

Best School Districts for Your Buck in Connecticut- Stafford Ranked #3

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Using school quality and cost-of-living measures, NerdWallet has discovered the Connecticut school districts that best represent the most bang for your buck. Here's how we found the most affordable school districts (121 unified or secondary school districts) in Connecticut:

- **Standardized test scores.** We combined 10th grade CAPT scores and SAT scores in 2012.
- **College readiness.** We factored in equally weighted scores for the graduation rate and the percent of high school graduates seeking higher education in 2012.
- **Class size.** We also considered the student-to-teacher ratio in select school districts.

All data are from the U.S. Census Bureau or the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Methodology

The score for each district was derived from these measures:

- 1. Housing cost** for each school district was 30% of the total score. Housing cost was calculated by averaging the district index score for median home value and selected monthly homeowner costs for the school district. The more affordable the area, the better the score. Data are from the 2012 DP04 from the U.S. Census FactFinder.
- 2. Standardized testing score** was 30% of the total score. District scores from 2011-12 were calculated by equally weighting state indexes of the 10th grader scale score for the CAPT and the districts' SAT scores. Data were provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- 3. College readiness** for the class of 2012 was 30% of the total score. College readiness was a combination of a school district's four-year cohort graduation rate, and the percent of students going on to colleges and universities, both two- and four-year institutions. The Connecticut State Department of Education supplied the data.
- 4. Student-to-teacher ratio** data was 10% of the score. Data were provided by Connecticut State Department of Education.

We evaluated 121 unified and secondary school districts in Connecticut for this study. Charter schools, private schools and school districts with only primary schools were excluded. This study didn't include Winchester, and Norwich data doesn't include SAT scores. Data for 2012 on the percentage of students enrolled in higher education wasn't available for East Granby, Groton and East Haddam. Instead, 2011 percentages were used in this study.

Observations:

- ☑ **Stafford is the highest ranked DRG F district- ranked 3rd**; next closest DRG F districts are Plainville (28) and Wolcott (29).
- ☑ **Of the top 20 ranked districts, Stafford is the only DRG F district.** Other DRG representations in the top 20 are as follows: A- none, B- 7, C- 7, D- 3, E- 2.
- ☑ **Rankings for neighboring districts** (DRG identification is in parenthesis)
 - Somers (C)- 18
 - Tolland (C)- 31
 - Ellington (C)- - 36
 - Windsor Locks (F)- 78
 - Enfield (F)- 79
 - Vernon (G)- 80
 - East Windsor (F)- 85

Best School Districts for Your Buck in Connecticut

DRG	Rank	School district	Median home value in 2012	4-year cohort graduation rate	Percent of graduates in higher education	SAT average in 2012	10th-grader CAPT scale score	Average high school class size	Bang for Your Buck weighted score
D	1	East Granby	274000	95.08	88	1641	1104	17	83.32
E	2	Litchfield	337700	97.09	85.29	1635	1119	16	83.28
F	3	Stafford	206600	88.03	80.88	1578	1036	14	82.2
C	4	Canton	322300	97.48	93.1	1734	1130	20	82.12
B	5	Farmington	338400	94.08	95.61	1648	1141	20	81.83
C	6	Bolton	287300	90.41	95.65	1608	1116	18	81.01
C	7	Regional 19	250100	87.25	78.1	1659	1072	16	80.76
D	8	East Lyme	325500	94.39	85.71	1629	1113	18	80.68
C	9	Regional 08	316000	90.54	95	1654	1112	19	80.4
C	10	Regional 04	344200	91.88	74.83	1635	1128	15	80.32
B	11	Simsbury	342400	95.58	89.95	1723	1155	20	80.2
B	12	Glastonbury	347200	95.9	93.32	1701	1116	19	79.73
B	13	Avon	390900	96.14	91.76	1729	1147	19	79.64
B	14	South Windsor	276300	93.78	89.3	1611	1124	20	79.45
E	15	Westbrook	345200	91.46	84	1539	1079	15	79.16
B	16	Granby	295300	97.35	89.95	1654	1114	21	79.12
C	17	Somers	325000	95.77	83.82	1584	1074	17	78.87
D	18	Waterford	280100	91.7	80.91	1540	1098	17	78.85
C	19	Regional 18	443000	97.12	86.14	1647	1142	19	78.57
B	20	Regional 15	345900	93.62	88.99	1637	1110	18	78.15
C	21	Regional 07	278500	93.17	72.19	1580	1123	19	78.03
D	22	Cromwell	248100	91.45	83.33	1547	1054	17	78
B	23	Cheshire	349800	95.86	91.4	1652	1111	20	77.94
B	24	Guilford	399100	97.56	85.56	1616	1159	19	77.52
B	25	West Hartford	305600	92.7	90.34	1609	1098	20	77.45
E	26	North Stonington	300900	87.04	72.55	1548	1048	14	77.38
D	27	East Hampton	273900	94.55	73.89	1559	1102	18	77.3
F	28	Plainville	209500	92.75	80.71	1467	1043	18	77.24
F	29	Wolcott	251200	93.61	85.78	1501	1070	19	77.22
D	30	Old Saybrook	401800	95.83	91.3	1595	1086	18	77.2
C	31	Tolland	285300	96.52	84.96	1608	1078	20	77.2
D	32	Berlin	297100	94.68	83.27	1525	1096	19	77.01
E	33	North Branford	310300	91.36	82.67	1512	1055	16	76.9

