



CYPRAS, Inc. and Rochester Chess Center
221 Norris Dr.
Rochester, NY 14610



August, 2025

TO: Buffalo Area Public Middle School Principals

FROM: Scott Kroner, Academic Challenge Bowl Director
Shelby Lohrman, Interscholastic Chess League Executive Director

RE: Sign-up/registration for the 2025-2026 school year

Preparations are now underway for the upcoming 2025-2026 season of Academic Challenge Bowl and the Interscholastic Chess League (ICL) programs; **a season which is looking forward to expanded growth in participation as schools continue to expand extracurricular offerings.**

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.

We are pleased to announce that schools will again have two ways to sign up for the programs: as a service of the Erie 1 BOCES or through the non-profit CYPRAS (which directs both programs). On the enclosed registration form, there are boxes to indicate the vendor for billing. There are no other forms that must be submitted (although non-component districts that opt to register with BOCES will need to submit a cross-contract form which can be provided by their home BOCES).

If you are unsure of interest among your students, you can schedule a demonstration where we come to your school -- either during lunch or after school -- and show your students what the programs are like. If you are interested, please contact Scott Kroner as soon as possible to schedule a demonstration.

The fee for Academic Challenge Bowl for the 2025-2026 season will be at **\$525/team**. The cost for a team in the Interscholastic Chess League stands at **\$234 (if in an exclusively middle school league); otherwise the fee is \$381 (if playing in a league with high school teams)**. Non-component Erie 1 BOCES schools that sign up through BOCES are responsible for cross-contract fees. Schools signing up through CYPRAS may be eligible for some discounts in addition to avoiding cross-contract fees. Transportation remains the responsibility of each individual school although coordinated scheduling — having ACB and Chess in the same league — does allow schools to save on transportation. **One bus; two teams!** That is not a requirement; teams from the same school may choose to participate in different leagues.

To register and participate in ACB and/or Chess this year, the enclosed registration form should be completed and returned to CYPRAS. Forms should be received by **Friday, October 24, 2025** by mail, fax or e-mail. The annual scheduling meeting for coaches, which sets the dates for competitions, will be held shortly thereafter. If you are considering working with another school to field a joint/shared team -- something that is permitted -- let us know. Previous non-participants to ACB will still receive a new school orientation. Participating schools should forward the pre-scheduling form to the coach/advisor for submission.

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 acb@nymasterminds.com. For the ICL, contact the Rochester Chess Center at 585-442-2430 or at chessleague@chessset.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 join this year and we look forward to receiving your registration!