

A+ participants are expected to attend school regularly. Participants must graduate with a cumulative (Grades 9 -12) attendance rate of 95% or higher. State A+ attendance requirements are very specific. The State Board of Education Regulations for A+ School do not specify any exceptions to 95% attendance.

Goals of the A+ Schools Program include improved student participation in academic rigor, selection of relevant courses taken in preparation for career success, and increased graduation rates within schools and districts. Good attendance is directly correlated to success in high school and increased graduation rates. Springfield Public Schools align the district's 95% attendance requirement for A+ eligibility with the State Board of Education Regulations for A+ Schools. Many local businesses indicate that an employee with 95% attendance would be terminated; high school gives students a chance to practice and make punctuality, self-discipline, and good attendance a habit for workplace success.

The A+ Program makes no distinction between 'Excused' and 'Unexcused' absences. Absences considered 'Excused' are those absences that the parent/guardian is aware of. Many 'Excused' absences, including those approved in advance by parents or school officials, count against a student's district attendance average. A doctor's note for an excused absence for colds, flu, strep, or other short-term illnesses does NOT qualify a student to have that absence waived.

Extenuating circumstances such as health problems or accident-related injuries may cause a student to miss long periods of school. When students anticipate missing at least 10 consecutive days or more, the student and/or parent/guardian must contact the school nurse or A+ Coordinator promptly so that Homebound Instruction can begin immediately. A student who qualifies for Homebound Instruction is coded on school records as being present – the absences do not count against the student's cumulative attendance average.

The student should be careful in the use of absences --excessive absences will affect the student's district attendance average and A+ eligibility. **Students are highly encouraged to miss no more than 4 days per school year, which will actually put them above the 95% requirement and will leave 'wiggle' room for unforeseen or unplanned absences.** Missing 7 – 8 days in a school year (or a cumulative total of 28 – 32 days during the student's four years in high school) is pushing the limits for maintaining 95% attendance. Missing 7 – 8 days in a school year doesn't leave any days for unplanned absences.

'Banking' days (not using the maximum # of days allotted each year) is encouraged to offset unexpected or non-school sponsored absences which may occur as a result of:

- routine, ordinary student illnesses (cold, flu, strep, mono, etc.)
- dentist or orthodontist appointments
- accidental or sport-related injuries
- non-school sponsored club sports, camp, or competitive activities
- work
- personal transportation problems
- funerals, etc.

The following absences do not count against students' district attendance averages in meeting the 95% A+ requirement:

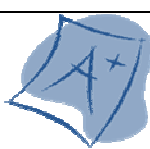
- Absences coded as school-sponsored activities
- Absences coded as pre-approved, documented college visits
- Absences coded as SPS district provided Homebound Instruction (a minimum of 10 consecutive days absences are required to apply for this accommodation). The school nurse and A+ Coordinator should be notified as soon as parents or students become aware of the need for homebound instruction due to illness or injury.
- Absences coded as part of a disability accommodation plan

In reviewing a student’s final cumulative attendance average, the student’s entire attendance history (freshman through senior year) will be considered. Attendance is based on Monday through Friday attendance when school is in regular session. Only days and times, which are calculated for Average Daily Attendance (ADA) will be used to determine the 95% attendance requirement. Attendance during summer school is not included in the students’ final average—only the semesters during the regular school year in which students are required to attend is counted. It is the responsibility of each A+ participant to closely monitor his/her attendance.

A+ participants are not disqualified for dropping below 95% attendance in any one year, but must have a cumulative attendance rate of 95% at the time of graduation. Students transferring to Glendale High School, who are ineligible because of attendance from previous schools, will also be considered ineligible at GHS.

The student’s final transcript will be the official record of attendance. A student with 94.999 or lower attendance average will not qualify for A+ eligibility. Student attendance averages are not rounded up; the student’s cumulative average must be 95.0% or higher.

Students or parents with questions about a student’s A+ attendance are encouraged to call the A+ Coordinator at the high school.

	It’s easier to <i>keep</i> a good average all four years of high school than it is to fall behind and play “catch up” on good attendance.			
	Average at the END of ↓	Gr 9 Attendance Avg	Gr 10 Attendance Avg	Gr 11 Attendance Avg
Freshman Year	80%	100%	100%	100%
Sophomore Year		90%	100%	100%
Junior Year			93.5%	100%

If snow and ice alter the number of days attended, if a senior carries a reduced course load, or if an unforeseeable emergency occurs, a 95% average may not be attainable, even with perfect attendance the number of years shown in the chart above.

- **Freshmen:** The chart shows that if your attendance falls to **80%** by the end of your freshman year, it could take three years of perfect attendance to average 95% by graduation.
- **Sophomores:** A sophomore with a two-year average of **90%** will need two years of perfect attendance to try for an average of 95% at graduation.
- **Juniors:** An average of 93.5% by the end of your junior year requires perfect attendance during the senior year and a full class load during all four terms to try for a final average of 95%.
- **Seniors:** Seniors who choose to be early leavers, with an attendance average below 95%, would not have enough days of attendance accumulated to meet the 95% attendance requirement. In this situation, choosing to be an early leaver would eliminate students from A+ eligibility when they meet graduation requirements in January.
- **Seniors:** If a student’s average is below 94.5% at the end of the first semester of the senior year, it’s possible they might not meet the 95% requirement even with perfect attendance second semester. A reduced number of days of attendance caused by snow and ice, or the reduced number of days seniors are required to attend can negatively impact the student’s attendance average. It never hurts to keep trying, but looking into other options for college funding is highly recommended—*just in case*.