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E	34	Thomaston	230300	91.3	73.81	1432	1049	16	76.85
D	35	Southington	270400	91.57	83.97	1548	1084	20	76.73
C	36	Ellington	274000	90.15	85.33	1559	1056	18	76.63
E	37	Portland	298900	91.3	82.14	1634	1071	20	76.54
D	38	Newington	235300	89.05	83.39	1540	1079	21	76.5
D	39	Ledyard	260500	91.51	84.34	1531	1069	19	76.29
E	40	Coventry	262400	86.27	74.63	1544	1078	18	76.29
E	41	Lebanon	265900	87.88	83.62	1506	1051	18	76.05
F	42	Thompson	217700	85.15	70.79	1487	988	16	75.75
C	43	Regional 13	332800	97.18	84.78	1567	1064	18	75.44
B	44	Regional 05	425700	96.31	91.49	1638	1162	20	75.29
D	45	Rocky Hill	273600	91.83	86.53	1479	1054	19	75.13
C	46	Oxford	377500	91.78	87.59	1544	1094	18	74.95
C	47	Suffield	326300	90.82	82.38	1578	1102	20	74.86
D	48	Wethersfield	266200	90.41	90.18	1551	1053	22	74.75
B	49	Madison	474300	96.72	92.66	1661	1161	21	74.74
E	50	Regional 01	364600	94.29	68.38	1484	1071	15	74.72
D	51	Colchester	277900	94.72	84.58	1516	1068	21	74.4
F	52	Plymouth	216700	84.17	72.57	1487	1026	18	73.39
D	53	North Haven	311600	92.47	88.89	1534	1092	22	73.29
D	54	Wallingford	274100	92.36	77.08	1520	1057	21	73.22
G	55	Groton	255200	81.74	72.5	1506	999	16	73.22
D	56	Clinton	291000	92.68	68.91	1552	1071	20	73.21
D	57	Bethel	353600	92.8	87.88	1531	1080	19	73.2
D	58	New Milford	324800	90.26	86.78	1560	1069	20	73.19
C	59	Regional 10	318000	96.09	80.26	1547	1097	21	73.12
C	60	Regional 17	355500	93.68	86.96	1546	1088	20	73.04
E	61	Regional 16	291400	91.88	81.28	1474	1043	19	72.99
B	62	Brookfield	403400	97.24	88.98	1605	1140	23	72.98
B	63	Monroe	412700	98.53	89.64	1582	1093	20	72.71
B	64	New Fairfield	367600	97.84	90.64	1620	1088	24	72.6
D	65	Branford	307500	93.02	79.27	1523	1054	21	72.48
E	66	East Haddam	303000	92.16	77.8	1518	1018	19	72.47

