



Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

June
2025

A Message From the Superintendent

Dear Scotch Plains-Fanwood Community,

As another school year comes to a close, I'm filled with pride and gratitude for the dedication and partnership shown by our students, staff, families, and community. Together, we created a year full of growth, achievement, and meaningful connections.

A special congratulations to the Class of 2025! Your graduation marks not just the end of your time in Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools, but the beginning of a new journey as alumni of a district that will always be part of who you are. Never forget the strong, supportive community you came from – you are forever part of the SPF family.

Thank you all for making this school year one to remember. Wishing everyone a relaxing and joyful summer break!

Sincerely,

Dr. Joan Mast

Superintendent of Schools





Congrats, Class of 2025!



A new tradition: Senior Clap Out

From high-fives to happy tears, the first-ever Senior Clap Out on June 13 brought joy, nostalgia and community spirit across Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools. The graduating seniors of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS) proudly returned to their elementary schools, where they were welcomed and cheered on by students, teachers and staff.



The idea was proposed by Class of 2025 Salutatorian Mac Bastable and quickly embraced by district administrators, teachers, and staff. Bastable has also served as the student representative on the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education for the last two years.

“We have a lot of senior events that give us the opportunity to say farewell to the High School, but I thought the Clap Out would be a great experience for the seniors to say farewell to the other schools,” Bastable said.



The day was especially touching for Bastable, as he returned to Coles Elementary School, where his sister is in second grade. “It was really special to share that moment with her, as I walked



down the halls of Coles.”

For Bastable and the other seniors, the moment brought their SPF experience full circle. Bastable remembers the Clap Out when he transitioned from fourth grade at Coles to fifth grade at Terrill Middle School.

The Senior Clap Out will become a yearly tradition, reinforcing the sense of community and continuity that defines the SPF experience.

Bastable, who will be attending Boston College as a finance major in the fall, said he’s proud to leave behind this legacy. “I’m excited to see where this goes in the future,” he added.



SPF Educators recognized as 'Teacher of the Year' for Union County



Eight educators from Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools were recognized as Teachers of the Year for their schools at the 2025 Union County Teacher Recognition Program, sponsored by the Union County Superintendents' Roundtable.

On May 28, the teachers, as well as the 2024-2025 Milken Educator Award Recipient Emily Litz, were honored at a ceremony at Kean University in recognition of outstanding teachers from districts across the county. They were joined at the ceremony by Superintendent Dr. Joan Mast and Board of Education Vice President Tonya Williams.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood's honorees included:

- Marina Beirne
- Ellen Christiano
- Lorissa Clark
- Alexandra Graham
- Paige Kovacs
- Jessica Mandy
- Katelyn Washuta
- Kristen Zmuda
- Emily Litz (2024-2025 Milken Educator Award Recipient)

SPF welcomes new Director of Special Services

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools is pleased to announce the

appointment of Marisa Stefani as the new Director of Special Services, effective Tuesday, July 1.

Stefani brings years of experience in special education, social work, and related services to the role. Most recently, she assumed a lead role within the Special Services Department at Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School, in addition to serving as the district's Transition Coordinator, Child Study Team Case Manager, and Wellness Counselor. She played a key role in overseeing case management, guiding Case Study Team operations, supporting staff, and coordinating services to enhance student outcomes.



She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and holds New Jersey certifications as a School Social Worker, Supervisor, and School Principal, as well as an Advanced Trainer in the Nurtured Heart Approach.

“Marisa has demonstrated strong leadership and supported students, families, and staff with skill and compassion,” said Superintendent Dr. Joan Mast. “We’re thrilled to welcome her to Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools, where her knowledge and passion will help strengthen and elevate our district’s Special Services.”

Stefani said she is eager to build relationships across the district and provide consistent support.

“I want everyone to know that I have an open-door policy, and I’m here to collaborate, listen, and be a resource,” she said. “I’m excited to join Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools and to begin connecting with everyone in the district.”

Stefani earned a Master of Social Work (MSW) from Southern Connecticut State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Social Services and Bachelor of Science in Health Science with a minor in Biology from Quinnipiac University, in conjunction with Yale University. She also completed the Foundation for Educational Administration’s New Jersey Expedited Certification for Educational Leadership (NJEXCEL) Certificate Program.

Stefani has previously worked as an adjunct professor at Monmouth University School of Social Work in West Long Branch, as well as in private practice. She has demonstrated leadership in a variety of settings, including public schools; private therapeutic schools as a clinical coordinator, supervisor, and school social worker; supervisor for a case management agency; program director of an adult and youth residential treatment facilities; juvenile justice program; domestic violence and sexual assault survivor program; and intensive in-community therapist.

We welcome her to the SPF team!

Jason Benedict joins Board of Education



The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education is proud to announce the appointment of Jason Benedict as its newest board member. A longtime Fanwood resident, father, and active community member, Benedict brings both professional expertise and a commitment to education.

“As a parent, a higher education professional with operational responsibilities in cybersecurity, and a lifelong learner, I’ve always believed that schools are the

cornerstone of any thriving community,” said Benedict. “With my professional experience and passion for the success of our district’s students, I felt a responsibility to give back to my community through the Board of Education.”

Benedict’s goals as a board member include championing student success by fostering strong learning environments, supporting teachers with professional development, and ensuring the Board of Education functions with transparency, accountability, and trust.

“Our district is already strong, and I want to help it become exceptional,” he said. “That means aligning resources with student needs, listening openly, and acting decisively.”

Benedict and his wife have lived in Fanwood for nearly 20 years, and a lot of their family and friends also live in Scotch-Plains and Fanwood. They have a son, who is a rising junior at Scotch-Plains Fanwood High School.

Benedict is currently the Associate Vice President for IT and Global Chief Information Security Officer at Fordham University. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business and information technology and a master’s degree in cybersecurity, both from Fordham University. He also holds an associate’s degree in accounting from Kingsborough Community College.

When Benedict is not working, he enjoys watching his son’s sporting events, doing community service, taking his fully restored 1985 Cadillac Eldorado convertible to car shows and judging BBQ food contests.

“I’m humbled and extremely grateful for this opportunity and look forward to working with the entire SPF community to keep our schools strong, future-ready, and rooted in the values that make Scotch Plains-Fanwood such a special place,” said Benedict. “We absolutely love being part of this community and I look forward to continuing our family’s commitment to public service in

any way we can.”

Featured Events

Enjoy the summer break!

Link to full calendar: [*Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools / Calendar*](#)

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