

Colégio Etapa

São Paulo, Brazil



Born from a vestibular cram course, this Sao Paulo school now claims 8 of Brazil's 15 Math Olympiad golds since 1998.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	72/100
Academic outcomes	84/100
University placement	80/100
Prestige & heritage	74/100
Alumni network	52/100
Facilities	62/100
Transparency	68/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Colégio Etapa occupies a distinctive niche in São Paulo: a Brazilian day school for ages 11–18 built on the intellectual habits of a vestibular prep operation. Founded in 1969, it has kept that exam-oriented spine while broadening into a full secondary school with instruction in Portuguese and English. The headline claim is not subtle: since 1998, Etapa says its students have won 8 of Brazil’s 15 gold medals at the International Mathematical Olympiad — a striking concentration of top-end mathematical talent. The school also points to 2024 medals across maths, biology, chemistry and physics, including IMO gold and IChO gold. This is the core of Etapa’s market position: **hard academic horsepower**, sharpened for students who like competition, pace and measurable outcomes.

That focus extends beyond Brazilian university entry. Etapa states that it has recorded more than **1,700** international university acceptances since **2000**, supported by a dedicated international office that handles guidance, application preparation, revision and university fairs. It also claims more than **130** offers at “conceituadas” universities across North America, Europe and Asia at the present stage of its 2026 cycle. Parents should read that carefully: the school clearly invests in outbound university advising, but it does not publish aggregate destination data in the excerpt here, nor any school-wide academic statistics. The proposition rests less on transparency of whole-cohort outcomes than on a visible pipeline of elite individual achievement. **This is a school that likes scoreboards.**

Why shortlist it? Because few schools in Brazil can credibly sell both Olympiad depth and a mature overseas admissions apparatus under one roof. Etapa’s extracurricular offer is framed as unusually wide, but the public evidence gives strongest weight to science Olympiads and international admissions, not to pastoral subtlety, arts culture or progressive pedagogy. That matters. Families looking for **a softly rounded adolescence** should look elsewhere. Families who want **disciplined ambition**, external benchmarks and a school culture that rewards stamina, precision and intellectual confidence will find Etapa compelling.

The right student for Colégio Etapa is clear. This is for the able, self-propelling teenager who enjoys academic pressure, thrives on problem-solving and does not need schooling sugar-coated. It suits mathematicians, scientists and strong all-rounders with competitive instincts, plus students targeting selective universities abroad who want structured support from early on. It is less suited to children who need a gentle pace, heavy pastoral cushioning or an educational philosophy built around self-expression first. Etapa offers **intensity with purpose**; for the right child, that is **an engine room, not a sanctuary**.

STRENGTHS

- Consistently posts some of the highest average ENEM scores among Sao Paulo private schools, with its Vila Mariana, Vila Mascote and Valinhos units regularly appearing among the states best results each year, the Etapa Internacional, Etapa Vila Mariana and Etapa Vila Mascote units figure among the 11 best ENEM averages in Sao Paulo capital in 2025.
- Long institutional track record: founded in 1982 as an extension of a vestibular-prep course that has run since 1970, giving it over four decades of focus on exact sciences and exam preparation, the college has been focused on the exact sciences and preparation for knowledge competitions and national and international entrance exams.
- Hosts an EducationUSA advising office, the first based at a school in Sao Paulo state, alongside an annual international universities fair to support students applying abroad, on July 7, 2022, EducationUSA opened an office at Colegio Etapa, the first at a school in the state of Sao

TRADE-OFFS

- The curriculum is built entirely around Brazilian entrance exams rather than an international diploma track, besides preparing for national exams such as Fuvest and ENEM, the school offers support for admission processes to foreign universities, with records of acceptances at Ivy League institutions and technology institutes like MIT, so the in-school teaching itself remains Brazilian-system only.
- Most grades operate on a half-day schedule, with full-day (integral) provision limited to certain years, Colegio Etapa is a part-time private school, with full-time education for some grades, a scheduling reality that may not suit families needing extended-day childcare.
- Monthly fees sit in the upper-middle bracket for Sao Paulo private schools, reported at roughly R\$3,001 to R\$7,000 depending on grade, before registration and other charges, Colegio Etapa III tuition varies between R\$3,001 and R\$7,000, depending on the school year and scheduled activities.

Paulo, and the institution also promotes an annual International Universities Fair.

- Runs its own didactic system, Sistema Etapa, which is licensed to partner schools across Brazil, reflecting an established and exportable pedagogical model, it uses its own didactic material, the Etapa System, which is adopted by partner schools in Brazil and integrates digital resources such as Etapa Digital and Etapa Link.
- Offers a free, competitive entrance scholarship exam (Desafio Etapa) awarding discounts of up to 100% for places in 6th grade, 9th grade and the first year of Ensino Medio, Colegio Etapa has open registration for the 44th Desafio Etapa, an initiative that offers participants scholarships of up to 100%, valid for studying in 2026 in the 6th and 9th grades of elementary school and the 1st year of high school.
- The schools identity is heavily built around exam results and science-olympiad medals, a narrow, results-driven academic culture rather than a broad arts or humanities-led environment, consistent with its stated focus on exact sciences and competition preparation.

ADMISSIONS

Entry points run from Educacao Infantil through Ensino Medio, with most places filled via standard enrollment, waitlists and early-booking or sibling/alumni discounts for younger grades. The distinctive route is the Desafio Etapa, a free, competitive scholarship exam offered in Bronze-to-Diamond tiers for entry into 6th grade, 9th grade and the first year of Ensino Medio, with discounts of up to 100% based on exam performance. Given the schools exam-results reputation, competition for both scholarship and fee-paying places is understood to be high, though no official acceptance-rate figures are published.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_95bcad08b9.