

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Andy Fleischmann

PROUDLY SERVING WEST HARTFORD

PROTECTING STATE SUPPORT FOR WEST HARTFORD AND OTHER TOWNS

This spring, the Assembly adopted a balanced budget without any tax increases which, most importantly, increases support for West Hartford and other towns – thus reducing pressure on our local property taxes. Ensuring quality education with increased state support is a priority for me, and I fought to increase municipal aid, statewide, by \$127,677,778 over last year’s numbers. Because of this increase, we were able to provide significant property tax relief to cities and towns like ours (see details below). Minimizing impacts on local property taxes, while making key investments in job creation programs such as Small Business Express and Step-Up (which encourages employers to hire veterans and the unemployed), will give our economy a much needed boost. (PA 14-217)

WEST HARTFORD SCHOOL FUNDING & MUNICIPAL AID

Education Cost Sharing (ECS)	\$18,181,174
Non-Public School Transportation	\$96,124
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$300,798
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$1,102,492
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$222,394
School Transportation	\$256,021
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$459,237
Town Aid Roads	\$689,311
Adult Education	\$132,422
DECD Tax Abatement and MRSA Payments	\$915,944
Total State Funds to West Hartford	\$22,355,917

This total is an increase of \$995,561 in school funding and municipal aid from last year, including an increase of \$804,495 in ECS dollars to West Hartford.

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STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

High quality early childhood education is critical to a child's development, providing a solid foundation for cognitive and emotional growth and future learning. This year, as Chairman of the Education Committee, I championed legislative establishment of the state's new Office of Early Childhood. This new body will oversee and administer programs that affect our children from birth until elementary school – breaking down silos that used to exist between school readiness programs, head-start programs, state-funded childcare centers, and other early childhood education efforts that ought to be better aligned. This new, coordinated approach will ensure greater efficiency in the use of state resources. And it will lead to better overall care and education for our most impressionable population – young children. **(PA 14-39)**

MOVING TOWARD UNIVERSAL PRE-K ACCESS

The newly established Office of Early Childhood will develop a plan to achieve universal access to preschool in Connecticut. Given that educational disparities among young children have been shown to be a key factor in creating an academic achievement gap between haves and have-nots, Connecticut's focus on universal access to preschool is critical to our closing that gap.

As the first step in this process, we have increased state support for school readiness and added 1,020 new preschool seats. We also created a floor rather than a ceiling for Competitive School Districts like West Hartford, which enables our town to receive more than \$107,000 to accommodate additional preschool spaces. Given West Hartford Public Schools' long-standing leadership in this area, I expect that our town will be working to expand the availability of preschool in the years to come.

Our state also took the historic step of creating a competitive grant program, Smart Start, which includes ten years of capital for investments in early childhood infrastructure, and support for operating costs. The program will target communities and neighborhoods that have demonstrated need for additional preschool slots –including parts of our town. **(PA 14-39, PA 14-41)**

WORKING WITH TEACHERS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT

This year, I strongly supported the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council's (PEAC) decision to modify guidelines regarding teacher evaluations while maintaining the integrity of common core standards. PEAC amended educator evaluation guidelines to allow teachers to better focus on each student's academic growth. It also provided models for resolving disputes when the evaluator and educator disagree on issues such as goals and objectives, or feedback. These changes were made after hearing from teachers and administrators who were concerned that too much change was hitting their classrooms at once, impeding their ability to be effective at the classroom level. Also this year, with my strong support, the State Board of Education approved additional changes to provide educators with both greater flexibility and clarity on the requirements for implementation of the new evaluation and support system. Taken together, these changes are intended to ensure that teachers can remain focused on teaching, with an evaluation system that is not overly burdensome or difficult to understand – so that our students get the best results possible.



Andy spends time with West Hartford preschoolers.



Har-Conn Chrome in West Hartford – one of the many local companies that the state's Small Business Express and Manufacturing Reinvestment Account can help grow.

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES TO HIRE AND TRAIN WORKERS

Small manufacturers in Connecticut are an important source of jobs and a key engine of economic growth. I've worked hard to provide support to these businesses through programs like the Manufacturing Reinvestment Account program (MRA). The MRA is designed to help small manufacturers fund capital investments and train their workers. This year, we made it easier for businesses to take advantage of the program by increasing the number of employees an employer may have to be eligible for the program from 50 to 150.

(PA 14-69 - SB 232 - Effective Date: July 1, 2014, and applicable to income and taxable years starting on or after January 1, 2014)

RE-EMPLOYMENT OF WORKERS

This year we looked to improve job opportunities for job seekers aged 50 and over. The Connecticut Employment & Training Commission under the Department of Labor will add older workers to its campaigns for training and employment services. The Department of Labor will also create a quick-reference guide of resources and have it posted on the 211 local services website. In addition, the Board of Regents will create definitions for non-credit vocational programs to enable the accrediting bodies to measure the success of these programs. **(PA 14-225)**

Helpful Numbers

Infoline (Disaster Info, Food, Housing, Utilities)	211
Consumer Protection	800-842-2649
Energy Assistance	877-WISE-USE (947-3873)