

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools



A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Scotch Plains-Fanwood Community,



Each spring, the Board of Education and district leadership take on one of our most important responsibilities: building a school budget that ensures every dollar invested is used efficiently and delivers value for SPF students.

At our [Board of Education meeting](#) earlier this week, the tentative [2026-2027 budget](#) was presented. This year's budget reflects a thoughtful approach amid a particularly challenging financial climate. Rising healthcare costs, inflationary pressures, increasing operational expenses, and continued enrollment growth have all required careful planning.

In many ways, this is a "no frills" budget.

However, that does not mean we are compromising on quality education. We, instead, remain focused on strong academic programs, including investing in a new Raiders Business Academy and expanded dual enrollment opportunities that prepare students for college and career pathways.

The tentative budget has been submitted to the county for review, and a formal adoption will take place at the April 30 Board of Education meeting.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership as we work together to provide the highest quality education for all SPF students. I wish you a wonderful Spring Break and look forward to welcoming everyone back refreshed and ready for the final months of the school year!

Sincerely,
Dr. Joan Mast
Superintendent of Schools

Have a SPF Story? Share it!



SPF students celebrated 104-year-old resident, timed with 100th Day of School

When 104-year-old Fanwood resident and World War II veteran Joe Schott walked into William J. McGinn Elementary School, he stepped into a birthday celebration that connected generations. Introducing himself to students in the hallway as “Grandpa Joe”, Schott was welcomed by hundreds of students whose 100th Day of School festivities coincided with his 104th birthday.

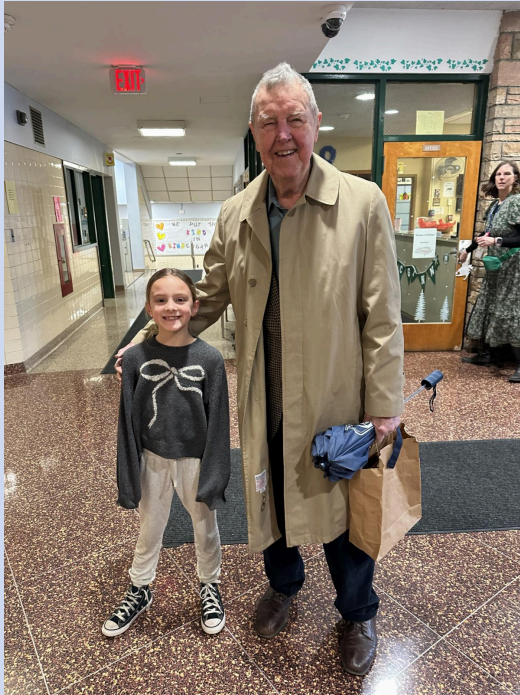
“The 100th Day of School is always a joyful milestone in Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools but celebrating it alongside Mr. Schott’s birthday made it especially meaningful for our entire community,” said Superintendent Dr. Joan Mast. “Moments like this connect generations and help our students understand that they are part of something special here in Scotch Plains-Fanwood.”



In the weeks leading up to the 100th Day of School, students across the district created birthday cards for Schott and learned about his life as part of their social studies curriculum. Classes from all five elementary schools participated.

The day after Schott's birthday, he visited McGinn. Coordinated by Joan Skubish, Town Historian for the Fanwood Historic Preservation Commission, the visit was a heartfelt celebration.

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SPFHS senior honored with Unsung Hero Award



Xhaoxiang Chen, a senior at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, was honored with the 2026 Unsung Hero Award during the Union County School Board Association awards celebration on March 13.

The Unsung Hero Award is given out annually by the Union County School Board Association in coordination with the New Jersey School Boards Association. The award recognizes one graduating senior from each high school in Union County who has made outstanding contributions to their schools and community.

Eight years ago, Chen and his family moved from China to the United States. Chen soared through the Multilingual Learners program in Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools and demonstrated exceptional perseverance, determination, and compassion, SPFHS Principal Dr. Warren Hynes said.

“Zhao has demonstrated the true qualities of a hero,” Hynes said. “We are incredibly proud of the dedication, empathy, integrity, collaboration, and excellence Zhao has

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Brunner Elementary School Celebrates Neurodiversity Week 2026



Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools proudly celebrated Neurodiversity Week from March 16-20. At Brunner Elementary School, the week stretched across subject areas and grade levels and is becoming a beloved tradition.

Led by Special Education Teacher Alexandra Graham and paraprofessional Rosemarie Pearce, the week-long celebration of inclusion, understanding, and acceptance is now in its fourth year at Brunner. Each year, it has expanded and now includes all 467 students from pre-K through 4th grade at Brunner.

“Each year, we ask ourselves how we can go a little bigger,” Pearce said.

This year’s theme, “I Am,” encouraged students to express their identities through positive affirmations.

Students and staff participated in themed activities designed to celebrate diverse minds. Highlights included a rainbow tie-dye themed kickoff day, fun hair and hat day to “decorate our amazing brains”, sensory-friendly pajama day, and mismatched socks day in recognition of World Down Syndrome Day.



