

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools



A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Scotch Plains-Fanwood Community,

As we approach winter break, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who makes our schools a remarkable place for students to learn and thrive.

To our parents and families: Thank you for your partnership and continued trust. Your support and collaboration are essential to all we do.

To our teachers: Your dedication, creativity, and commitment to SPF students inspires me. Thank you for the countless hours you pour into creating meaningful learning experiences and lasting relationships.

To our staff: Whether you work in a classroom, office, cafeteria, bus, or building, you keep our schools running with care and pride. We are deeply grateful for all you do.

To our community: Thank you for standing alongside us, believing in our mission, and supporting our schools. Your partnership strengthens our district and communities.

As we head into this well-deserved break, I hope you find time to rest, reflect, and enjoy the season with family and friends. Have a wonderful winter break!

Sincerely,
Dr. Joan Mast
Superintendent of Schools



Have a SPF Story? Share it!

Grade-Level Adjustments to Address Enrollment Surge

The district recently announced a phased plan to move fifth graders to the elementary schools, starting with Brunner Elementary School in the 2026-2027 school year. This strategic adjustment addresses an unprecedented enrollment surge while ensuring the district continues to deliver high-quality education for all students.

"The plan at Brunner Elementary gives us an opportunity to evaluate a future model for our district. The long-term plan will be to sequentially evaluate our ability to keep fifth-grade students in their elementary schools across the district. These changes are being made thoughtfully and responsibly, guided by our district's mission to ensure academic excellence for all students," said Superintendent Dr. Joan Mast.

[Read More About the Plan Here](#)

Thank you for Community Input on Future Goals



SPF is excited to develop a new Strategic Plan to set goals for the next three to five years. As part of this process, the district solicited feedback in November through parent, staff, and community surveys to gather data, ideas, and perspectives from all residents.

Thank you to everyone who participated! We look forward to sharing future updates about the Strategic Plan process in the coming weeks.

Student-Athletes Celebrated at Fall National Signing Day

Three Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School student-athletes have signed Letters of Intent with colleges and universities. The students were celebrated at the Fall National Signing Day Ceremony. We are so proud of their academic and athletic accomplishments!

The following student-athletes will continue to compete at the collegiate level:

- Sadie Shapiro - Soccer – Duquesne
- Caleb McDowell - Lacrosse – Yale
- Delaney Farley - Track – West Chester





Scenes from 8th Grade Parent & Student Night

The reimagined Eighth Grade Parent & Student Night at SPFHS was a huge success on Nov. 13, with dozens of clubs and programs presenting that evening. Hundreds of eighth-grade students and parents came for the event to learn more about the high-quality academics and variety of extracurricular, athletics, and social clubs that are a hallmark of SPFHS.

Full List of SPFHS Activities & Clubs



JV Baseball Mound Before Work



JV Baseball Mound After Work

Building & Grounds Improvements Across the District

The district prioritizes ongoing maintenance and improvements to our fields.

[Click here](#) to see a list of work that has been completed during the 2025-2026 school year and what is planned for the future.



JV Softball First Base Line Before Work



JV Softball First Base Line After Work

SPFHS Junior Accepted into Cooper Hewitt Design Hive Program



Junior Lucas Lugo tours the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in NYC.

Junior Lucas Lugo has been selected for the highly competitive *Cooper Hewitt Design Hive Program*, a paid, youth-led initiative at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City.

The Design Hive program gives high school juniors and seniors in the New York City area the chance to explore professional design, collaborate on projects and see how ideas become finished products. Lugo is one of only 12 students selected for this prestigious program.

Lugo's interest in design started in sixth grade, inspired by architecture, fashion and creative exploration. He has continued since then to take art classes in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district.

"I have always been curious and loved exploring artists, designers, movies, music, and creators," he said. "Design is everywhere, from water bottles to buildings."

[Read more about Lucas](#)



A current piece of still life artwork created by Lucas Lugo.





Congratulations to the 15 Governor's Educator of the Year Recipients!

We recently recognized 15 exceptional teachers and educational services professionals nominated for the 2025-2026 Governor's Educator of the Year Recognition Program.

The Governor's Educator of the Year recipients are:

- Anne Guard, Nettingham Spanish Teacher
- Kathleen Daniele, Nettingham Classroom Aide
- Kathy McArdle, Evergreen First Grade Teacher
- Celina Merejo, Evergreen Classroom Aide
- Andrea Karanik, SPFHS Social Studies Teacher
- Richard Dorry, SPFHS Student Assistance Specialist
- Katherine (Kate) Szczubelek, School One Kindergarten Teacher
- Holly Hindin, School One Classroom Aide
- Emily Bentivegna, Brunner Special Education Teacher
- Marissa Kurtz, Brunner Speech/Language Specialist
- Elizabeth Sinnott, McGinn Special Education Teacher
- Kamini Sanghvi, McGinn Classroom Aide
- Kari Weinglass, Coles Special Education Teacher
- Dawn Haligowski, Coles Classroom Aide
- Nora Shalan, Terrill English/LA Teacher





SPFHS Students Accepted into Region II Band and Choir



Congratulations to the SPFHS students who auditioned and were accepted into both the Central New Jersey (Region II) Band and Choir! This is an amazing achievement, made possible only through hard work and dedication.

