

Representation  
matters! If you  
can see it, you  
can be it

K-12  
Tutoring  
Program  
Guide

The Change-Makers  
Foundation

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## **Program Overview**

Brilliant Minds Thriving (BMT) Tutoring Service is a subdivision of The Change-Makers Foundation and is responsible for providing K-12 STEAM tutoring services to Black youth in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Why STEAM tutoring services? Despite being a student myself, I accepted the calling earlier in my educational journey to tutor students in STEAM subjects and have not regretted one moment of taking that on. Over the course of my tutoring chapter, I have often wondered, how can schools instill the love of math, science, and technology in all children, especially Black children at the earliest levels? Unfortunately, statistics show that Black youth are severely underrepresented in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) fields.

Due to a plethora of factors which draw root from anti-Black racism and systemic exclusion, a common trend exists; there is an achievement gap, or disparity in academic performance between white and Black students.

Black students don't have access to the same educational support resources which has created the foundation for the vacuum we see in representation in STEAM professions. Supports like advanced classes, higher education, and tutoring services are not as easily accessible to families in lower income brackets, and new comer families that are from racialized backgrounds.

That is where the idea of Brilliant Minds Thriving tutoring service came from. Simply an idea, just to provide resources through K-12 tutoring services that focuses on STEAM related subjects.

Simply put, academia is the gateway to success and a platform dedicated to the building of STEAM specific competencies that is affordable to communities historically excluded from STEAM spaces is paramount to closing the gap. When or if students have only experienced a specific type of lifestyle or come from a certain background, there is a lack of understanding and diversity in the scholarly world which leads to misconceptions, misinterpretations, and misunderstandings. Even though the next generation of Black youth are pursuing higher degrees, there is still a significant lack of representation from the Black community specifically in STEAM which cannot be ignored.

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Students are more likely to regard educators and even career professionals of the same race as them as role models, making them more likely to pursue their ambitions. Representation matters because having a teacher that understands the cultural foundation of a student's life improves their outcomes drastically. The opposite can be said about a lack of connection with students. If there isn't adequate representation, stereotyping ensues, which exacerbates the demonization of Black students and perpetuates the cycle of inequity.

Historically, the Black community has been suppressed in all aspects, especially in pursuing an education. Compared to their White and other non-Black counterparts, dropout rates, suspension, expulsion, and completion rates are significantly lower in the Black community. Rooted in these educational outcomes is a deep-seated history of Anti-Black Racism which admittedly cannot be addressed overnight, however, recognizing the systemic oppression of Black people in the Canadian education system is vital when understanding why the career vacuum exists to this day in STEAM.

Aside from the historical context associated with the lack of Black representation in STEAM, there are various socio-economic factors that contribute to this as well. Issues surrounding race, education, and economic security are all intricately related and cannot be discussed without the acknowledgement of one another. Black Canadians have amongst the lowest average household income compared to every other ethnicity, which makes it exceedingly difficult to save funds to put towards higher education and educational support. This is undoubtedly a key metric in determining whether a student pursuing higher education has the proper financial system to make it through school which in turn puts a higher burden on the Black student population, who need to spend a larger portion of their lives paying back their loans.

The lack of diversity in the STEAM professions is a cycle that continues to go on. There are many instances of Black youth stating that they are or were the only Black person in their STEAM classrooms, leading to feelings of isolation as there is not anyone else there to validate their points of view.

To bridge this disparity, we must systematically reform the education system here in Canada. It begins with having Black educators to inspire Black students. It then moves onto increasing Black participation in STEAM by ensuring that equitable opportunities

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to access STEAM related supports is available. At this point in time, because change cannot happen overnight, to address the gaps in educational support, Brilliant Minds Thriving was founded. Offering K-12 services for Black youth in order to reinforce inclusion and emphasis on acknowledging socio-economic differences that exist. In return, the hope is that this brings about more representation, creating more room for Black youth to pursue STEAM degrees.

Inclusion training only does so much, but substantial and effective measures start with actually including Black people in the workplace. Giving the Black community a chance to share their stance and receive equitable and culturally sensitive supports will only further qualify the Black experience and elevate their voices to the public which will hopefully lead to a more inclusive society.

