

# These towns boast N.J.'s top-rated schools. Here's what it costs to buy a home there.

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## By

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So you want to send your kid to one of New Jersey's top local high schools?

That's great.

Just how rich are you?

New Jersey's latest [controversial school ratings](#) reflect what research has long shown: Family income is often tied to kids earning higher standardized test scores, helping wealthy communities dominate list after list of the best public schools.

Buying in the Garden State towns that boast the best public schools could cost anywhere from \$675,000 in South Jersey to more than \$1 million in parts of North Jersey, according to an NJ Advance Media analysis of Zillow and state Department of Education data.

And, of course, once a town has a reputation for great schools, there's only one direction for home prices to go, according to James Hughes, an agent with Keller Williams NJ Metro Group in Upper Montclair.

"One of the top reasons people are looking to buy a home is because they're jockeying into school districts," Hughes said. "School ratings can have a significant impact on real estate values ... that drives a lot of people to go to certain neighborhoods."

NJ Advance Media identified the 10 highest-rated local public high schools — excluding magnet and specialized high schools — from the state's ratings released last week. Then we paired that with Zillow's most recent [typical home sales data](#) for the zip codes those schools predominantly serve.

The result isn't a perfect picture. Some zip codes include properties in neighboring towns. And some homes will obviously cost far less or far more. But the data offers a glimpse into what families might need to pay to buy a home in these sought after communities.

And it shows how factors like family income continue to shape our perception of a school's success or failure.

"That's why in addition to pointing people to data, I say go visit the schools," Hughes said. "Do your own empirical study before making a decision."

Zillow's calculation of "typical home value" is a trimmed mean, according to the company, an average calculated after removing a small percentage of the largest and smallest values.

On the education side, the state acknowledges New Jersey's school ratings do not provide a full picture of any school. And critics say they are oversimplified. Ratings are calculated using standardized test scores, student academic growth, graduation rates and other factors, including chronic absenteeism. Each school is given a summative rating from 0 to 100. Read more about the ratings [here](#).

With that in mind, here are the typical home values in the New Jersey towns with the 10 highest-rated, regular admission local high schools.

The Essex Fells Municipal Complex in Essex Fells.SL

**10. Essex Fells, Fairfield, North Caldwell, Roseland**

**West Essex High School**

West Essex High School earned an 89.44 rating from the Department of Education.

The typical home value for Essex Fells' 07021 zip code was \$1.2 million in February, up 10.93% from the previous year.

The typical home value for Fairfield's 07004 zip code was \$719,987 in February, up 9.55% from February 2023.

The typical home value for North Caldwell's 07006 zip code was \$748,841 in February, up 9.61% from the previous year.

And the typical home value for Roseland's 07068 zip code was \$699,334 in February, up 9.25% from February 2023.

**9. Randolph**

**Randolph High School**

Randolph High School earned an 89.72 rating from the Department of Education.

The typical home value for Randolph's 07869 zip code was \$710,866 in February, up 11.17% from the previous year.

**8. Closter, Demarest, Haworth**

**Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest**

Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest earned a 90.28 rating from the Department of Education.

The typical home value for Closter's 07624 zip code was \$944,282 in February, up 8.89% from the previous year.

The typical home value for Demarest's 07627 zip code was \$1.1 million in February, up 7.2% from February 2023.

And the typical home value for Haworth's 07641 zip code was \$960,574 in February, up 9.39% from the previous year.

Moorestown High School students celebrate graduation.SJN

**7. Moorestown**

### **Moorestown High School**

Moorestown High School earned a 90.56 rating from the Department of Education. The typical home value for Moorestown's 08057 zip code was \$682,833 in February, up 8.17% from the previous year.

### **6. Chatham**

#### **Chatham High School**

Chatham High School earned a 91.11 rating from the Department of Education. The typical home value for Chatham's 07928 zip code was \$1.1 million in February, up 9.16% from the previous year.

### **5. Tenafly, Alpine**

#### **Tenafly High School**

Tenafly High School earned a 91.39 rating from the Department of Education.

The typical home value for Tenafly's 07670 zip code was \$1 million in February, up 8.49% from the previous year.

The typical home value for Alpine's 07620 zip code was \$2.8 million in February, up 6.19% from February 2023.

Livingston High School is rated as one of New Jersey's best. NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

### **4. Livingston**

#### **Livingston High School**

Livingston High School earned a 92.78 rating from the Department of Education.

The typical home value for Livingston's 07039 zip code was \$896,018 in February, up 8.41% from the previous year.

### **3. Fair Haven, Rumson**

#### **Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School**

Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School earned a 93.06 rating from the Department of Education.

The typical home value for Fair Haven's 07704 zip code was \$1.3 million in February, up 11.27% from the previous year.

The typical home value for Rumson's 07760 zip code was \$1.5 million in February, up 8.93% from February 2023.

### **2. Mountain Lakes**

#### **Mountain Lakes High School**

Mountain Lakes High School earned a 93.33 rating from the Department of Education.

The typical home value for Mountain Lakes 07046 zip code was \$1 million in February 2024, up 8.52% from February 2023.

### **1. Haddonfield**

#### **Haddonfield Memorial High School**

Haddonfield Memorial High School earned a 93.61 rating from the Department of Education.

The typical home value for Haddonfield's 08033 zip code was \$677,376 in February 2024, up 11.17% from the previous year.

*NJ Advance Media staff writers Katie Kausch and Amira Sweilem contributed to this report.*