



August 2026

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 2026-2027 school year

Preparations are now underway for the upcoming 2026-2027 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 their 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 sister program — the 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 announcing a couple of behind-the-scenes changes to help deal with concerns we had last year. This year there is a new billing information form which we are requiring participants to submit along with their registration form. Our hope is that this will resolve billing problems we encountered last year (a continuation of issues that we have been dealing with since COVID). This financial form does not have to be submitted at the same time as the regular registration form or the prescheduling form but schools cannot be fully registered, nor be scheduled for games, until that form has been received.

With the start of classes not far away, we hope that your school will make plans to join us for another fun and engaging year of interscholastic competitions. Both ACB and Chess have been important parts of the extracurricular offerings at dozens of schools for years.

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 student the programs. If you are interested, check the appropriate box on the enclosed form and return it as soon as possible or call or e-mail us to schedule a demonstration.

The fee for Academic Challenge Bowl for the 2026-2027 season will be at **\$542/team**. The cost for a team in the Interscholastic Chess League stands at **\$245 (if in an exclusively middle school league); otherwise the fee is \$393 (when playing in a league with high school teams)**. 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 23, 2026** by mail, fax or e-mail. The annual scheduling meeting, 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 by e-mail at acb@nymasterminds.com. For the ICL, contact the Rochester Chess Center at 585-442-2430 or at league@nychess.org. More information is online at our web sites: www.nymasterminds.com/acb and www.nychess.org/league

We hope you'll consider joining this year and we look forward to hearing back from you!