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F	67	Regional 11	247400	95.24	76.19	1421	996	18	72.38
G	68	Torrington	183200	79.73	71.54	1489	979	18	72.33
B	69	Newtown	446700	94.83	86.47	1628	1140	20	72.16
D	70	Watertown	268500	90.95	84.4	1450	1023	20	72.11
C	71	Regional 14	369600	96.92	78.24	1543	1079	20	72.06
F	72	Montville	231000	86.55	73	1453	1023	19	71.44
D	73	Windsor	240800	85.05	82.35	1394	962	16	71.39
F	74	Seymour	277900	87.01	83.22	1425	990	17	71.35
G	75	Bristol	211700	85.1	68.01	1495	1024	20	71.23
F	76	Griswold	223900	87.5	70.48	1445	988	18	71.13
G	77	Putnam	206500	81.54	64.52	1410	927	14	71.11
F	78	Windsor Locks	209800	91.22	72.79	1437	970	20	70.6
F	79	Enfield	199900	85.16	74.89	1478	1003	21	70.46
G	80	Vernon	215400	81.95	78.17	1448	989	20	70.26
B	81	Trumbull	429100	97.24	92.83	1605	1117	23	70.24
G	82	Plainfield	195300	85.22	58.24	1434	964	17	69.92
D	83	Shelton	360700	91.36	74.56	1480	1075	19	69.56
G	84	Naugatuck	211100	84.24	78.93	1418	1012	21	69.39
F	85	East Windsor	232000	86.52	78.75	1399	983	19	69.33
G	86	Manchester	206700	73.17	86.26	1398	980	20	68.24
G	87	Killingly	203900	76.96	73.03	1405	966	19	68.21
E	88	Regional 06	372000	96.55	73.81	1519	1040	22	68.08
G	89	Middletown	237600	76.08	85.06	1418	1002	21	67.97
D	90	Stonington	352800	92.31	76.02	1528	1067	24	67.92
G	91	Hamden	248400	84.32	73.84	1398	972	18	67.75
D	92	Milford	321500	86.02	79.48	1475	1049	21	67.66
I	93	Windham	173500	70.17	79.08	1353	869	16	67.14
A	94	Regional 09	656500	97.06	91.85	1695	1174	20	66.64
A	95	Wilton	824600	98.08	95.53	1801	1173	20	66.53
A	96	Ridgefield	699900	98.19	95.43	1721	1178	22	66.44
G	97	Bloomfield	222700	78.06	87.35	1238	939	17	66.27
B	98	Fairfield	599300	94.2	88.89	1644	1123	22	65.77
G	99	East Haven	233100	72.17	80.77	1381	968	20	65.65

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G	100	Stratford	276200	86.5	84.59	1399	1008	23	65.54
A	101	Weston	906900	99.48	93.65	1794	1172	20	64.95
H	102	East Hartford	184200	76.65	75.37	1321	899	18	64.47
A	103	Darien	1000000	96.46	97.36	1776	1149	18	63.59
H	104	Derby	232200	75.47	71.11	1387	930	20	62.56
A	105	New Canaan	1000000	96.96	94.72	1795	1184	21	62.18
H	106	West Haven	222400	72.12	87.12	1338	938	22	61.73
A	107	Westport	1000000	97.9	97.14	1785	1179	22	61.66
H	108	Meriden	198200	69.54	65.55	1362	921	21	60.9
H	109	Ansonia	253200	76.1	66.86	1327	931	19	60.35
B	110	Greenwich	1000000	92.26	92.22	1717	1135	18	60.25
C	111	Regional 12	589600	85.14	79.69	1544	1044	23	59.93
I	112	New Haven	219000	70.87	83.63	1209	901	19	59.72
I	113	Waterbury	158300	62.62	76.74	1246	875	20	59.34
H	114	Norwalk	440700	84.88	82.66	1416	975	21	59.33
H	115	Stamford	537300	85.24	86.02	1468	974	21	58.56
I	116	New Britain	169900	60.54	76.99	1349	847	22	57.78
H	117	Danbury	317200	76.75	75.49	1434	941	25	57.57
I	118	Hartford	178300	64.75	76.23	1130	891	21	55.84
I	119	New London	196400	61.92	53.25	1296	922	22	55.26
I	120	Bridgeport	206300	66.3	58.45	1166	831	19	50.81
H	121	Norwich	198000	22.39	7.14		779	14	37.83