Brilliant Minds Thriving operates by having Black youth in STEAM or who are qualified to teach STEAM providing services to Black families in need of educational support. We are committed to hiring Black community members to help run this initiative.

## **Elementary School Preparation**

Especially for academics, the elementary years are defining years in a student's life. It's scary to think about the impact of a bad year, and what a few Cs and Ds can have on their confidence and self-belief. Students have a wide range of needs at the Elementary level and whether it's language, math, science, history or even organization, note-taking, and study skills, the 'Brilliant Minds Thriving' tutoring program is here to help you.

## **High School Preparation**

High school serves as the basis for post-secondary education, and regardless of the subject, we have the experience necessary to teach it and make it easy for your child to succeed! High school is an area that necessitates a highly specific and specialized type of assistance. Thus, it is critical that the tutor and student develop a positive relationship, as this can make all the difference. We can assist you with any subject, whether it be science, math, English, or another. That additional assistance can mean the difference between arduous and daunting tasks becoming manageable and worthwhile.

## **High School**

We understand that while your child is in high school, he or she requires highly specific and specialized assistance. At this critical moment, the appropriate tutor-mentor can make all the difference. We recognize how annoying high school homework may be and how simple it is to fall behind. We can assist you with any subject, whether it be the sciences (Chemistry, Biology, or Physics), math, English, or any other subject.

## **English**

English can be a very difficult language to learn. Learning to speak is a very different experience from learning to write and read. R.Y.M. Tutoring Service provides English tutoring to students at all levels to ensure their success in English courses. Unfortunately, teachers do not have the time to devote additional attention to the needs of each student in their classroom; therefore, an English tutor can assist your child in developing the competencies necessary to meet and overcome any challenges they may encounter in their classroom environment.

## **Math**

We believe that every student, regardless of whether they believe it or not, is capable of great things in mathematics. We are committed to assisting all types of math students. Whether it's for homework assistance, catching up, or getting ahead, we are incredibly versatile and will provide assistance based on each student's learning style. We cover a variety of topics, including Addition and Subtraction, Multiplication and Division, Fractions and Decimals, Numeration, Data Interpretation, Geometry, Measurement, Algebra, Calculus, and Data Management.

## **Science**

It is not exaggerating to assert that science is responsible for the majority (if not all) of global improvements in quality of life. Even if one does not want to pursue a career in the sciences, developing one's scientific capacity or developing scientific competencies might open up a world of possibilities. Our Science tutors are committed to assisting your child in obtaining answers to questions they may be hesitant to ask/do not receive in class, learning and remembering concepts, completing assigned work, and working on diverse projects to hone their theoretical and practical skills. Our lessons are designed with the goal of long-term academic growth and career capability development in mind. Each student is paired with an engaging, engaged, and compassionate tutor who works to increase students' knowledge, absorption, and retention capabilities, allowing them to feel comfortable exploring the world of science. By giving this type of assistance, we enable children to excel across the board and build their self-esteem, allowing for a more enjoyable school experience.

## **French**

Apart from English, Canada's other official language is French. Learning the language presents a distinct set of difficulties, as it may not be spoken at the same rate as English at home. Having said that, it might be really challenging to assist your child in picking up the language. Despite this, we want our students to stay optimistic about their abilities to learn the language and realize that they may require assistance. While schools provide a space for kids to learn French in a classroom setting, as is the case with any language, extensive practice outside of class is required to become fluent. We want to create an environment where your child can focus on their French language abilities without feeling discouraged.

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## **Homework Help**

We understand that while your child is in high school, he or she requires highly specific and specialized assistance. At this critical moment, the appropriate tutor-mentor can make all the difference. We recognize how annoying high school homework may be and how simple it is to fall behind. We can assist you with any subject, whether it be the sciences (Chemistry, Biology, or Physics), math, English, or any other subject. We can assist you regardless of your circumstances. Our program adheres to the academic curriculum and can be customized to match the individual needs of each student. The program can be tailored to assist them in preparing for professions in STEAM. You wish for nothing but the best for your child.