

\_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date) (Person or Organization and location)

I understand it is my responsibility to provide transportation for my child to and from his or her jobshadowing location and that he/she will be responsible for all assignments missed on the jobshadowing day. (This day will not be counted against his/her 95% attendance requirement for A+.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian - PRINT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature.

**Shadowing Appointment**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, by signing below, verify that I have made the  
(Please print student’s name)  
following jobshadowing appointment:

Jobshadowing Date \_\_\_\_\_

Jobshadowing Time \_\_\_\_\_

Jobshadowing Business \_\_\_\_\_

I further understand that if I miss this appointment or fail to complete the necessary requirements, I will forfeit the credit given for this assignment. I understand I will be released from this agreement only with a doctor’s excuse or with recommendation from the teacher.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(English Teacher Signature - Approval)

**SHADOWING INFORMATION SHEET**  
**(Complete and submit to Principal's Office/A+ Office AFTER**  
**Jobshadowing Experience)**

STUDENT'S NAME

\_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF BUSINESS SHADOWED

\_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

NAME OF PERSON SHADOWED

\_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

**JOBSHADOWING DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL TIME \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTURE TIME \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

This portion is signed by the person you shadowed **AFTER** your jobshadowing is completed

By signing below, I verify the accuracy of the above information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name of person shadowed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of person shadowed)

## JOBSHADOWING ALTERNATE ASSIGNMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, **have chosen to do the alternate assignment for jobshadowing.** I have completed my questions and completed an essay or an oral report about a career as an assignment in my Language Arts II class.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Teacher Signature)

(Please complete this form with the requisite signatures and send to the A+ office before the end of the third quarter. Thank you.)