

stability of businesses, neighborhood character and building conditions within the district boundaries. The organization exists to serve its diverse mix of businesses and institutions while collaborating with neighborhood groups. FABD's Business Coordinator began work in November of 1996. Job duties include expanding FABD membership, providing member services, coordination of FABD projects and programs, and serving as a conduit for information and available programs/services between city departments and area businesses.

## *EDUCATION*



*Pictured above is Hartford Public High School, the second oldest high school in the nation.*

The Hartford Public school system is in crisis and Asylum Hill is directly effected. The State of Connecticut, in an unprecedented move last year, took control of the entire system. Here is a stark, snapshot view of Hartford's population and the startling realities of its school age population:

### Overall Hartford Population:

- only 18 sq. miles with a population of approximately 125,000 of which 28% are below poverty level
- ONLY 34% have a high school degree
- 61% are under 34 (It is a YOUNG city!)
- 15% of the teenage women become pregnant (2<sup>nd</sup> in nation!)
- fastest shrinking city in USA (10% decline from 90-96)
- Fifth poorest in the nation for cities with populations over 100,000

### Hartford's Schools:

- 32 schools overall with 4,000 employees
- 93% minority students (50% Hispanic and 43% African American)
- 23,500 students (down 10% in last 5 years)

- 45% are non-English speaking
- highest yearly dropout rate in State (19%)
- Class of 1996 had a cumulative dropout rate of 49%
- lowest spending per pupil in textbook/supplies in the State
- 2<sup>nd</sup> highest per student overall in spending in state (\$9,000/pupil)
- highest teacher salaries in state \$59,000
- last in CT in testing results
- 50% of students are designated SPECIAL ED.
- lowest pre-school attendance in state
- more high school girls are leaving the schools pregnant than are graduating
- out of 3 high schools, two are on accreditation probation
- over \$300,000,000 in renovation costs for the schools at this time
- 4 superintendents in 5 years
- unions that are often at odds with educational reforms
- policy manuals have not been updated in 6-20 years; depending on area
- inadequate evaluation of performance reviews of personnel
- history of Board of Education interference in personnel, performance, etc....

As mentioned above, Hartford Public High School, located in Asylum Hill, the second oldest high school in the nation, nearly lost its accreditation. Only through a legal appeal did it not lose its accreditation and instead has been placed on probation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The local elementary school, West Middle, has problems of overcrowding, low test scores, and a poor reputation.



*Pictured above, West Middle School, located on Asylum Avenue.*

Quirk Middle School, although not in the Asylum Hill neighborhood, is the school to which children continue upon graduating from West Middle. The charts below offer a more detailed description of these three schools based on the State Department of Education's Strategic Profiles from the 1995-96 academic year. Information on the district and State level is also provided as a means for comparison.

**Vital Statistics for Hartford Public High School, West Middle School, and Quirk Middle School**

	Hartford Public High School	High Schools in the Hartford District	State of Connecticut High Schools
Total Enrollment:	1,904	5,584 (proj. 1999)	
Ethnicity:	0.1% Am. Indian 1.2% Asian Amer. 34.7% Black 59.1% Hispanic 4.9% White		
% of students with non-English home language:	57.9%	45%	11.2%
CT APT scores(grade 10) % receiving cert. of mastery:	Language Arts - 6 Math - 9 Science - 6 Interdisciplinary - 10 All Four Tests - 1	Language Arts - 9 Math - 8 Science - 4 Interdisciplinary - 12 All Four Tests - 1	Language Arts - 35 Math - 41 Science - 34 Interdisciplinary - 36 All Four Tests - 12
Dropouts - class of 1995 cum. 4 year rate:	48.5%	43.6%	17.4%

	West Middle School	Elementary Schools in the Hartford District	State of Connecticut Elementary Schools
Total Enrollment:	824	14,963 (proj. 1999)	
Ethnicity	0.0% Am. Indian 2.3% Asian Amer. 64.0% Black 34.0% Hispanic 0.1% White		
% of students with non-English home language:	24.3%	42.5%	12.0%
CMT scores(grade 6) % meeting State goal:	Reading - 14.7 Writing - 3.0 Math - 1.5 All Three Tests - 0.0	Reading - 16.8 Writing - 13.7 Math - 8.1 All Three Tests - 3.3	Reading - 59.4 Writing - 39.6 Math - 47.7 All Three Tests - 25

