

# ANOTHER TOWN COMPARISON

## West Hartford: A Great Place to Live and Work

**West Hartford** is a wonderful town with strengths far beyond just its education system.

- In 2006, [Money Magazine](#) ranked West Hartford as the 10th most-educated town in the United States and in the [August 2010](#) issue it is ranked the top small city in Connecticut to raise a family.
- In June 2010, [Kiplinger Personal Finance Magazine](#) ranked West Hartford as one of the top ten cities to live in for the next decade.
- West Hartford holds the coveted AAA bond rating from Moody's Investor Service and Standard & Poor's. This rating puts our town in the top half of one percent of communities in the country with regard to fiscal management, a singularly impressive accomplishment.

Our high schools were ranked among the top 800 high schools (out of over 16,000 high schools) in the nation by [Newsweek Magazine](#), and ranked us among the top ten in the state. In 2009, Emmett Gilles, a graduating Conard senior, was selected as a Presidential Scholar. Emmett's accomplishments are one of scores that the West Hartford academic community has achieved. Our performing arts programs are internationally recognized. Our students begin instrumental music lessons in grade four and strive for selection to our elite jazz bands, choral groups and I Giovani Solisti, a combined high school string orchestra. The Hall High School Theatre Department was selected as one of 30 American high school theatre programs to compete in 2010 in the International Theatre Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, a citywide extravaganza that is the largest arts festival in the world. Our schools are a tapestry of cultures and ethnicities, with close to 70 languages represented in our school system, a microcosm of all the talent, intelligence and diversity that America has to offer.

## ECONOMY

	Brunswick, ME	West Hartford, CT	United States
<a href="#">Unemployment Rate</a>	3.00%	4.70%	5.20%
<a href="#">Recent Job Growth</a>	-0.63%	1.09%	1.59%
<a href="#">Future Job Growth</a>	35.75%	37.48%	37.98%
<a href="#">Sales Taxes</a>	5.50%	6.35%	6.00%
<a href="#">Income Taxes</a>	7.15%	5.00%	4.60%
<a href="#">Income per Cap.</a>	\$30,490	\$48,808	\$28,555
<a href="#">Household Income</a>	\$55,833	\$84,092	\$53,482
<a href="#">Family Median Income</a>	\$75,246	\$111,150	\$65,443
Students	2300	9800	
Spending per Student	\$16,000 +	\$16,000 +	
Education % of Town Budget	60% +	57%	

- The following slides show the complete current list of all the schools in West Hartford that are active, functional, and successful educational institutions.
- Notice the dates the schools were built!
- In at least the past 50 – 100 years, not one school building has been abandoned or demolished in West Hartford.

## West Hartford Public Schools

### Names of the West Hartford Public Schools

Most of the schools in West Hartford are named for individuals who were educators or who were otherwise important in the history and development of the town.

**Aiken** Elementary School, which opened in 1964, is named for Mary Louise Aiken, a long-time math teacher and guidance counselor at Sedgwick School. Aiken was born in Saratoga, New York in 1909 and was a 1931 graduate of Mount Holyoke College. She took graduate courses at the Universities of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont and at Harvard University.

**Braeburn** Elementary School, opened in 1956, is located on Braeburn Road which runs between Mountain Road and Pleasant Street near Fairview Cemetery and West Hartford Center. This school was named for the street on which it is located.

**Bristow** Middle School, West Hartford's newest school, which opened in 2005, is named for an African slave who lived in West Hartford, then the West District of Hartford, and who bought his freedom from Thomas Hart Hooker in 1775. Residents from surrounding communities often came to consult with Bristow because of his agricultural expertise. He is the only African American known to be buried in the Old Center Burying Ground.

**Bugbee** Elementary School opened in 1950 and was named for Lloyd H. Bugbee, superintendent of West Hartford Schools from 1922 to 1946. Born in 1889 in Hartford, Vermont, Bugbee came to West Hartford as principal of Hall High School in 1917. At the time of his death in 1975, he was remembered by his successor as having "built a school system with a warm, friendly, cooperative attitude."

