



Advocates for Children of New York
Protecting every child's right to learn

Know Your Options: Alternatives for Middle & High School Students



If you haven't graduated yet, you have the right to be in school through the June after your 21st birthday. If you are struggling in your high school and need a fresh start, there are options, including transfer schools, YABCs, and high school equivalency programs.

RESTART ACADEMY

ReStart Academy is an alternative education program that serves students in 27 sites across the five boroughs. Different sites offer different supports, including behavioral health or substance abuse treatment, juvenile justice services, and a program for overage 8th graders located in DOE high schools. Each site has its own application process. For more information, visit their website at <https://www.restartacademy.org/>.

In addition to ReStart Academy, there are several other schools for overage middle school students, including New Directions and New Visions AIM charter schools, listed below. You can learn more at <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/other-ways-to-graduate/alternative-middle-schools>.

TRANSFER SCHOOLS

Transfer schools are small high schools with smaller classes and support services, including counseling. Many have credit recovery programs where students can earn credits faster than in a regular high school. Transfer school students have the same diploma options as students at regular high schools.

To find a transfer school near you, visit www.schools.nyc.gov/find-a-school and type "transfer" into the box that says, "School Name or Zip Code." Or, download this directory: www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/other-ways-to-graduate-english.

Who can attend transfer schools?

Most transfer schools are for students who have been in high school for at least one year and are behind in credits. Each school has its own admissions policy and most offer some special education services. Contact transfer schools directly to see if they can provide the services in your IEP. For more information, see: www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/transfer-school-admissions-reference-guide.

This tip sheet does not constitute legal advice. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

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How do I get into a transfer school?

Every school's application process is different, and students may apply to transfer schools throughout the school year. A typical application process has 4 steps:

- STEP 1:** Contact the school(s) directly and ask about its application process.
- STEP 2:** Send the school a copy of your transcript and other records, along with a cover letter and/or completed application form.
- STEP 3:** If the school feels you may be a good match, they will schedule an interview with you.
- STEP 4:** The school will tell you their decision. If accepted, students usually start at the beginning of the next grading period or semester.

What if I can't get into a transfer school?

Transfer schools are each in charge of their own enrollment, but they do have to follow rules. Transfer schools cannot turn you away because you have a disability or need special education services. Transfer schools are not allowed to ask for your attendance or suspension records. They are also not allowed to make you come for a trial or probationary period before you can officially start.

If you run into any of these problems, or are struggling to find a transfer school, contact the DOE's transfer school office at transferhighschools@schools.nyc.gov or 646-654-1261 ext. 9, or call AFC's Helpline.

YABCs

Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs) are evening programs for high school students who are behind in credits and have adult responsibilities that make attending school during the day difficult. Most YABCs offer classes Monday through Thursday from about 3pm until 7pm. YABC students have the same diploma options as students at regular high schools and receive a diploma from their sending high school, not from the YABC. For a list of YABC sites, go to www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/other-ways-to-graduate/young-adult-borough-centers, or visit <https://schools.nyc.gov> and search "YABC."

Who can attend YABCs?

To attend a YABC, you must be 17.5 or older, in your fifth or sixth year of high school, and have 17 or more credits. YABCs cannot turn you away because you have a disability or need special education services. If you have a disability, talk to your guidance counselor or YABC staff to make sure a YABC can provide all the special education services on your IEP.

How do you get into a YABC?

There are 3 steps to enrolling in a YABC.

- STEP 1:** Set up an appointment with your school's guidance counselor to get the necessary forms. If you are not currently enrolled in a high school, go to the Family Welcome Center to get a high school placement first. You can find a list of Family Welcome Centers here: www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enrollment-help/family-welcome-centers.
- STEP 2:** To enroll at the YABC, ask your guidance counselor to:
 - Fill out the necessary forms (called Y-1 and Y-2 forms)

- Give you a copy of your transcript
- Give you a copy of your immunization record

STEP 3: Contact YABCs near you to find out if they have space. Bring all the documents above to the YABC you want to attend. Most YABCs accept these documents between the hours of 4 and 7 pm, Monday through Thursday. Call the YABC program ahead of time to confirm.

