

# In West Hartford you have a choice of elementary schools.

Take a closer look at our two magnet school options.

## Magnet Schools in West Hartford:

Charter Oak International Academy  
Florence E. Smith STEM School



## Is a West Hartford magnet school right for your child?

West Hartford families are justifiably proud of the quality of their neighborhood elementary schools. So some parents wonder, why consider a magnet school? West Hartford's two magnet elementary schools begin with the same comprehensive curriculum standards as neighborhood schools, but enrich the student experience with an inquiry-based teaching and learning model. Many families find the inquiry-based model encourages children to think more creatively and independently.

In addition to the inquiry-based learning model, our magnet schools each embrace a specific learning theme. Charter Oak International Academy's instructional philosophy is based upon the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program, which encourages students to develop a more global perspective. Florence E. Smith STEM School emphasizes science, technology, engineering and math.

If you feel your child would thrive in one of the West Hartford School System's magnet school environments, we encourage you to explore further. Read more at our website, schedule a visit to either or both schools, or talk to someone whose child already attends a magnet school. You know your child best, so why not explore the full range of options available? Florence E. Smith STEM School and Charter Oak International Academy are available exclusively to West Hartford residents.



**Charter Oak students are engaged, compassionate, and open-minded global learners.**

The world is becoming a smaller place. This generation of children will be the most international and diverse in modern US history. The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (PYP) brings a deeper level of inquiry to the curriculum. Students' natural curiosity drives investigation of current world issues about science, social studies, and the arts.

**At Charter Oak International Academy students learn to be internationally minded, reflect on their own identities and the cultures of others, strive to be caring citizens by helping others, and learn to care for our planet. We accomplish this through:**

- Inquiry-based units of study aligned with four to six global themes including, Who We Are, How We Express Ourselves, Sharing The Planet, and How the World Works
- Instruction on communication, research, thinking, social, and self-management skills
- Fifth-grade capstone project where students inquire, collaborate, synthesize thinking, present, and take action on globally significant, locally relevant issues
- Student-led conferences enable children to take responsibility for their learning, reflect, and set goals with their parents and teachers
- Shared responsibility for our planet with an emphasis on sustainability, and participating in school garden-based learning experiences
- World Language Instruction into the Pre-K to Grade 5 Curriculum
- Integrated communication access and cultural awareness for Deaf and hard-of-hearing students
- Five full-day, NAEYC-accredited, inquiry-based Pre-K classrooms
- Home of the district's only National Award-Winning Odyssey of the Mind Team where students take on problem-solving challenges!
- Student-led assemblies provide a forum for students to share their work, talents, and achievements, and develop leadership skills
- Home of the Award-winning Family Resource Center which provides PreK aftercare, family groups, a Play in a Week, and Saturday Academy for families
- Learning experiences connected to the United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals, celebrating International observances such as International Day of Peace, and Human Rights Day, as well as having students reflect on their perspectives, cultures, identities, and those of others
- Students are empowered to make positive changes in their school, at home, and in our local and global community. Examples include Cultural Day, our 5th grade Day of Action where students take responsibility for our school gardens and courtyard
- After School Explorations to enrich and enhance student learning
- Suzuki violin lessons Pre-K to grade 3

***The world is our classroom all day everyday!***

# Smith STEM

notice. wonder. explore.

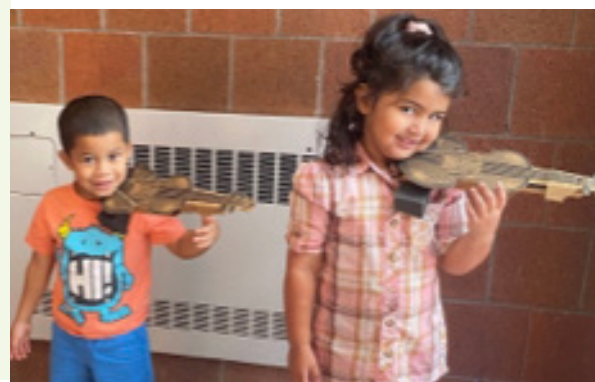
**Cultivating students' curiosity and creativity through inquiry-based learning, with an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.**

The Florence E. Smith STEM School is an exemplary 21st-century learning community whose students persevere to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and learning dispositions to be responsible, productive, creative, and self-directed learners. With 21st-century skills at the heart of a STEM Education, Smith STEM School prepares all students today for the world of tomorrow no matter which career paths they follow. In addition to the district curriculum, Smith STEM School provides students with innovative learning experiences through our Habits of Mind, engineering curriculum, integration of technology, and student-centered inquiry experiences. Our inquiry-based instruction and learning empowers students by cultivating critical thinking, problem-solving, perseverance and collaboration.

