

# Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools



**A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together**

## A Message from the Superintendent

### Dear Scotch Plains-Fanwood Community,

Each October, schools across the country recognize National Bullying Prevention Month – a time to reaffirm our shared commitment to creating safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments for all students. At Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools, we take this commitment very seriously and believe that every child deserves to feel valued, respected and supported.

This month, I encourage you to take a few moments to talk with your children about the importance of being upstanders – to speak out against bullying and to stand up for one another. Bullying prevention is a community effort, and we are strongest when we unite around the message that bullying is never acceptable.



If you need to report an incident of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (H.I.B.), you can do so using this anonymous reporting [form](#). Additional resources for families can also be found [here](#).

While October provides an opportunity to shine a spotlight on bullying prevention, our efforts extend beyond this month. Each day, we aim to create schools built on kindness, empathy, and belonging for all students, staff, families, and community members.

Thank you for your continued partnership in helping us build a culture of respect and care in SPF.

Sincerely,  
**Dr. Joan Mast**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**Have a SPF Story? Share it!**

# Student Voices on the Board of Education

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools is proud to have Grace MacDougall serve as the Senior Board Representative and Leah Genato serve as the Junior Board Representative on the Board of Education. They bring valuable student voices and perspectives into district discussions!



**Grace MacDougall, Senior Representative**

**Activities:** President of Student Government Association; Co-President of Spanish Honors Society; President of the Spanish Club; Board Member on Study Advisory Board and Peer Leaders Board; YMCA swim instructor and tennis player

**What has your experience on the Board of Education been like?**

It's definitely different from other leadership positions I've held in school. I've been able to see what happens behind the scenes of our schools – from meeting with new assistant principals to discussions about district goals. It's exposed me to new perspectives and helped me strengthen my leadership and public speaking skills.

**What do you enjoy most about being on the Board?**

I enjoy being able to capture and share student input. Representing my classmates is such a rewarding experience. It's given me a greater appreciation for our staff and teachers, and it's allowed me to be a role model for my peers.



**Leah Genato, Junior Representative**

**Activities:** Competitive dancer since age 9; leads the Science Club at the Scotch Plains Public Library; event coordinator on the Teen Advisory Board at the Library; Youth Secretariat on Model UN; Junior class officer of Salsa (Spanish Club); social media manager and member of Girl Up Club.

**What made you want to join the Board of Education as a student representative?**

I first learned about the student representative opportunity through an email sent to my class. I'm a huge believer in saying 'yes' to opportunities that take me out of my comfort zone. I really wanted the position, and I was surprised and excited to be chosen, especially knowing how many of my classmates applied.

**What are you looking forward to in this role?**

I'm excited to get an inside look at how our school system is governed and managed. It's invaluable insight for me because I'm interested in a future career in public policy and law. This experience will help me develop my leadership and communication skills,

**What skills are you building through this experience?**

Public speaking and communication, especially learning how to collaborate, make compromises, and understand how different committees work together. This experience has helped me see the bigger picture of how decisions are made across the district. I would like to practice law, specifically civil or immigration law, and these skills are invaluable.

**Fun Fact:** Grace enjoys drawing in her free time.

both personally and professionally. It also will allow me to be a voice for my classmates on things that matter to them.

**Fun Fact:** Leah enjoys celebrating her Filipino heritage and traveled this summer to the Philippines to visit family. She loved connecting with her family, many of whom serve in political positions in the country.

## Hispanic Heritage Month Celebrated with District-Wide Activities



SPF was proud to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, which ran from Sept. 15 – Oct. 15. Aligning with the national theme, **"Collective Heritage: Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future,"** the district engaged students at all grade levels.

This observance was particularly meaningful for the district, where over 15% of students identify as Hispanic. It also directly reflected the district's commitment to creating equitable and inclusive classrooms.

"We are working to provide 'ample mirrors and windows' for all students," said Dr. Robert McGarry, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. "Hispanic Heritage Month offers us an opportunity to create mirrors for our Hispanic and Latine/x students by affirming their identities and incorporating their experiences into our curriculum, while also creating windows for all students to learn about and appreciate the diverse cultures and experiences of these communities."

### Activities included:

- Elementary schools: Teachers used a comprehensive set of slides developed by district staff. These resources introduced students to Hispanic Heritage Month through videos, geography lessons, and facts about the 21 Spanish-speaking nations. Daily activities included "Words of the Day" to learn Spanish greetings, colors, and feelings, a "Book Room" with read-alouds of books by and about people of Hispanic/Latin heritage, and an "Art Corner" featuring directed drawings of sugar skulls and projects inspired by abstract artist Ines Alvidres. Students also enjoyed music through a "Kidz Bop Hispanic Heritage Mix".
- Terrill Middle School: 7th and 8th-grade students celebrated by reading articles, conducting research, watching music videos, and participating in geography activities related to Hispanic heritage.
- Nettingham Middle School: Students created large wing-themed bulletin boards inspired by a Frida Kahlo quote, which will serve as photo opportunities for the school community. The morning announcements featured famous Hispanic and Latino individuals throughout the month, culminating in a school-wide Hispanic Heritage Month Spirit Week in early October.
- High School: The Spanish department is hosting a vibrant Hispanic Heritage celebration on Oct. 30 from 5-7 p.m. in the school cafeteria. The event will feature dance lessons from the local Alma Montuno dance studio, allowing students to enjoy music and food from the Spanish-speaking world.