The Band Concert will be on Sunday, Jan. 18 at 3 p.m. The Choir Concert will be on Sunday, Jan. 25 at 3 pm. Both concerts will be at the Nicholas Music Center at Rutgers University.

Symphonic Band

Aleksander Stevens

Treble Choir

Juilee Joshi

Alex Martins

Juilee Joshi

Kayla Mathew

Mixed Choir

Mackenna Fisher

Logan Griffiths

Jordin Iazzetti

Teresa Jackson

Gayatri Phatak

Knevin Pilley

Aaron Pinsky

Arielle Solomon

SPF Board of Education Approves Teacher Leadership Positions

At the Dec. 18 Board of Education meeting, the Board approved Teacher Leadership positions. Teacher Leaders will serve as departmental instructional leaders and liaisons between administration and faculty, promoting excellence in curriculum, instruction, and professional growth within the department.

Elementary

- Tracy Butler - *Social Studies*
- Charlene Hall - *Science*
- Courtney Kelleher – *Gr. 5 Social Studies & Science*

Secondary

- Marjorie Fitzgibbon – *Business*
- Zachary Heebner - *Special Education*
- Luke Piede - *Math*



SPIFFY SAYS

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

woof!

Dec. 24 – Jan. 2 – Winter Break

Jan. 10, 8 a.m. - Super Sports Saturday at SPFHS

Jan. 14, 7 p.m. - Terrill Grades 5 & 6 Chorus and Instrumental Winter Concert

Jan. 19 – Schools are Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan. 20 – Coles Author Visit Jerry Pallotta

Jan. 22, 8 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting in SPFHS Media Center

Jan. 27, 7 p.m. – School One 4th Grade Winter Concert

See more events on the District Calendar

Alumni Corner: Sairah Llano '24



SPFHS graduate Sairah Llano '24 is a sophomore at The College of New Jersey. She is studying mechanical engineering and is a member of the softball team. She was recently recognized as an NFCA Scholar Athlete, reflecting her hard work in balancing academics and athletics.

She recently attended a Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education meeting and shared her perspective on how SPF prepared her for college.

I attended Scotch Plains–Fanwood schools from kindergarten through high school, so being here tonight is very meaningful to me. Especially since I was once a student rep, it's fun to be back. Everything I'm doing now—academically, athletically, and as a leader—started with the foundation this district provided.

Engineering has challenged me in the best ways. Balancing a rigorous engineering curriculum with collegiate athletics requires persistence and focus. I'm proud to share that I'm currently earning all A's this semester so far (not all the grades have been put in yet), and I've also received two internship offers, which has been super exciting. More than anything, those opportunities have shown me how prepared I was when I entered college.

There are so many aspects of SPF that helped me get to where I am today. I was able to somewhat breeze through Physics and Calc A, B, and most recently, C. A lot of thanks goes to the teachers I had here, Mr. Koegel, who I had for both Calculus and Calculus BC, and Mrs. Alabdullah who I had for physics and AP physics. Both of them and so many of the other teachers I've had helped me develop the problem-solving mindset and confidence that I use every day.

Beyond the classroom, I'm also involved in leadership and engineering-focused organizations. I was recently elected Vice Regent of Theta Tau, the professional engineering fraternity at TCNJ. I joined Theta Tau last spring and served as fundraising chair this past semester. I'm also a member of Solar District Cup, where a team of students is working to strategically design where solar panels should be put on Clemson's campus to help them have more green energy. It's normally a senior project, but it was opened to other classes. I'm working on the design and financial aspects.

Having served as a former student representative on the Board of Education, I understand the time, thought, and effort that goes into this work—both during these meetings and behind the scenes. I'd also like to thank Dr. Mast and all members of the board for their leadership and support of this district. I know you have important work ahead, and I want to thank you for your continued investment in students and for your commitment to education in Scotch Plains–Fanwood.

I'm proud to represent my town, proud to say I grew up in Scotch Plains–Fanwood, and excited to continue building on the foundation that started here.

SPF IN THE NEWS

A Night to Remember: Nettingham Middle School Renames Annual Basketball Game for Nico Lombardi

Nettingham Middle School hosted a very special event on Friday, Dec. 5: the Nico Lombardi Memorial Basketball Game, what was formerly the 8th Grade vs. Staff Basketball Game. The contest now serves as a lasting tribute to Nico.



[Read the Full Article on TAPinto](#)

Scenes from Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School's Annual Mr. Spiffy Contest

The annual Mr. Spiffy High produced by Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School on Friday, Dec. 5, is part fashion show, part talent show, a lip-syncing showcase, and most importantly, a fundraiser to benefit a charitable cause.



[See the Full Article on TAPinto](#)

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