

Coordinator's Message

To Parents and Students:

The Lesterville R-IV School District has established a locally funded tuition assistance program called CATS +. The letters in CATS + have meaning: Continuing Achievement Towards Success. The program is designed to promote achievement in the academic, social, and character areas. We believe that a strong development in these areas will lead to a greater level of success in the future for all students who participate in the program. Participation in this program is available to every student so that he/she may further his/her educational experiences.

It is common knowledge that those who graduate from high school have more earning power than those who fail to finish high school. We also know that those with a post-secondary education earn more than those who have no additional training. We live in a rapidly changing world where competition drives success.

We at Lesterville R-IV School District desire to provide our students every opportunity to be prepared to face the challenges and develop the skills and responsibilities required to be successfully competitive. A general high school program of study is not enough preparation for today's colleges or for employment in today's complex workplace. Rather, the program of study must be carefully planned and selected to help ensure that students attain their goals.

As part of the CATS + Program, each student, working with their parents and the Program Coordinator, will develop a course of study centered on one of the six broad career pathways. The course of study may reflect a general area of interest or it may concentrate on specific occupational goal.

Students have the opportunity to receive up to \$100 per credit hour for up to 60 hours of college or technical school tuition assistance. This means that a student has the opportunity to have up to \$6,000 worth of his/her tuition paid through the CATS + Program.

I. CATS + Award Program Requirements

The CATS + program provides students the opportunity to earn FREE tuition to a college or technical school. To qualify for this financial incentive, a student must be **certified** as a CATS + Award Student of Lesterville High School. The principal and the program coordinator, as the official representatives of the CATS + program, have the responsibility to certify whether a graduate of Lesterville High School meets the criteria before graduation. Certification will require the eligible student to do the following:

1. Enroll in and attend Lesterville High School continuously for his/her junior and senior years and meet all other qualifications outlined within the program.
2. Sign a **CATS + Award Contract**.
3. Maintain at least a **3.0 cumulative Grade Point Average** on a 4.0 scale.
4. Maintain a cumulative **96% attendance** record for all four years of high school.
5. Perform **75 hours** of unpaid, approved tutoring and/or community service.
6. Maintain a record of **good citizenship** and avoidance of unlawful use of drugs and alcohol.
7. Make a **good faith effort** to first secure all available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.
8. Apply for a minimum of **ten (10) scholarships. Five (5) of those scholarships must be from the State/National Scholarship list. Students Must Apply for All Applicable Local Scholarships. A copy needs to be submitted to the Program Coordinator.**
9. Attend the Lesterville R-IV **Alumni Banquet** his/her graduation year and each year in which he/she receives financial assistance through the CATS + Program.
10. Maintain a **2.5 Grade Point Average** while attending college or technical school as a full-time student.
11. Complete a **Follow-up Survey** administered by the Lesterville R-IV School District.

Disclaimer and Precaution: Official CATS + Award status will be determined in May of each school year. Tuition reimbursement is contingent upon local funding and is subject to change by a decision of the Lesterville R-IV School District Board of Education. Program policies and procedures are subject to review and modifications made as deemed appropriate by the Lesterville R-IV School District Board of Education. Eligible students must apply and make a good faith effort to first secure all available funds that do not require repayment before taking advantage of Program monies. Local scholarships will not limit tuition assistance. Students who violate the school discipline (see citizenship requirements) and/or use drugs/alcohol will forfeit the CATS + reimbursement. Funds will not be used for repeated courses.

II. CATS + Award Contract

After a Lesterville High School student has completed 10.5 credits of high school studies, has established a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale, and has established a cumulative 96% attendance average, the student will be notified that he/she has met the initial requirements to participate in the CATS + Program. If the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to participate in the program, they must read all of the qualifications and requirements and sign the CATS + Award Contract. The CATS + Award Contract must be returned to the CATS + Program Coordinator. The coordinator will establish a file for the student, in which all documentation regarding activities and requirements will be kept. The documentation in the file will be used to determine certification to receive financial assistance through the CATS + Program.

III. Enrollment Requirement

In order for a student to meet the enrollment requirement, the student must enroll in and attend Lesterville High School continuously for his/her junior and senior years.

1. Students “new to the district” must enroll into the district on or prior to the first day of attendance (as set by the school calendar) of his/her junior year at Lesterville High School.
2. If a student transfers into Lesterville High School from another school after the beginning of his/her junior year, the student will not be considered eligible for the CATS + Award Program at Lesterville High School unless the previous school is a designated A+ school, and the student was active in the previous school’s A+ Program.
3. Students in the CATS + Program must be enrolled as full-time students during the four years of high school and complete their entire senior year at Lesterville High School in order to maintain eligibility.

IV. Grade Point Requirement

To receive the CATS + Award, students must graduate with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Additional statements to clarify the grade point policy are listed below.