The celebration culminated in a school-wide art project supported by Art Teacher Brian Rosenberger. Each student created a unique watercolor background, added a black-and-white photo of themselves, and completed “I Am” affirmation statements such as “I am kind,” “I am a friend,” or “I am a problem solver.”

The colorful, quilt-like design is on display at Brunner.

“We are always thinking about how we can be who we are as individuals, while also building each other up as a whole community,” said Graham. “It’s about celebrating every student for who they are.”



The special education preschool team at Brunner, from left to right: Alexandra Graham, Rosemarie Pearce, Jennifer Cabezudo, Samantha Strulowitz, Ashley Maynard, Jeanny Porras, Lizette Rodriguez, Olivia McIntosh, Laurie DiFabio, and Karen McGowan.

Congrats to the Valedictorian and Salutatorian!

Congratulations!
Isabella Mirenda

Valedictorian,
Class of 2026



Congratulations!
Gabriella Suriani

Salutatorian,
Class of 2026



SPFHS is thrilled to announce the valedictorian and salutatorian of the Class of 2026. Our valedictorian is Isabella Mirenda, while our salutatorian is Gabriella Suriani. Both students have attained remarkable academic success while also taking active roles in our school community.

Isabella (Bella), who has not yet committed to the college of her choice, earned a weighted GPA above 4.78. Her favorite courses included AP Chemistry, AP Calculus, AP Psychology, and AP Biology. Bella plans to major in engineering, and her experience with AP Chemistry has her leaning toward chemical engineering at this time.

Gabriella (Gabby), who has committed to Wake Forest University, earned a weighted GPA above 4.71. Her favorite courses included AP Chemistry, AP Physics, AP Statistics, AP Biology, and AP U.S. Government and Politics. Gabby will be a biochemistry and molecular biology major on the pre-med track, and may also explore the field of public health.

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Preschool registration to begin Saturday, April 11

We will begin accepting online preschool applications for the 2026-2027 school year on Saturday, April 11 at 10 a.m.

All preschool classes will be held at LaGrande Elementary School located at 330 South Ave. in Fanwood. The Preschool Program uses the Creative Curriculum, which fosters children's learning through exploration and discovery. Preschool classes are composed of general education students and students with special needs, as determined by a district evaluation.

Applicants must be residents of Scotch Plains or Fanwood. Proof of residency status and an original birth certificate will be required for new students enrolling in the program. The child's age as of October 1, 2026 will determine placement in a 3-year-old or 4-year-old class.

Typically, 3-year-olds attend the morning session from 8:45-11:40 a.m. and 4-year-olds attend the afternoon session from 12:40-3:30 p.m. All classes meet five days per week.

Tuition for the half-day program will be \$450 per month. A 10% sibling discount is available. In addition, free or reduced tuition may be available for families who qualify per federal guidelines or a district review.

Online applications will be available on the program website (www.spfk12.org/preschool) beginning Saturday, April 11 at 10 a.m. For additional information, please contact the Preschool Office at (908) 889-8600 x31402 or preschool@spfk12.org.

Fast Facts About Our Program:

- All preschool classes will be held at LaGrande Elementary School starting in the 2026-2027 school year.
- LaGrande Elementary School is located at 330 South Ave in Fanwood.
- Half-day sessions are held in the morning from 8:45-11:40am, or in the afternoon from 12:40-3:30pm.
- Classes meet 5 days per week following the SPF Public Schools calendar.
- Children must be residents of Scotch Plains or Fanwood to participate.
- Approximately 15 children are in each class.
- Each class is supervised by a teacher certified in Early Childhood Education and Special Education and assisted by a full-time instructional aide.
- Children must be 3 or 4 years old on or before October 1st of the school year for which they are enrolling.
- Our program utilizes Creative Curriculum for its proven results in promoting math, literacy, and critical-thinking skills.

If you are concerned that your preschool child is developing or learning differently, you can request an evaluation for preschool special education and related services. For more information about the evaluation process, please call the Department of Special Services at (908) 889-0100.



woof!

SPIFFY SAYS

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

March 30 – April 3 – Schools Closed for Spring Break

April 10 & 11, 7-9 p.m. and **April 12, 2-4 p.m.** – Terrill Musical

April 15, 6:30-7:30 p.m. – Coles Science Fair

April 18, 6:30 – 9 p.m. – McGinn Variety Show at SPFHS Auditorium

April 22, 7 p.m. – District Chorus Festival

April 24, 6 – 7 p.m. - School One PTA Variety Show

April 27, 7 p.m. – District Music Festival at Nettingham

April 29, 7 p.m. – District Art Show

April 30, 6 – 7:30 p.m. – A Night of Social Justice: The Revolution Reimagined at SPFHS

April 30, 8 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting in SPFHS Media Center

[See more events on the Calendar](#)

Community Members can Sign Up for the Newsletter, too!

Do you know any community members who are interested in receiving SPF news? Our monthly newsletter is open to everyone – alumni, residents, and community members.

Subscribe to stay connected to student achievements, district updates, post-bond referendum updates, and all the good happening across SPF.



www.spfk12.org | (908) 232 - 6161
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