

# Resources for middle school students

## Academic prep

**A Better Chance (ABC)** places top middle and high school students of color in highly ranked independent day schools, boarding schools and public schools. Students with at least a B+ average who are ranked in the top 10% of their class are eligible. Candidates must apply one year in advance.

**Apex for Youth** pairs middle and high school students, primarily Asian-Americans and recent immigrant students with mentors who meet with them twice a month, help with homework and join them in sports and games,. There a SAT prep program and and a general college prep program as well.

**Breakthrough New York at the Town School** is a tuition-free, year-round enrichment program for highly motivated middle-school students with limited educational opportunities. There is a two-year commitment, including a rigorous academic summer program and enrichment classes, museum trips, mentoring and high school placement guidance throughout the school year.

**The Center for Leadership and College Preparation**, affiliated with **Bank Street College of Education**, offers educational opportunities both to high-achieving students and to struggling students. The program serves kids in 5th to 12th grades, giving them access to a wide range of academic resources, college prep classes, counseling, mentoring and activities, as well as individual attention and support. Students are admitted in the 5th, 7th and 9th grades.

**The Double Discovery Center** at **Columbia University** houses educational programs serving low-income and first-generation college-bound students. **Talent Search** is a career and college counseling program for students in 7th-12th grade.

**Harlem Education Activities Fund (HEAF)** offers intensive academic enrichment courses, test preparation, and social and personal development activities for students after school, on Saturdays and during the summer. The goal is to assist college-bound students from educationally and/or economically disadvantaged communities in developing intellectual and life skills. Programs are specific to middle and high school students.

**The Oliver Scholars Program** selects highly motivated African American and Latino 7th-graders and offers them support and guidance to gain admission to some of the Northeast's best independent schools. Support continues through the college admissions process.

**Prep for Prep**, a nonprofit group, helps high-achieving minority students attend top colleges, including Ivy League schools. There are programs for 5th-, 6th- and 7th-grade black, Latino and Asian students. The program includes a seven-week summer session and weekly Wednesday and Saturday classes.

**Summer on the Hill** at Horace Mann is an enrichment program for academically talented public school students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Students start in the 2nd grade and continue until placed in high school, participating in Saturday-morning classes during the school year and a six-week summer session. They study language arts, math and science, and learn study skills. Summer programs include fine arts, recreation and an overnight trip to the **John Dorr Nature Laboratory** in Connecticut. Summer on the Hill continues to offer support through 12th grade.

**Teak Fellows** supports students seeking to gain admissions to top high schools and colleges. Students who are citizens or permanent residents, have proof of financial need and have scored above 90 percent on tests and in class may apply by October of their 7th-grade year. The program runs from the summer after 7th grade until college placement. Only 25 students are accepted each year.

**United Neighborhood Houses** has a complete list of neighborhood houses and community centers in New York City, many of which offer college counseling.

**Harlem RBI** provides inner-city youth with opportunities to Play, Learn and Grow. They use the power of teams to coach, teach and inspire youth to recognize their potential and realize their dreams.

**The EHTP University Program (EHTP-UP)** is a dynamic college readiness program for middle school and high school students. EHTP-UP addresses a wide range of college preparation and admissions, including: early college awareness in grades 6-8, intensive support with the high school admissions process, high school credit accumulation tracking, attractive enrichment courses, Regents and SAT test preparation, college application assistance, financial aid coordination, mentoring and counseling.

## Arts

**Project Art** is an after-school, weekend and summer visual arts education program that invites art students to explore art in a bold and unique way. The program unites young artists with practicing professional and resident artists from around the world. At the end of the summer term and the school year, project-based student works are displayed in New York City and around the world.

**Alliance for Young Artists & Writers** and its regional affiliates reach out to schools across the nation to identify accomplished artists and writers in grades 7-12. About 1,000 students earn national awards, including more than \$1.5 million in scholarships. Student work is exhibited, published and presented to a national audience.

**CUNY Creative Arts Team (CAT) Youth Theatre** creates original productions from the ideas of its members. They aim to amplify the collective voice of the group while creating social and culturally relevant theater of the highest possible standard.

**Free Arts NYC** uses painting, dance, drama, writing, music, sculpture, photography and other creative outlets to help children express themselves and gain confidence and self-esteem through **Free Arts Days, Weekly Mentor Program, Parents and Children Together with Art (PACT)** and **Cultural Enrichment Opportunities**.

**High 5** is dedicated to making the arts affordable for teens by offering \$5 tickets to hundreds of dance, music, theater, film, museum and spoken-word events. Its **Teen Reviewers and Critics Program (TRaC)** includes weekly seminars and attendance at performances where kids learn how to evaluate and write about what they see. Limited middle school participation - students must be 13.

