

TRACKING PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT PATTERNS OF
MISSOURI A+ PROGRAM-ELIGIBLE GRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

The Missouri A+ Schools Program is primarily a high school improvement program that includes a post-secondary financial incentive to encourage student participation. This statewide cohort study tracked a Missouri A+ Schools Program cohort's in-state public post-secondary experience. The study was grounded in post-secondary access literature and previous studies of statewide scholarship programs. Particular emphasis was placed on the influence of student demographic characteristics (Pell-eligible, racial/ethnic status, and first-generation) upon post-secondary enrollment patterns.

The A+ Schools Program incentive stipulates enrollment at a Missouri two-year public institution. The findings suggested that the majority of A+ students were not Pell-eligible, first-generation, or minority. However, the proportion of students who enrolled in post-secondary education between demographic groups was quite similar. The researcher noted that enrollment flow was directed to two-year institutions. Measures of academic preparation accounted for more variance in enrollment choices than demographic characteristics.

Minority students were found to be the most at-risk demographic group. Pell-eligible students were also found to be at-risk. However, there were no significant findings with regard to first-generation students. Rather, first-generation students performed at or above rates of students who were not first-generation. Overall, measures of academic preparation were stronger indicators of student enrollment behaviors than were demographic characteristics.