



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



August, 2025

TO: Buffalo Area High School Principals
FROM: Scott Kroner, MasterMinds Commissioner
Shelby Lohrman, Interscholastic Chess League Executive Director
RE: Sign-up/registration for the 2025-2026 school year

Planning is now underway for the newest season of the MasterMinds and the Interscholastic Chess League (ICL) programs; **a season which looks forward to a continued expansion of participating schools.** MasterMinds is a team-based, academic quiz bowl-style competition similar to the old College Bowl program. It provides a competitive structure to recognize the strengths of academically talented students. The Interscholastic Chess League allows students to test their analytical skills in the classic game of logic and strategy against the talents of the brightest students from other schools.

We are pleased to announce that schools will again have the option to sign up for MasterMinds and/or Chess in a couple of ways: as a service of the Erie1 BOCES (by cross-contract if you are a non-component district) or through the non-profit CYPRAS (which directs both programs). On the enclosed registration form, you will find a box to indicate the vendor for billing. There are no other forms that districts must provide.

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 MasterMinds and Chess have been important parts of the extracurricular offerings at dozens of schools around the Greater Buffalo area for years; all part of the more than 100 schools across upstate NY that participated last year.

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 MasterMinds for the 2025-2026 season will be at **\$822/team** and the cost for the optional JV program is **\$377** (with varsity participation as a prerequisite). The cost for a team in the Interscholastic Chess League stands at **\$381**. Transportation remains the responsibility of each individual school although coordinated scheduling — having MasterMinds 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 play in different leagues.

To register and participate in MasterMinds and/or Chess for the 2025-2026 season, just one of the enclosed registration forms should be completed and returned, with a requested deadline of **Friday, September 19, 2025**. If you are considering working with another school to field a joint/shared team -- something that is permitted -- let us know. Previous non-participants in MasterMinds will still receive a new school orientation. Participating schools should forward the pre-scheduling form to the coach/advisor for submission.

As schools continue to restore or even expand programming beyond pre-COVID levels, now a great time to become involved! For any questions about MasterMinds, contact Scott Kroner at 585-473-0864 or by e-mail at masterminds@nymasterminds.com. For Chess, contact Shelby Lohrman of the Rochester Chess Center at 585-442-2430 or chessleague@chessset.com. You can also check out www.nymasterminds.com and www.nychess.org for additional information.

We hope to see your school offer your students the opportunity to participate in these popular programs, and we look forward to hearing back from you!