**InterSchool Orchestras of New York (ISO)** is a youth orchestra program based in New York City offering seven graded orchestras, symphonic band, flute choir, and chamber music to beginning through advanced students, age 6-19. Orchestras are comprised of more than 300 students representing a multitude of ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds. All students in the ISO Symphony are on full scholarship to guarantee there are no financial barriers to a student's ability to participate. Application and Registration fees may be re-imbursed. Apply for an audition

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art** offers a program of free classes held after school and on weekends for families and kids from 18 months to 12.

**YKidsARTS**, sponsored by the **Alliance for the Arts**, lists arts and cultural activities available to kids and families, including many neighborhood institutions, after-school activities and more.

**The Summer Arts Institute** is a tuition-free, intensive, four-week arts program for New York City public school students entering 8th to 12th grades, held at **Frank Sinatra School of the Arts** in Queens. Students major in dance, theater, vocal music, instrumental music, visual art, film or photography. Admission is by application and audition.

**Wingspan Arts** offers a tuition-free Summer Theater Conservatory for incoming 7th- to 12th-graders. Current 6th- to 11th-graders should log on to the website for information and application. Auditions are held in January and February. High school students put on a play and a musical; middle schoolers write and produce an original work.

## Math and science

**ExploraVision** encourages kids to create and explore a vision of future technology. Students work in small groups, along with a team coach and an optional mentor, simulating research and development teams. Students compete in regional competitions, and the top 24 teams go to a national competition. Prizes include up to \$10,000 in savings bonds.

**Camp G.O.A.L.S. (Greater Opportunities Advancing Leadership and Science) for Girls.** An application-based free six-week summer camp for current 8th- and 9th-grade girls from NYC public schools. About 85 accepted students will build proficiency in math and science. Through a partnership with the Rutgers School of Engineering and Science Buddies, girls will experience hands-on activities and field studies focused on aeronautics, engineering, marine science, medical science and space/astronomy. Classes take place at Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. Contact Shay Saleem at 646-381-5168 or [CampGOALS@intrepidmuseum.org](mailto:CampGOALS@intrepidmuseum.org).

**New York Hall of Science in Queens** offers free admission September through June on Fridays from 2 to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 10 to 11 a.m.

## Essay contests

**Alliance for Young Artists and Writers** and its regional affiliates reach out to schools across the nation to identify accomplished artists and writers in grades 7 to 12. About 1,000 students earn national awards, including more than \$1.5 million dollars in scholarships. Student work is exhibited, published and presented to a national audience.

**Creative Communication** sponsors **essay-** and **poetry-**writing contests for students in grades 4-12. Students compete against their peers in both age and location, and winners share more than \$70,000 in prizes. Selected entries are published in a hard-bound anthology.

History, politics and journalism

**Children's PressLine** produces journalistic stories created by students ages 8 to 18. Students act as reporters and editors and learn to conduct research and interviews and edit.

**HarlemLive** is an award-winning, critically acclaimed web magazine produced by teens from throughout New York City. It is a journalism, technology and leadership program that teaches students ages 13-21 how to run an online newspaper. The publication includes news articles, investigative stories, opinion pieces, personal essays, poetry, photography and video documentaries. The students organize events, conduct workshops and sit on panels, improving their networking and public-speaking skills.

**The North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad (NACLO)** is modeled after similar Linguistics Olympiads held in Eastern Europe. In these events middle and high school students learn to solve linguistic problems from dozens of the world's languages. In the process, they learn about the richness and diversity of language and exercise natural logic and reasoning abilities. No prior knowledge of particular languages or linguistics is necessary.

**Schomburg Center's Junior Scholars Program** for ages 11-17 offers a Saturday school geared toward students of African descent. Its primary goal is to ground young people in the histories and cultures of the African Diaspora. The program is an intensive, 26-week series of Saturday sessions, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Junior Scholars have access to resources at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. For applications or more information, contact Deirdre Hollman at 212-491-2234.

**Teens Take the City** is a program of the YMCA of Greater New York through which 500 teens from all backgrounds get involved in local government, civics and politics. The program is partly supported by the **New York City Council**, and each council member can nominate five students to participate.

**The Collectors Club of New York** sponsors a free Youth Stamp Club with monthly meetings for kids in grades 4 and up. The program welcomes experienced stamp collectors and introduces beginners to a hobby that also teaches about history, geography, famous people and events. Sessions are held beginning in September on Saturdays from 10-11/30 a.m.

## Homework help

**The Boys' Club of New York** welcomes 6- to 20-year-old boys and charges less than a dollar a year to participate in computer classes, attend summer camp, get homework help and receive dental services. The club has a location in Flushing (Queens) and two in Manhattan.

**HomeworkNYC.org** is a website run by the public libraries. The site is designed specifically to help students in grades K-12th in every area of the New York City schools curriculum and offers live, online assistance. Students and parents can also search for information on a variety of topics. The library site is also affiliated with the teacher's union **Dial-A-Teacher**, a helpline that allows students and parents to talk directly with a city teacher Monday through Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m./ 212-777-3380.

**The Liberty Leaders program** at Bank Street College provides support to 5th- to 12th-graders six days a week for 11 months. Students have access to a wide range of academic resources, college prep classes, counseling and enrichment activities.