# Seven Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Students Recognized in National Merit Scholarship Program

Seven Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School seniors have been named Commended Students in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program. The students are **Annie Ricca, Emma Telpis, Gareth Su, Isabella Mirenda, Joseph Lambert, Karoly Jakab, and Venny Ebrahim.**

They are among the 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation recognized for their exceptional academic promise.

"Congratulations to Annie, Emma, Gareth, Isabella, Joseph, Karoly, and Venny for excelling academically and making the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools community proud," said Superintendent Dr. Joan Mast. "With their hard work and dedication, these students are bound to achieve continued academic success, and we'll be cheering them on through every accomplishment."

Students entered the National Merit Scholarship Program, a nationwide competition for recognition and awards conducted by National Merit Scholarship Program, by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) last year. In April, NMSC identified the 50,000 highest scorers and notified their high schools.

Although these seven students will not continue in the 2026 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards, they are recognized for placing among the nation's top scorers. Congratulations to our SPFHS students and all the Commended Students nationwide!



## Facilities and Infrastructure Updates Happen Across the District

The district has undertaken a variety of facility and infrastructure updates that will benefit students and staff. Updates included:

### Infrastructure

- New Nettingham Life Skills Room
- Nettingham flood remediation and rebuild
- Nettingham Generator
- High School Main Office moved to the front of the school; relocation of Child Study Team

- High School CST Space
- Flag poles replacements at Nettingham and Brunner and repairs across the district
- HVAC Replacements

#### Maintenance

- Various room touch ups
- Concrete/pavement/pothole repairs throughout the district
- Playground Repairs

#### Other

- Stage curtain replacements, repairs, treatments
- Bobcat purchase to increase efficiency of operations

The district also worked closely with its architects to plan for the La Grande Elementary School renovations and the referendum projects. The district has begun the bid process and completed the first sale of bonds for the projects approved by voters in January 2025. With construction beginning this fall, the district is on track to open La Grande Elementary School to pre-kindergarten students for the 2026-2027 school year and to complete district-wide upgrades to fire alarms, electrical, and HVAC by fall 2026 and fall 2027. Visit <https://www.spfk12.org/our-district/referendum-updates> for details!



## Annual CROP Walk to Unite Community Against Hunger

The annual CROP Walk to End Hunger will take place on **Saturday, Nov. 9, starting at 12 p.m.** This event will bring together people from all walks of life to support hunger relief efforts both locally and around the world. This meaningful event highlights our community's shared commitment to helping others while fostering understanding and connection across generations and faiths. For our students, the walk offers a valuable opportunity to engage in service learning and deepen their awareness of the global and local impact of hunger.

SPF MINISTERIUM  
PRESENTS

## CROP HUNGER WALK

Join Us for a Walk  
to help reduce food  
insecurity here at home  
and around the world

RAIN OR SHINE  
**SUNDAY NOV 9TH**  
REGISTRATION & INFORMATION  
TABLES - 12:00 TO 1 PM  
HIGH OFF - 1:00 PM  
FINISH - 3:00 PM  
**SPF HIGH SCHOOL TRACK**  
**667 WESTFIELD RD,**  
**SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ**



LEARN MORE, WALK OR DONATE  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/SPFCROPWALK](https://tinyurl.com/spfcropwalk)  
AUGUST RUGGIERO 908-377-3409



**SPIFFY  
SAYS**

woof!

*“Stay up to date with  
District events using  
the calendar!”*

Check out the District Calendar

### *Events to watch out for:*

Oct. 29, 10-11 a.m. – Ask the Superintendent at Fanwood Memorial Library

Oct. 31 – Happy Halloween! View the calendar for parades and other activities.

Nov. 6-7 – Schools Closed for NJEA Convention

Nov. 9, 12 p.m. – Crop Hunger Walk at SPF High School Track

Nov. 10, 6 p.m. – HS National Honor Society Induction

Nov. 12, 10 am – National Letter of Intent Signing

Nov. 13 – School One Veterans Day Celebration

Nov. 20, 8 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting in SPFHS Media Center

Nov. 21, 7 p.m., Nov. 22, 2 & 7 p.m., Nov. 23, 2 p.m. – SPFHS  
Metamorphoses Fall Play

Nov. 26 – Single Session Day for all Schools

Nov. 27-28 – Schools Closed for Thanksgiving Break



See more events for each school: <https://www.spfk12.org/spf-district-calendar>

**www.spfk12.org | (908) 232 - 6161**  
**512 Cedar Street, Scotch Plains, Nj 07076**



Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education | 512 Cedar St | Scotch Plains, NJ 07076 US

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