When can I apply to YABCs?

YABCs usually take new students at the beginning of each semester. You may apply to YABCs throughout the school year; however, spots tend to fill up quickly, so register early if possible.

CHARTER TRANSFER SCHOOLS

New York City has a handful of charter schools for students who have dropped out of or fallen behind in their current high school. Many of these schools accept new students even after the school year has started. Most also have small classes, pair students with an advocate counselor, and offer internship programs. Check out the websites below for more information.

- John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy (Bronx & Lower Manhattan), www.jvlwildcat.org
- New Dawn Charter School (Downtown Brooklyn), www.ndchsbrooklyn.org
- New Visions AIM Charter High School (South Bronx and East New York, Brooklyn), www.newvisions.org/pages/aim-charter-high-schools
- New Ventures Charter School (Staten Island), www.newventurescharter.org
- Urban Dove Team Charter (South Bronx and Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn), www.udteam.org

HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAMS

High School Equivalency (HSE) programs, also called Pathways to Graduation (P2G), prepare students to take the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC). The TASC is free and replaced the GED in 2014. To earn your HSE diploma, you must pass all 5 TASC sub-tests, including a writing portion. The TASC is a difficult exam and not a ‘quick fix’ for students who are struggling to complete high school.

Who can participate in HSE programs?

Generally, you must be 18 or older to participate in HSE programs, with at least an 8th grade reading level. In some cases, 17-year-olds can enroll with parent or guardian permission. You should have at least a 5th-6th grade reading level for Pre-HSE programs. If you are having trouble keeping up with the work, consider getting tutoring or literacy services from the DOE or a community-based program.

How do I register for a HSE program?

Go to the nearest Referral Center. There, you will take a pre-test and meet with a guidance counselor to match you with the right program. For a list of Referral Centers, visit www.p2g.nyc/enroll.

When can I take the TASC?

The TASC is administered many times a year. For TASC locations, dates, and information on accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.acces.nysed.gov/hse/hse-testing-centers.

VOCATIONAL AND CAREER TRAINING

Learning to Work (LTW) is a program in transfer high schools and YABCs. LTW offers paid internships, job skills training, resume help, job coaching, and more. To participate, you must be enrolled in a YABC or transfer school.

Cooperative Technology High School (Co-op Tech) is a unique Career and Technical Education school with courses in more than 20 trades, such as plumbing, culinary arts, graphic design, and nursing. The main program is in Manhattan, with smaller programs in the other boroughs. Students attend a DOE high school or HSE program for part of the day and go to Co-op Tech to learn a trade for the rest of the day. To apply, you must be 17 or older. For details, visit www.co-optech.org.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

These programs should never turn you away because you have a disability. Students with disabilities in transfer schools, YABCs and P2G programs have the same special education rights as in any other DOE school. This includes the rights to request evaluations, have IEP meetings, and get your IEP supports, including “related services.” For example, if your IEP recommends speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy or counseling, and your transfer school, YABC, or P2G does not have the service, you can get a voucher to receive these services outside of school. The voucher is called a Related Services Authorization (RSA). For more information, see: www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/special_ed_guide.pdf.

You should not be asked to give up the supports on your IEP or 504 Plan when you enroll in a transfer school, YABC, or P2G program. Because these programs are smaller than most high schools, after you enroll, you may want to request an IEP or 504 meeting to talk about the supports you will need in the new program.

» LEARN MORE «

For more information about any of these options:

- Talk to your guidance counselor.
- Visit www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/other-ways-to-graduate/learn-about-other-ways-to-graduate.
- Go to a Referral Center. They can talk to you about transfer schools or YABCs, help you enroll in a High School Equivalency program, or help you get back into a community high school. There is a Referral Center in each borough. For a list of Referral Centers, visit www.p2g.nyc/enroll.
- If you can't get through to a Referral Center, call or email the District 79 Office of Student Support Services at (917) 521-3639 or youthhelp@schools.nyc.gov.