1. Grade point average is calculated only at the end of each semester and is cumulative for all four years of high school.
2. Grade point averages are calculated to five (5) decimal places. Rounding up of grade point averages will not be allowed.
3. A letter containing grade point information will be sent after the completion of each semester to the parents of CATS + Award participants.

4. The student's official transcript will serve as evidence of the grade point average for admission into a college or technical school.
5. The student will be required to maintain a 2.5 grade point average while attending the post-secondary institution. The student will be responsible for ensuring that the program coordinator receives a copy of grades each semester.

V. Attendance Requirement

The following guidelines and procedures will be in effect when certifying that the CATS + Award student has met the required 96% attendance rate for four years:

1. The cumulative attendance information given to the program coordinator will come from the official attendance record kept by Lesterville School.
2. The cumulative attendance record will be kept for a four-year period from the beginning of the student's freshman year until graduation.
3. Attendance percentages are calculated to four (4) decimal places. Rounding up is not allowed.
4. A letter with attendance information will be sent home at the end of each semester.
5. After receiving this information, the parent will have an opportunity to file an attendance appeal with the high school principal if an error has occurred.
6. Students with specific health histories must make sure that the medical documentation of chronic or long-term health related problems are on file with the school nurse if they are to be considered in a possible review.

Attendance Appeals:

Absenteeism for reasons **other than** chronic or long-term health related problems or funerals for immediate family members should be accounted for within the 4% allowable limit. Schedulable appointments should be made to avoid exceeding the allowable absentee requirement.

1. Parents submitting a request for a waiver of days missed shall provide the high school principal with documentation with specific dates and the reason the student was absent from school. Documentation may include letters from attending physician, school nurse, principal, or court official.
2. The high school principal will meet with the committee to review the request for a waiver of days missed. The review committee will determine if any, all, or none of the days will be waived.
3. The high school principal will notify the parents by letter of the committee's decision.

VI. Tutoring / Community Service Requirement

The CATS + Award Program requires all program participants to perform seventy-five (75) hours of unpaid tutoring and/or community service. These hours must be documented before May 1 of the CATS + student's senior year. The following guidelines and procedures will be used to meet the tutoring /community service requirement:

1. In order to begin and count any hours towards the tutoring /community service requirement, the CATS + student must have met the following criteria:
2. Have on file, with the program director, a CATS + Award Program Contract signed by the student and parent.
3. Have successfully earned a minimum of 10.5 credits of high school coursework.
4. Have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
5. Have a cumulative 96% attendance record or better.
6. Have a record of good citizenship.
7. All tutoring activities must be sponsored by and coordinated through the Lesterville School and the CATS + coordinator.
8. **75 hours of Tutoring and/or Community Service must be earned through more than one activity. No more than 33.3% (25 hours) will be counted towards the 75 hour requirement for one activity. (Ex: Helping with elementary basketball for 3 years counts as one activity)**
9. An official log sheet must be filled out by the student for each activity session and signed by the school official in charge of the tutoring/mentoring activity.
10. The tutoring may be done during the school year or summer school.
 11. All tutoring must be done on school premises unless specific permission is given by the CATS + coordinator.

VII. CATS + Student responsibilities for Tutoring/Community Service are:

1. All activities must have the CATS + Program Coordinator's approval prior to the activity. Any hours for an activity without prior approval will be denied.
2. Be present upon the agreed date and time for the activity.
3. Notify the staff member in charge if an absence must occur. Notification should be given the day of, or prior, to the activity.

4. The student must have the tutoring folder for required signatures in order to be allowed to tutor.
5. All hours must be completed prior to May 1 of the CATS + student's senior year.
6. All community service activities must be pre-approved through the CATS+ Program Coordinator.
7. Community service activities will be approved on an individual basis by the CATS + Coordinator. Community service may include work for public entities such as the library, city and county offices, etc. It may include community and/or school projects for beautification, service to the elderly, etc. Students are to submit their request and ideas to the CATS + Coordinator for consideration.
 - a. Service hours that are expected or required as part of any school, civic, and/or private organization will not count towards the requirements of the CATS + Program.
 - b. Any CATS + student receiving payment and/or gifts of monetary value will not receive credit for the service hours for the activity.
 - c. Service activities for family members are strongly discouraged and may not be approved.
 - d. It is the responsibility of the CATS + student to seek out, submit for approval, and complete any and all service activities.

VIII. Citizenship Requirement

1. Students who sign a contract for the CATS + Program are to maintain good citizenship. Cases outside of school time and outside of program activities, involving serious violations, will be subject to review under the Citizenship Requirement.
2. Any student who violates the District's Drug/Alcohol/Substance Abuse Policy during the time in which he/she is under the CATS + Contract will automatically forfeit his/her CATS + Program status and/or tuition reimbursement.
3. The high school principal and the CATS + committee will review violations of the school district's discipline policy each semester using the following guidelines:
 - a. Any violation committed by a student while under the CATS + contract which involves poor behavior, disrespect, profanity, dishonesty, etc. will be reviewed by the principal and the committee.
 - b. Any student, while under the CATS + contract, who receives two or more disciplinary referrals in a semester will be reviewed by the principal and the committee.