## **Smith STEM students reach beyond subject areas to challenge their minds in creative ways through:**

- Weekly science lab experiences led by our science teacher in the only elementary science lab in the district
- Monthly student-led assemblies highlighting our Habits of Mind, student achievements and stewardship
- *Engineering is Elementary* curriculum developed by the Boston Museum of Science
- STEAM PM, our free after-school enrichment classes for Grades 3-5, infuse the arts and our Habits of Mind with hands-on, memorable experiences
- Technology-rich classrooms that foster communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving through engineering, coding, and robotics experiences
- Signature STEM experiences in Grades K-5 offer students engaging opportunities to apply their learning and expand their knowledge base
- A math specialist who supports meaningful mathematics instruction that fosters student independence and allows students to construct their conceptual understanding to solve real-world problems by applying mathematical ideas
- Bits and Bytes Computer Club led by the Conard High School for fourth-grade students
- *Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics* in Grades 1-5 to encourage applied thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative decision-making
- Yearly after-school Family STEM Night for families with engaging, interactive experiences for all ages
- Computer Coding and Computer Science experiences at each grade level
- Suzuki violin lessons in Pre-K to Grade 3
- Full-day NAEYC accredited inquiry-based Pre-K
- Long-standing partnerships with local, educational organizations such as the Connecticut Science Center, Forest Park Zoo, the Children's Museum, and Roaring Brook Nature Center

**Notice. Wonder. Explore!**



# Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

**Q Who can apply to these magnet schools?**

**A** Only residents of West Hartford. Both Smith and Charter Oak magnet schools are open to students in grade Pre-K through 5.

**Q Where can I apply?**

**A** You can apply online at [whps.org/magnet](http://whps.org/magnet). These magnet schools are open to West Hartford residents only. If you are admitted into a magnet school, you will need to establish residency before your admittance can be accepted. Please visit [www.whps.org/residency](http://www.whps.org/residency) for more information on residency requirements.

**Q May we apply to both magnet schools?**

**A** Families may apply to one magnet school, PK-5.

**Q If my child gets into a magnet school, will we have to go through the lottery again the next year?**

**A** If you apply to and are accepted as a magnet student you are guaranteed your spot through 5th grade as long as you reside in West Hartford. If you apply to Pre-K and are accepted to either magnet school as a **neighborhood** student and move out of the neighborhood prior to the start of the school year, you will forfeit your spot. If you are a K-5 neighborhood student and move outside of the Charter Oak or Smith neighborhoods respectively, you will move enrollment to your new neighborhood school. If the move occurs during the school year you may submit a written request to stay for the remainder of the school year to Dr. Andrew Morrow, Assistant Superintendent.

**Q I live in the Charter Oak or Smith neighborhood. Do I need to apply to the lottery?**

**A** If you live in the magnet school attendance zone and are entering grades K through 5, you do not need to apply. If you live in the attendance zone and are applying for Pre-K, you will need to apply through the lottery.

**Q If we have one child currently enrolled in a magnet school as a magnet student, will his/her brother or sister get in as well?**

**A** All children, including siblings of currently enrolled magnet students, must apply through the lottery. Siblings of currently enrolled students at Charter Oak will be given the lowest lottery numbers. K-5 siblings of currently enrolled K-5 students at Smith will be given the lowest lottery numbers.

**Q Is transportation provided to the magnet schools?**

**A** Yes, transportation will be provided to students who attend a magnet school and live more than a mile from the magnet school.

**Q What if my child doesn't get into a magnet school through the lottery?**

**A** Students who don't make enrollment through the magnet school lottery will be put on a wait list, and then given the choice to enroll as slots open. The wait list is reviewed in June and again just prior to the start of school in late August. The wait list is then deleted as a new magnet lottery process is started each year.

**For more information, visit [whps.org/magnet](http://whps.org/magnet)**



## Magnet School Timeline for 2025-26

Application Process Starts.....	January 15, 2025
Parent Information Meeting at Charter Oak.....	February 13, 6:30 PM
Parent Information Meeting at Smith.....	February 6, 6:30 PM
Application Due .....	March 7, 4:00 PM
Lottery Results sent .....	March 20, 2025
Responses to acceptance due .....	April 4, 2025
Waiting List Review .....	Late June and Mid-August

**For tours and more information, contact:**

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