



August 2021

TO: Rochester Area Middle School Principals
FROM: Scott Kroner, Academic Challenge Bowl Director
Ron Lohrman, Interscholastic Chess League Executive Director
RE: Sign-up/registration for the 2021-2022 school year

Preparations are now underway for the upcoming 2021-2022 season of Academic Challenge Bowl and the Interscholastic Chess League (ICL) programs; **a season that follows on the heels of a year unlike any other in our history.**

As you may know, Academic Challenge Bowl is a quiz bowl-style, academic team competition that effectively serves as a modified-level (grades 6, 7 and 8) version of the high school quiz bowl program MasterMinds. The ACB program gives students with academic strengths the opportunity to extend those talents against some of the brightest from other local schools. ACB's partner — Interscholastic Chess League — allows students a chance to test their analytical skills in the classic game of logic and strategy against the talents of students from other schools.

Despite being unable to meet in-person for the 2020-2021 school year, complete seasons for both the Chess and ACB programs were held. Utilizing Zoom as a communications tool, and using free web-based applications — www.lichess.org for Chess and www.buzzin.live for ACB — we were able to complete a full regular season of interscholastic competitions, including playoffs. During a school year when so many extracurricular activities were dramatically scaled back or just outright cancelled, our programs gave students an opportunity to be participate and be involved.

In-person play remains the gold standard for both chess and quiz bowl. But recognizing that COVID and its variants remain a concern, we want to assure you that we are taking necessary steps to make our programs as vibrant and safe as we can. As such, until such time as health officials deem it unnecessary, we will be enforcing mask-wearing for participants in our programs. At our high school-level competitions, we are requiring mandatory vaccinations. However, because many middle schoolers may not have access to the vaccine, we feel we should not enact that requirement. Should a vaccine for younger participants be available, we may introduce that requirement. We know there may be some push-back from parents — especially if/when the vaccine part becomes a reality— but given that our in-person events bring together students from multiple schools, we believe the prudent course is to require that all participants will wear masks when necessary, and be vaccinated if/when possible.

Furthermore, if circumstances make in-person play for either program an unacceptably risky situation, we will convert to remote play until such time as officials deem it reasonable to resume in-person play. Having completed a full season of remote play, we know how to do it, and do it effectively.

Recognizing that schools/districts are facing unusual financial stress, the cost for this year's programs are being **frozen at previous year's levels**. The fee for Academic Challenge Bowl for the 2021-2022 season remains at **\$483/team** The chess fee for schools playing in a middle school league still stands at **\$198**.

To register and participate in ACB or Chess this year, the enclosed registration form should be completed and returned to CYPRAS. Forms should be received by **Friday, October 15, 2021** by mail, fax or e-mail. The annual scheduling meeting for coaches, which sets the dates for competitions, will be held shortly thereafter.

Academic Challenge Bowl and Interscholastic Chess are great programs to offer to your students and the time has never been better to join some of the most popular academic programs around. If you have any questions about ACB, please contact Scott Kroner at 585-473-0864 or at nyacb1@gmail.com. For the ICL, contact Ron Lohrman of the Rochester Chess Center at 585-442-2430 or at chesscenter@rochester.rr.com. The ACB web site also offers answers to a host of questions: www.nymasterminds.com/acb, as does the chess web site: www.nychess.org/league

We hope you'll consider joining this year and we look forward to receiving your registration!