- c. Any student, while under the CATS + contract, who receives two (2) tardies in a semester will automatically be placed on a Warning Status.
4. Upon review of each individual case, the principal will respond in one of the following ways:
 - a. Good Citizenship – No Action Taken
 - b. Warning Status – Notification sent to the student and parent. A second warning given within the same semester will place the individual on Probation Status. A semester immediately following without any violations of the Good Citizenship standard will place the student in Good Citizenship Status.
 - c. Probation Status – Notification sent to the student and parent. Probation Status will be for the following semester. The case will be reviewed at the end of the probationary semester. A semester immediately following without any violations of the Good Citizenship standard will place the student in Good Citizenship Status. Two (2) Probation Status semesters occurring consecutively will result in the student being removed from the CATS + Program.
 - d. Disqualification – Notification sent to the student and the parent that the student has been removed from the CATS + Program and that financial assistance through the Program is relinquished.
 5. Appeals may be made with a written request to the superintendent of schools.
 6. All reviews, decisions by the committee, and correspondence will be placed in the student's CATS + file by the Program Coordinator.

VIII. Good Faith Effort to Secure Funding

Parents must make a good faith effort to secure all available post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.

1. Parents must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>
2. After parents receive the Student Aid Report (SAR), verifying the financial aid information on the original FAFSA, a copy will be provided to verify that the requirement of Good Faith Effort has been completed. The Program Coordinator will place the copy in the student's CATS + file.

X. Using CATS + Program Funds

Once a student completes all of the CATS + Program requirements and is certified by the high school principal, the graduating student will be eligible to receive CATS + Program funds. The following guidelines will apply to the use of CATS + Program funds:

1. A student will receive this incentive for up to sixty (60) college/technical school hours at a rate determined by the Lesterville R-IV School District Board of Education.
2. A student must enroll and attend as a full-time student in a college or technical school.
3. A student must complete the sixty (60) hours as a full-time student within three (3) years after graduation from Lesterville R-IV High School.

XI. Combining A+ and CATS+

Students who meet the qualifications for both A+ Scholarship Program and CATS+ Tuition Assistance Program may use both programs under the following conditions:

1. Complete all of the requirements to qualify for both programs prior to graduating high school.
2. Attend an A+ qualifying community college or technical school in Missouri after graduation.
3. Maintain the post-high school requirements for both A+ and CATS+ while attending college or technical school.
4. A+ and CATS+ may not be used during the same semester. A+ will be used while the student is enrolled in the community college or technical school.
5. CATS+ Extension: CATS+ tuition assistance availability will be extended from (4 semesters in 3 years) to (4 semesters in 4 years) for those who use A+ and CATS+ combined. The following conditions to extend CATS+ availability apply:
 - a. A+ must be used for the first 2 years unless a student obtains an Associate's Degree in less than 2 years in order to extend CATS+ availability.
 - b. All post-secondary requirements for CATS+ must be maintained during the time the student uses A+ in order to extend CATS+ availability.
 - c. CATS+ will not be extended to the 4th year if the student has not obtained an Associate's Degree within 2 years or is still enrolled in a community college after the second year. (3 year availability will apply).

XII. Recognition for CATS + Award

It is essential that students who successfully complete all of the requirements of the CATS + Program receive special recognition for their achievements. The following recognitions will apply:

1. A list of students who meet the CATS + Program requirements will be submitted to the local newspaper.
2. Students who meet the requirements of the CATS + Program will be recognized at the end-of-the-year awards assembly.
3. Students who meet the requirements of the CATS + Program will be presented with a medal of accomplishment and recognized during their graduation ceremony.

CATS + Award Contract

Student financial assistance will be available for a period of three years after graduation from Lesterville R-IV High School.

To be eligible, each student must enter into a written agreement with the Lesterville R-IV School during the last three years prior to high school graduation. (2 years for transfer students) Each student must also:

1. Enroll in and attend Lesterville High School continuously for his/her junior and senior years and meet all other qualifications outlined within the program.
2. Maintain at least a **3.0 cumulative Grade Point Average** on a 4.0 scale.
3. Maintain a cumulative **96% attendance** record for all four years of high school.
4. Perform **75 hours** of unpaid, approved tutoring and/or community service.
5. Maintain a record of **good citizenship** and avoidance of unlawful use of drugs and alcohol.
6. Make a **good faith effort** to first secure all available federal post-secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.
7. Apply for a minimum of **ten (10) scholarships. Five (5) of those scholarships must be from the State/National Scholarship list. Students Must Apply for All Applicable Local Scholarships. A copy needs to be submitted to the Program Coordinator.**
8. Attend the Lesterville R-IV **Alumni Banquet** his/her graduation year and each year in which he/she receives financial assistance through the CATS + Program.

