



## Bronx students learn options at high school fair with some of city's best institutions

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BY BEN KOCHMAN

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*Photo by Ben Kochman: Eighth graders Daniel Pinzon, Jordan Ambrosio and Mark Berrera were dressed to impress at a high school fair Tuesday featuring some of the city's most high-performing schools.*

The future looks a little brighter for these Bronx bookworms.

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Most of the students from Middle School 218 and Highbridge Green Middle School hail from low-income, immigrant backgrounds and are not exposed to a full spectrum of high school choices, organizers said.

"They've never ever heard of a lot of these private schools," said Nicole Jennings, program director at WHEDCo, which put on the two-hour fair.

"They've always been something that is for someone else and not for them."

The youngsters met with representatives from dozens of top-tier private, religious, charter and border schools, including Ethical Culture Fieldston School and Riverdale Country School, which are both in the Bronx.

“There’s this high school called Riverdale, which I had kind of heard about, but I didn’t totally understand it,” said eighth-grader Ivette Sierra. “But it seems like a great opportunity.”

Officials from schools on hand said they offered a variety of financial aid to help students in a district where city statistics peg the median income from 2010-2012 at just under \$26,000 a year.

Tuition at Riverdale Country School — which boasts a bucolic Riverdale campus — rings in at \$37,000. About 20% of its graduating class got financial aid, according to the school’s website.

The fair has churned out blossoming Bronxites before.

“When I told my mom about Fieldston, she was like, ‘What? Where is that?’ ” said Shaoli Yusaf, a former MS 118 student who is now a sophomore at the private Riverdale school.



ii Photo credit, Ben Kochman: Middle school students Christine Pyankaroo, Ivette Sierra and Roxanne Luengas learned of their private and parochial high school options at Tuesday's fair.