

Introduction

A+ Schools of North Carolina began in 1993 with two pilot schools that were the inspiration for the development of the current statewide network of A+ schools. Initial implementation is a three-year process, after which schools continue to work with A+ staff to collaboratively plan professional development to sustain and strengthen their A+ school over time. A+ Schools of North Carolina also works with other states to develop statewide A+ networks, or to develop one or two schools as pilot A+ schools for their district, region, or state. A+ staff will assist in planning the scope and development of your initiative.

Overview of Key Components of Implementation

A+ Institutes: While becoming an A+ school is a process that involves the entire school over several years, the key event that launches a school into their first year of A+ implementation is a five-day A+ Summer Institute for all staff members. The A+ Schools five-day institute is designed to prepare your staff, including administrators, classroom teachers, special area teachers, and teacher assistants, to begin implementing the eight A+ Essentials™, the key philosophical commitments made by all A+ schools. More than 20 years of program evaluations from teams of researchers and participants have identified the five-day institute as a transformative process and the primary change agent in becoming an A+ school.

In years two and three of A+ implementation, schools attend a three-day, whole-staff summer A+ conference. In subsequent years, schools attend one-, two-, or three-day summer conferences as needed and as resources indicate.

Onsite and Online Professional Development: During the first three years of implementation, A+ Schools offers onsite professional development designed specifically for schools new to A+ practice and philosophy. After the implementation period, schools are offered onsite or online professional development as needed that is planned collaboratively with individual schools. Throughout the process, schools learn to conduct self-assessments to determine their level of A+ implementation and growth, as well as their particular needs and goals for each year.

A+ Network: One of the benefits of being an A+ school is the networking that occurs, providing mutual support and opportunities for resourcing and shared practice as each school develops their unique creative, engaging learning environment. In North Carolina, and in other states with A+ schools, we have developed strong A+ networks of A+ principals, A+ Coordinators, A+ teachers, and A+ Fellows (professional development facilitators) who can offer mentoring, support, connections, and resources for a wide range of A+ practices and challenges.

A+ Network Events: It is expected that the principal and A+ Coordinator(s) from each school attend bi-annual A+ Leadership Meetings which take place in North Carolina. A+ Schools also offers a New Teacher Training for staff who have been unable to attend A+ PD. These dates are provided well in advance, and A+ Schools covers the costs of substitutes and hotels. Out-of-state schools cover the cost of travel. Schools are also expected to maintain regular communication with A+ staff, participate in A+ Liaison visits twice per year, occasionally allow pre-scheduled visitors to their school, and keep abreast of current happenings in the A+ network.

Estimated Costs

Below is a timeline and overview of the estimated costs for professional development and participation in the A+ Schools network. Please note that A+ Schools is often able to offer financial support for new schools with demonstrated financial need, and when financial support is available, costs will be re-negotiated to reflect any available discount. Multi-year contracts are acceptable as needed.

ESTIMATED COSTS TO SCHOOL/DISTRICT

PLANNING AND PRE-APPLICATION MEETING

- Information sessions for potential new A+ schools
- School site visit and/or day of observation at A+ Summer Institute for potential school leaders
- Attendance at fall A+ Leadership Meeting
- Pre-application meeting for teams from potential A+ schools
- Planning meeting(s) and pre-application support with A+ Schools staff, as needed

ESTIMATED PRE-PLANNING COSTS — No Cost to School, A+ Schools Covers Costs \$ 00

*Additional travel costs (mileage, meals) and stipends, if provided, are covered by school/district

YEAR ONE

- 2025 five-day A+ Summer Institute for entire school staff
*Estimated costs - may adjust up or down based on size of school staff.
Note that estimate does not include overnight accommodations. Travel, additional meals, and stipends, if provided, are the responsibility of the school/district. \$26,000
- Two full-day professional development sessions (onsite or online) during the 2025-2026 school year \$ 5,000
- Spring and Fall A+ Leadership Meetings cost of travel
- Fall New A+ Teacher Training cost of travel
- Pre-Conference School Survey - spring no cost

ESTIMATED TOTAL YEAR ONE \$31,000

YEAR TWO

- 2026 three-day A+ Summer Conference for entire school staff
*Estimated costs - may adjust up or down based on size of school staff.
Note that estimate does not include overnight accommodations. Travel, additional meals, and stipends, if provided, are the responsibility of the school/district. \$17,000
- Two half or full days of onsite or online follow-up PD during 2026-2027 school year (estimated costs) \$ 5,000
- Spring and Fall A+ Leadership Meetings cost of travel
- Fall New A+ Teacher Training cost of travel
- Pre-Conference School Survey - spring no cost

ESTIMATED TOTAL YEAR 2 \$22,000

YEAR THREE

- 2027 three-day A+ Summer Conference for entire school staff
*Estimated costs - may adjust up or down based on size of school staff.
Note that estimate does not include overnight accommodations. Travel, additional meals, and stipends, if provided, are the responsibility of the school/district. \$17,000
- One half or full day of onsite or online follow-up PD during 2027-2028 school year \$ 2,500
- Spring and Fall A+ Leadership Meetings cost of travel
- Fall New A+ Teacher Training cost of travel
- Pre-Conference School Survey - spring no cost

ESTIMATED TOTAL EACH YEAR, YEAR 2 \$19,500

ESTIMATED TOTAL THREE-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION **\$72,500

**A+ Schools contributes approximately \$25,000 per school in services, events, and materials over the three-year implementation period, not including additional financial support.

ADDITIONAL COSTS TO SCHOOL/DISTRICT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

a. **BOARD AND LODGING FOR SCHOOL STAFF**

When schools must travel to attend an institute or conference, board and lodging is additional to the costs listed above. For budgeting purposes, estimate \$90 per day for each person attending (\$450 total for five-day, \$270 total for three-day). This would cover the costs for double occupancy hotel rooms, breakfast, and dinner for each attendee. Lunch is included in the institute/conference cost projection, and occasionally the hotel includes breakfast.

b. **MILEAGE, TRAVEL EXPENSES, AND STIPENDS FOR SCHOOL STAFF**

Other budget items paid with school funds could include reimbursement for school staff mileage/travel expenses, and payment of stipends for those attending the institute/conference, based on district policy of each school.

*Even if funding support is available from A+ Schools, it cannot be used to cover the costs for mileage/travel expenses or staff stipends.

NORTH CAROLINA NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Other costs to the school beyond the summer institute/conference are the expenses of participating in A+ network activities. While most A+ meeting/event costs are paid for by A+ Schools, the school should allow some budgeting for travel expenses as follows:

1. Fall – Statewide A+ Leadership Meeting (required attendance) and New Teacher Training
2. Spring – Regional A+ Leadership Meetings (required attendance)
3. Site visits to other A+ schools for staff or leadership

Each A+ school/district would cover the following meeting costs: travel expenses to attend network meetings (mileage, additional meals), costs for teacher stipends, if applicable, costs for substitutes or travel to visit other A+ schools.

A+ Schools of North Carolina covers the following costs annually:

- A+ network meetings, including facilitation by program staff, meeting space, materials, and lunch.
- New A+ Teacher Training, including facilitation, meeting space, materials, and lunch.
- Substitute pay so staff can attend A+ network meetings (maximum allowances apply).
- Overnight accommodations (double occupancy) for those traveling long distance to attend A+ network meetings (maximum one night).
- A+ Liaison support via bi-annual visits, access to A+ LiveBinder, A+ U, online professional development, and other tools and resources.

NOTE: When training multiple schools in the same district simultaneously, there will be an 18% discount on the costs.