



Origins

The **Beyond Limits Scholars Program (BLSP)** is a middle school to high school bridge program developed by **Stamford Achieves** in collaboration with the Stamford Public Schools in response to data reflecting a persistent and significant percentage of struggling freshmen. In addition to the invaluable feedback and guidance from SPS committees, BLSP's foundation and program design was influenced by numerous articles and educational research.

Program Mission

Identify mid-tier (but statistically at-risk) middle school students prior to high school matriculation and set them on a positive course by:

- Providing critical learning and high school management skills training
- Introducing participants to district staff and upper classmen who serve as peer mentors
- Engaging their parents/guardians and encouraging ongoing communication
- Highlighting available Stamford Public School and City of Stamford resources
- Offering ongoing support to ensure a successful freshman year
- Building academic confidence and raising expectations

2014 BLSP Pilot

- 31 students recruited from five (5) district middle schools; each completed a program application, signed a program agreement and interviewed with BLSP representatives.
- Staff comprised of a Dean of Students, two (2) teachers, and a guidance counselor from each Stamford comprehensive high school.
- Welcome & orientation dinner for students and their families held in early June to review program objectives and expectations.
- One-week summer enrichment schedule (August 18-22, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm) headquartered at UConn Stamford.
- Dynamic curriculum focused on enhancing academic skills, exposing students to interesting career paths, connecting personal health to success in school, and establishing high school and long-term goals.
- Minimal extended “seat time” - no homework assignments or assessments.
- Regular student and parent feedback on specific program elements and overall satisfaction.

Ongoing Support

Program staff continues to work with our scholars and their families during their freshman year with: on-site meetings at the two primary high schools, off-site meetings (including Neighbors Link Stamford, Stamford Y, and Future 5) and ongoing bi-lingual communications. BLSP also provides free after-school, evening and weekend off-site tutoring in core subjects to complement numerous school-based resources.

Partners

Stamford Achieves closely collaborates with: Stamford Public Schools (SPS), Stamford Public Education Foundation (SPEF), Mayor's Youth Employment Program (MYEP), Stamford Family YMCA, Future 5, and The Ferguson Library. In addition to the resources of Stamford Achieves, the BLSP also gratefully acknowledges the support, including in-kind donations, of Amanda & David Russekoff, the Lone Pine Foundation, The Per and Astrid Heidenreich Family Foundation, and Purdue Pharma.

2015 Goals

- Track 2014 program students to identify opportunities for enhancing the summer programming, and to provide ongoing student support and communication with BLSP families.
- Expand program to 55-65 students.