

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

### AGENDA ITEM

Private High Schools Designated as A+ Eligible  
Coordinating Board for Higher Education  
April 6, 2017

### DESCRIPTION

With the enactment of SB 638 (2016) during the 2016 legislative session, Missouri's non-public high schools became eligible for designation as A+ high schools. This makes students attending those schools potentially eligible for the A+ Scholarship Program. The intent of this agenda item is to provide an update on the designation process and the steps MDHE staff is taking to incorporate students graduating from those schools into the program.

### Background

Senate Bill 638 allows nonpublic high schools to submit applications to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for A+ designation. It also provides that students who graduate from those schools are eligible to receive reimbursement for tuition and required fees at eligible A+ postsecondary institutions as long as they satisfy the student eligibility requirements. Specifically, the following language was added to the A+ authorizing statute (Subsection 160.545.3, RSMo).

*Any nonpublic school in this state may apply to the state board of education for certification that it meets the requirements of this section subject to the same criteria as public high schools. Every nonpublic school that applies and has met the requirements of this section shall have its students eligible for reimbursement of postsecondary education under subsection 8 of this section on an equal basis to students who graduate from public schools that meet the requirements of this section.*

### Implementation

Since the legislation became effective, DESE and MDHE staff have been working to prepare for the change. In fall 2016, DESE established the application process for the nonpublic institutions and provided notification regarding the statutory change and the timeline for designation.

As part of the normal outreach efforts relating to this program, MDHE staff has participated in several workshops and training sessions focused on ensuring nonpublic high schools have information about program participation and student eligibility. These sessions have been held at locations across the state and included participation by a wide variety of nonpublic school representatives.

### Current Status

At its March 14, 2017, meeting, the State Board of Education unanimously designated 57 nonpublic high schools as A+ high schools. In response, MDHE staff have reached out to each of the newly designated high schools to provide information about program operations and requirements, to provide a template for the "A+ stamp" used to indicate on a student's transcript

that they have met the eligibility requirements, and to request some information about the school's 2017 graduating class.

Consistent with past policy, 2017 graduates of these schools are considered eligible for the scholarship program since the schools were officially designated prior to graduation, as long as the students meet all of the program requirements. The information we have requested will assist the department in making projections for the 2017-2018 award year relating to both growth in student participation and in the funding requirements for the program.

**Conclusion**

While funding for the A+ program remains an area of interest and concern, the MDHE continues to work diligently to ensure graduates of the newly designated schools will be able to move seamlessly into the scholarship component of the program. As the A+ programs at these schools become more mature, we expect to see continued growth in the A+ Scholarship program and will need to monitor the financial impact of this change closely.

**STATUTORY REFERENCE**

Section 160.545, RSMo – A+ Schools Program

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

This is an information item only.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Attachment A – Nonpublic schools designated as A+ eligible

Archbishop O'Hara High School  
Barat Academy  
Bishop Dubourg High School  
Blue Ridge Christian School  
Calvary Lutheran High School  
Cardinal Ritter College Prep  
Christian High School  
Cor Jesu Academy  
Cristo Rey Kansas City High School  
Crosspoint Christian School  
Dayspring Christian School  
De Smet Jesuit High School  
Duchesne High School  
El Dorado Christian School  
Father Tolton Catholic High School  
Gloria Deo Academy  
Grace Classical Academy  
Greenwood Laboratory School  
Heartland Christian School  
Helias Catholic High School  
Incarnate Word Academy  
Islamic School of Greater Kansas City  
John F. Kennedy Catholic High School  
Lutheran High School South  
Lutheran High School North  
Lutheran High School St. Charles  
Marshfield Christian School  
McAuley Catholic High School  
Missouri Military Academy

Mountain Grove Christian Academy  
Neosho Christian School  
Nerinx Hall High School  
Norte Dame de Sion High School  
North County Christian School  
Northland Christian School  
Notre Dame High School  
Our Savior Christian Academy  
Park Avenue Christian School  
Rosati-Kain High School  
Sacred Heart High School  
Saxony Lutheran High School  
Springfield Catholic High School  
St. Dominic High School  
St. Francis Borgia Regional High School  
St. John Vianney High School  
St. Joseph Christian High School  
St. Joseph's Academy  
St. Mary's High School  
St. Pius X High School-Kansas City  
St. Pius X High School-St. Louis  
St. Teresa's Academy  
St. Vincent High School  
Summit Christian Academy  
The Lutheran High School of Kansas City  
Trinity Catholic High School  
Trinity Christian Academy  
Valle Catholic High School