	Quirk Middle School	Middle Schools in the Hartford District	State of Connecticut Middle Schools
Total Enrollment:	1,252	3,159 (proj. 1999)	
Ethnicity	0.0% Am. Indian 1.2% Asian Amer. 29.9% Black 66.0% Hispanic 3.0% White		
% of students with non-English home language:	71.2%	50.9%	10.9%
CMT scores(grade 8) % meeting State goal:	Reading - 18.2 Writing - 12.5 Math - 8.9 All Three Tests - 3.3	Reading - 18.4 Writing - 15.4 Math - 8.8 All Three Tests - 4.0	Reading - 58.9 Writing - 45.5 Math - 47.3 All Three Tests - 29.6

*This data is compiled from the Connecticut State Department of Education Strategic School Profiles for 1995-96*

The charts above describe some staggering statistics regarding schools in the Hartford school district, specifically Asylum Hill's Hartford Public High School and West Middle School, and Quirk Middle School which Asylum Hill children attend. Test scores at both the high school and elementary school level are far below those of the entire State. For example, at Hartford Public High School only 9% of the students passed the Math portion of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test while 41% passed on the State level. The test scores for Language Arts and Science are equally discouraging. At West Middle School, only 3% of the students passed the writing portion of the Connecticut Mastery Test while 59.4% passed on the State level. West Middle school also falls far below Hartford's other elementary schools where 13.7% passed the writing portion of the test. Only 1.5% passed Math while 47.7% passed on the State level. At Quirk Middle School, 8.9% passed Mathematics compared to 47.3% at the State level.

It is important to note that West Middle school has had an increase in student scores on the Fall 1997 Connecticut Mastery Test. Mathematics has increased by 7% in grade 6. Writing scores increased by 28% in grade 4 and 15% in grade 6. Reading scores increased by 10% in grade 4. Superintendent Patricia Daniel congratulated West Middle School with a certificate for their achievements. There is a tremendous need to challenge students academically at West Middle so that they perform better throughout their future years. If students do not qualify for special education services, there is a great need to provide remedial services in reading, writing, and mathematics. In the upcoming year, Reading Recovery staff will be hired to provide remedial services to students in need. Additional staff will be added to teach mathematics to those students who present difficulty in this discipline.

Also of relevance is the fact that the Hartford Public School System remains heavily segregated. The Hartford Public High School student body is 34.7% Black, 59.1% Hispanic, and only 4.9% White. At West Middle School, 64% are Black, 34% are Hispanic, and .1% is White. The Quirk student body is 66% Hispanic, 29.9% Black, and 3% White. Finally in terms of dropouts, 48.5% of Hartford Public High School students did not graduate from the class of 1995. This is compared to 17.4% on the State

level. West Middle School also continues to be plagued by overcrowding. Student enrollment for the 1997-98 school year has increased over the past two years to over 900 children. This is far too many children for an elementary school. Issues such as these were the impetus for the Sheff vs. O’Neil school desegregation case. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs that the Hartford school system is segregated and that this segregation effects the quality of education for Hartford children.

For Asylum Hill to attract families these critical issues within the schools must be dealt with immediately. However, with a new superintendent, Patricia Daniel, to lead the system and a new principal at West Middle, Thomas Danehy, as well as \$20,195,000 allocated to Hartford Public High School this is a time ripe for change. Presented below is West Middle School’s plan for the next three years.

**West Middle School  
Three Year Organizational Plan**

<b>1998 - 1999</b>	<b>1999 - 2000</b>	<b>2000 - 2001</b>
<b>Global Studies Pilot</b> Grades pk-6 / Bil / Sp.ed. Niles Street	<b>Global Studies</b> Evaluate - Refine Niles Street	<b>Global Studies</b> Evaluate - Refine Niles Street
<b>A+ Arts Academy</b> Planning & Training	<b>A+ Arts Academy</b> pilot Grades pk-6 Location - Main Bldg.	<b>A+ Arts Academy</b> Evaluate - Refine Main Bldg., 2nd Floor
<b>Primary Classes</b> Grades pk-3	<b>“To Be Discussed”</b> Planning & Training Main Bldg.	<b>“To Be Discussed”</b> Main Bldg.
<b>Intermediate Classes</b> Grades 4-6 Sigourney Street	<b>“To Be Announced”</b> Sigourney Street	<b>“To Be Announced”</b> Sigourney Street

Finally, a footnote on education, a major component missing in the Hill, as in most of Hartford, is meaningful intergenerational education. We must recognize seniors as having skills and talents to teach to school children (tutoring, crafts, language, etc.) and that school children can teach seniors (data processing, foreign language, new math, etc.). Intergenerational programs will help to bridge the gap between these two populations. Most important, stereotypes around growing “old” will be stripped away as children see seniors as mentors and active members of the community.