

Options for Students Who Are Falling Behind in High School – 2008-09

Every public school student in New York City should have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. But traditional high schools may not work for all students. Children who have fallen behind in school, dropped out, or who want to transfer from their current schools have options to complete their secondary education.

As a parent, you should be familiar with your child's options. Students who have fallen behind or dropped out can pursue alternate pathways to a high school diploma by enrolling in Transfer Schools or Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs). Older students (ages 17-21) can enroll in programs to help them pass the GED exam en route to college or a career. There are also a number of support services available to students who wish to remain in their current schools.

Alternative Pathways that Lead to a High School Diploma

Students in diploma-track alternative schools and programs fulfill all diploma requirements (credits and exams) with additional and personalized supports.

Transfer High Schools: Transfer Schools are small, academically-rigorous, full-time high schools for students who have been enrolled in high school for at least one year and who are behind in accumulating high school credits. Essential elements of these schools include a personalized learning environment, rigorous academic standards, student-centered pedagogy, opportunities to accelerate credit accumulation, and a focus on connections to college. Transfer Schools are equipped to serve students with zero or few credits, but specific age and credit admissions criteria vary for each school. More specific information can be found by asking your child's guidance counselor, calling a Referral Center for High School Alternatives, or visiting the Transfer Schools Web site at www.nyc.gov/schools/Offices/OMPG/TransferHighSchools.

Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs): YABCs are supportive learning environments designed for students age 17.5 or older who have been in high school for at least four years and have attained a minimum of 17 credits. They are full-time academic programs that operate in the evening and are designed specifically to meet the needs of high school students who might be considering dropping out because they are overage for their grade or because they have adult responsibilities that make attending school in the daytime difficult. The instructional model allows students to concentrate only on the credits they need for graduation. To register in a YABC program, a student must first meet with a guidance counselor at his or her current school for a counseling session and to complete required registration forms. (Students not currently registered at a NYC public high school should complete these forms at a Borough Enrollment Office.) The student should then meet with the YABC program staff to review documentation and eligibility requirements. To learn more about YABCs, go to <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/OMPG/YouthAdultBoroughCenters>.

Learning to Work

Beyond academic courses, several Transfer Schools, YABCs, and GED programs also have a work internship component called Learning to Work, which helps students stay engaged in school, or re-engage in school, through work readiness. The Learning to Work program offers in-depth job readiness and career exploration opportunities for students, as well as paid internships at selected sites. These options help students develop the skills they need to complete high school or obtain a GED *and* to gain employment or move on to post-secondary education. Learning to Work partners with community-based organizations, and together they support students with free services such as attendance outreach, individual and group counseling, tutoring, and youth development.

Alternative Pathways that Lead to a General Education Development (GED) Diploma:

A GED diploma is awarded by New York State when a student takes and passes the GED exam. The GED is a 7.5 hour test taken over two days. The exam covers the most important information in the high school curriculum, including reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students who pass the GED are eligible to attend college. Having mastered the skills and knowledge expected of a high school graduate, these students also have better job opportunities. GED preparation programs are for students aged 18 to 21. Students who are 17 and who have extenuating life circumstances can also choose to enroll in a GED program. The City offers two GED programs:

GED Plus is a citywide program intended to make full time and part time GED preparation user-friendly for students and their families. The five borough GED Plus “hubs” provide direct instruction to students who require English Language Learner, special education, and literacy supports in preparing to take the GED. GED Plus also features a large number of “spoke” sites that vary in size from 25 to over 100 students. The spokes provide GED preparation in partnership with a range of community based agencies in all five boroughs. Some sites offer vocational training, and many offer other services.

ACCESS GED is a full-time educational program for students who wish to pursue Learning to Work options such as paid internships and career exploration while they acquire the academic skills to pass the GED exam and enroll in college. ACCESS and Community Based Organization personnel work collaboratively with all students to set and achieve individual academic, workplace, and personal goals. Students must be 18-20 years old and able to attend class during regular school hours. To enroll in GED Plus or ACCESS, contact the closest Referral Center for intake and placement testing.

Support Services for High School-Aged Students:

Parents should be aware of the different programs and supports that are available to their children at their current schools or in other schools if they chose to transfer. Services are available for:

- Students who are pregnant or young parents;
- Students who are court-involved or have recently been released from detention;
- Students who are new to the US and are high school-aged;
- Students with a medical condition that limits attendance;
- Students living in temporary housing; and/or
- Students who need substance abuse treatment.

For more information about the services available to these students, talk to your child’s guidance counselor or call your nearest Referral Center.

Who to Call for More Information:

Referral Center	Address	Phone Number
Bronx	1010 Reverend James A. Polite Avenue, Bronx, NY 10459	718-842-9200
Brooklyn	832 Marcy Avenue, Room 501A, Brooklyn, NY 11216	718-636-5770
Queens	162-02 Hillside Ave, Room 109, Jamaica, NY 11432	718-739-2100
Manhattan	500 8 th Avenue, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10018	212-244-1274
Staten Island	450 St. Marks Place, Staten Island, NY 10301	718-273-3225

If you experience difficulty contacting a Referral Center, please contact the District 79 Office of Student Support Services at 917-521-3639