**Charter Oak** Elementary School was built in 1927 to replace a four-room school building that had previously served families in the south section of West Hartford. The school was named for the famous oak tree in which the charter of the Colony of Connecticut, Connecticut's first constitution, was supposedly hidden from British agents in 1687.

**Conard** High School, which opened in 1957, was named in honor of Frederick Underwood Conard who was Chairman of the Board of Education when plans for a new high school were first approved. Conard was president of Niles-Bement-Pond Company in West Hartford. Always interested in young people, he was active with the Boy Scouts of America and served as president and trustee of the Hartford YMCA. One of his sons, John Hand Conard, followed in his father's footsteps as Chairman of the Board of Education from 1967-69.

**Duffy** Elementary School, which opened in 1952, was named for Louise Day Duffy, a respected teacher and member of the West Hartford Board of Education. Duffy was a graduate of Hall High School, Class of 1902. Following her graduation from Smith College, she taught briefly in Windsor, CT before returning to teach English and mathematics at Hall. She then worked at the Horace Mann School in New York City until she returned to West Hartford to marry Ward Duffy.

**Hall** High School is named for William H. Hall, the principal of the town's first high school which opened in 1872. Sometimes referred to as the town's "grand old man of education," William Hall was later superintendent of West Hartford schools and author of the first written history of the town. In 1924, at the age of 79, Hall laid the cornerstone for Hall High School, the building which is now the West Hartford Town Hall. The current Hall High School facility was built in 1970.

**King Philip** Middle School, designed as a combination elementary and junior high school, was at one time the largest school in West Hartford. It is located on King Philip Drive and was named for its location. King Philip was the name given by English colonists to Metacom, a Wampanoag tribal leader who led his warriors in raids against English settlers in Massachusetts. **Built in 1955**

**Morley** Elementary School, originally known as the Fern Street School, was built in 1926. In 1930, the name was officially changed to honor Edward W. Morley, a professor of chemistry, recognized for discovering the atomic weight of oxygen. Morley grew up in West Hartford and returned to the town upon his retirement from teaching.

**Norfeltd** Elementary School opened its doors to students in September of 1957. It was named for Eric G. Norfeldt, long-time teacher, coach and director of Physical Education at Hall High School. Born in New Britain, Norfeldt was a graduate of Springfield College and came to Hall in 1924. A youth league baseball field at the corner of Trout Brook Drive and the Boulevard has also been named in his honor.

**Sedgwick** Middle School, was opened in 1931. Planned as a junior high school, it also served elementary students until 1956. The school was named for William Thompson Sedgwick, a West Hartford native recognized as an authority on public health and a biology professor at M.I.T. from 1883-1921.

**Smith** Elementary School was originally called the Seymour School and was first opened in 1915. In 1948, the name of the school was changed to honor Florence E. Smith who had been its principal since 1926. She continued to serve in this capacity until 1958. The school has undergone significant additions and renovations during its long history and now serves as a magnet school for science and technology.

**Webster Hill** Elementary School, built in 1949, is named for its location on Webster Hill Boulevard. It is

likely that the street name derives from the nearby location of the Webster family home, the birthplace of Noah Webster, author of the first American dictionary and the widely-used "blue-backed speller."

**Whiting Lane** Elementary School was built in 1954 to replace East School. Located on Whiting Lane, the school is named for its location in the area once owned by the Whiting family, owners of Whiting's Nursery.

**Wolcott** Elementary School is named for Henry A. Wolcott, a mechanical and civil engineer who was also a member of the West Hartford Board of Education, a town selectman and a state legislator. Both Wolcott School, built in 1957, and Wolcott Park are situated on land purchased from Wolcott's estate.

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So West Hartford has 16 schools, 13 of which are as old or older than Coffin Elementary and 5 out of those 13 schools built before 1950. They are all still being used. Maybe there is a lesson to be learned here for Brunswick?