## Environmental studies

**The Garden Apprentice Program at Brooklyn Botanic Garden** provides students in grades 8 to 12 with training and volunteer placements focused on gardening, environmental issues, science, leadership and career skills. Apprentices become an important part of the garden's education department.

**The New York Botanical Garden's Explainer Program** accepts middle and high school students between the ages of 13 and 17 who enjoy the outdoors and want to learn about plants, nature and science. The program offers the opportunity to learn about plants, develop new skills and receive personal mentoring. Explainers also help younger children who visit the Everett Children's Adventure Garden.

At **MillionTreesNYC** students and families can participate in citywide volunteer tree-planting and tree-care workshops. The program is a public-private initiative launched by the City of New York Parks Department and New York Restoration Project with the goal of planting a million new trees across all five boroughs over the next decade.

## After school

Many schools have after-school programs to accommodate children of parents who work. Some of these programs are free, but most charge a fee. Some after-school programs are held in the school building, and others are at community organizations. Call your child's school to find out about after-school programs

**Harlem Educational Activities Fund** is a not-for-profit supplemental education and youth development organization that identifies scholars in middle school and supports them until they are successfully admitted to four-year colleges through a variety of after-school, Saturday and summer programs.

**Out-of-School Time**, New York City's official after-school initiative, features more than 550 programs that provide a mix of academic, recreational and cultural activities for young people after school, during the holidays and in the summer.

**Partnership for After-School Education** provides technical support to schools and community agencies. The website lists locations of programs and what they offer.

**Police Athletic League** sponsors numerous after-school and summer programs. Program locations are listed by borough with contact information.

**The After-School Corporation** sponsors and funds programs in public schools. Its website shows maps of districts and schools where they are located.

**YMCA** has extensive after-school program options, some of which are free.

**The Beacon Program** runs school-based community centers serving children, youth and adults. There are currently 80 Beacons located throughout the city operating in the afternoons and evenings, on weekends and during school holidays, vacation periods and summer.

**Child Care Inc.** provides a referral service that helps parents locate appropriate child care and pre-kindergarten programs.

## DOE contacts

Contacting the Department of Education is hit-or-miss: some people who answer the telephones are knowledgeable and helpful while others are really not. Expect confusing and contradictory information. Our advice: pleasant persistence. Keep trying and you will eventually get the information you need. We've compiled a list of telephone number and emails that may be useful.

## Parent support line

We have found this to be the most helpful number to call for general information about your school zone, enrollment, pre-kindergarten registration and gifted and talented programs. The operators are unfailingly polite and try their best to answer your questions. Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., phone: (718) 935-2009 or (212) 374-2363.

## Main switchboard

This is the main switchboard for the **Department of Education**. If you have the name of someone you want to reach, but not his telephone number, the operators may be able to connect you. Phone: (718) 935-2000.

## Office of Pupil Transportation

For questions about school buses and Metrocards. The **Office of Pupil Transportation** has a particularly good website. Hours: Monday–Friday, 6 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., phone: (718) 392-8855.

## Office of School Food

The **Office of School Food** provides menus and applications for free and reduced-price meals.

## Department of Academic Support and Performance Service Desk

For questions about **ARIS** and **ARIS Parent Link**, periodic assessments, New York State Standardized Tests, contact the **Department of Academic Support and Performance Service Desk**. Phone: (212) 374-6646.

## Enrollment

Routine enrollment issues should be resolved at one of the city's 14 **enrollment centers** in the city. However, if you have a problem that the enrollment center can't solve—and many people do—try these people:

**Director of middle school enrollment: Sandy Ferguson**

**Director of high school enrollment: Hussham Khan**

**Executive directors of enrollment:**

Bronx: **Samantha Gouden**

Brooklyn: **Judith Butcher**

Manhattan: **Leonard Trerotola**

Queens: **Margaret Rogers**

Staten Island: **Judith Butcher**

If none of these people can help, try the **Office of Student Enrollment**, 52 Chambers Street, NY NY. The director is **Robert Sanft**.

## Gifted and talented

Most questions about **Gifted and talented programs** can be answered by the staff at the parent support line: (718) 935-2009. Another contact in the office of gifted and talented programs is **Grace Gonzales**, (212) 374-7693.

## Special education

Your child's teacher or principal should be able to answer most questions about special education. If you are new to New York City, or if your child attends a private or parochial school, contact one of the city's **10 Committees on Special Education**. Parents of children with serious disabilities may contact the superintendent of District 75, **Gary Hecht**, (212) 802-1503.

The deputy chancellor in charge of the **Office of Special Education and English Language Learners** is **Corinne Rello-Anselmi**. Call (212) 374-5766 for special education and (212) 374-6072 for English Language Learners.



## English language learners

**The Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners** has information on programs for ELLs. The deputy chancellor in charge of both English Language Learners and special education is **Corinne Rello-Anselmi**, (212) 374-6072 in the Office of Special Education and English Language Learners.