To maintain eligibility for reimbursement after graduation, each student participating in the CATS + Program must during the three year period of financial assistance eligibility:

1. Enroll and attend on a full time basis a college or technical school.
2. Maintain a **2.5 Grade Point Average** while attending college or technical school.
3. Complete a **Follow-up Survey** administered by the Lesterville R-IV School District.
4. Attend the Lesterville R-IV Alumni Banquet. (see #8 above)

Disclaimer and Precaution: Official CATS + Award status will be determined in May of each school year. Tuition reimbursement is contingent upon local funding and is subject to change by a decision of the Lesterville R-IV School District Board of Education. Program policies and procedures are subject to review and modifications made as deemed appropriate by the Lesterville R-IV School District Board of Education. Eligible students must apply and make a good faith effort to first secure all available funds that do not require repayment before taking advantage of Program monies. Local scholarships will not limit tuition assistance. Students who violate the school discipline (see citizenship requirements) and/or use drugs/alcohol will forfeit the CATS + reimbursement.

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent: _____ **Date:** _____

Program Coordinator: _____ **Date:** _____

Scholarship List

The following list contains State / National Scholarships as well as Local Scholarships for which students may apply. The list is not all inclusive of all scholarships available; however, the State / National Scholarships listed below are the scholarships for which the CATS+ student must apply in order to meet the five (5) required from that category. The list is subject to change as scholarships become available.

Scholarship Requirement: Each CATS+ student must apply for a minimum of ten (10) scholarships. **Five (5) of those scholarships must be from the State / National Scholarship list. Students Must Apply for All Applicable Local Scholarships** If a student applies for any scholarship not on the lists, the scholarship must be approved by the CATS+ coordinator in order for it to count towards the minimum ten. **A copy needs to be submitted to the Program Coordinator** Students are encouraged to apply for as many scholarships as possible. Local Scholarships awarded do not have any effect on CATS+ financial awards. ***Application deadlines must be met in order to count towards the scholarship requirement!**

State / National Scholarships (Must Apply for 5)	Local Scholarships
American Legion Burger King Coca-Cola Dept. of Natural Resources Educational Communications Foundation Elks National Foundation ESA Foundation Scholarship Horatio Alger Scholarship LEAP (Accounting) Mid-East Missouri Contractors Missouri Society of Prof. Surveyors Missouri Bankers Foundation Missouri Insurance Education Foundation Missouri United School Insurance Council John Dennis (MO Sheriff's Assoc.) Masonic Scholarship Fund of Missouri Missouri's Teacher Education Scholarship Missouri's Minority Teaching Scholarship John T. Belcher (MSBA) National Defense Transportation Assoc. Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Southeast Missouri Mine Safety Assoc. Urban Flight and Rural Needs Scholarship Wal-Mart Scholarship James L. and Nellie M. Westlake Scholarship National BETA Club Scholarship Missouri State BETA Club Scholarship	Lesterville Faculty Lesterville Alumni Ellington Rotary First State Community Bank Mid-East Contractors Jerry Nolen Scholarship Valley Springs Foxtrotters Lesterville PTO Carol Morris (Eastern Star) Black River Area Veterans Organization Shelter Insurance Lulu and Annabel Pinkely Scholarship Derek Scott Watts Memorial Dustin Stulce Foster Family Shelter Insurance Lesterville Board of Education Centerville PTO/CTA Reynolds County Farm Bureau

CATS+ Community Service Request

Date of Request: _____

CATS+ Student's Name: _____ Grade Yr. _____

Date of Activity: _____ Location of Activity: _____

Contact Person for Activity: _____

Briefly describe the activity and its benefits to the community and/or school:

Approximate Number of Hours for the Project: _____

- e. Service hours that are expected or required as part of any school, civic, and/or private organization will not count towards the requirements of the CATS + Program.
- f. Any CATS + student receiving payment and/or gifts of monetary value will not receive credit for the service hours for the activity.
- g. Service activities for family members are strongly discouraged and may not be approved.
- h. It is the responsibility of the CATS + student to seek out, submit for approval, and complete any and all service activities.

Approved _____ Declined _____
Signature of CATS+ Coordinator

CATS+ Community Service (Completed)

CATS+ Student's Name: _____ Grad Yr. _____

Activity: _____

Date of Activity: _____ Location: _____

Person in Charge: _____

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hrs.	Signature of Person in Charge I certify the CATS+ student has adequately completed the activity for no pay and the time is accurate.

CATS+ Student's Signature

Date

CATS+ Coordinator's Signature

Date