SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS · 2026–2027

Superintendent's Report

October 26, 2026

#SPSCompassionate&Extraordinary

Our Vision and Mission

VISION

Cultivating compassionate and extraordinary learners!

MISSION

Springfield Public Schools will challenge every student through meaningful, engaging experiences — empowering all students to flourish and contribute in an evolving world.

TONIGHT'S AGENDA

Report Overview

1. **Student Representative Report**
   Gabriela Vianna
2. **2025–2026 School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades Under the Anti-Bullying Act**
   Ms. Meredith Gerckens
3. **Student Safety Data System (SSDS) Reporting Period 2, SY 2025–2026**
   Ms. Meredith Gerckens
4. **In Our Schools**
5. **Calendar Reminders**

PRINCIPAL APPRECIATION MONTH

Thank You to Our Principals!

Dr. Norman Francis, Jr.
Jonathan Dayton High School

Mr. Ron Slate
Florence M. Gaudineer Middle School

Mr. Dave Rennie
James Caldwell School

Mr. Tim Kielty
Thelma L. Sandmeier Elementary

Dr. Jonathan Firetto
Edward V. Walton Elementary

WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you for leading our schools every day!

Student Safety Data System Reporting

SSDS 2025–2026 Reporting Period 2

Ms. Meredith Gerckens

SSDS · 2025–2026 REPORTING PERIOD 2

Incidents, Trainings, and Programs by School

Category	EVW	JCS	TLS	FMG	JDHS	Total
Total incidents	1	0	0	10	8	19
Violence	0	0	0	8	3	11
Vandalism	1	0	0	1	1	3
Substances	0	0	0	0	1	1
Weapons	0	0	0	0	0	0
HIB alleged	8	1	0	8	3	20
HIB confirmed	0	0	0	1	3	4
Other incidents leading to removal	1	0	1	0	5	7
HIB trainings	8	7	11	5	8	39
HIB programs	8	7	6	1	10	32

HIB Training

Instruction and/or practice activities specifically designed to prepare someone to implement a program or strategy, fulfill a responsibility, or implement a skill proficiently.

HIB Program

Events, plans, systems, or a series of scheduled organized activities or procedures under which action may be taken toward a goal. A single event is not a program unless it meets this definition.

ANTI-BULLYING BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

HIB Grade Summary: 2025–2026 School Year

Ms. Meredith Gerckens

2025–2026 HIB SELF-ASSESSMENT

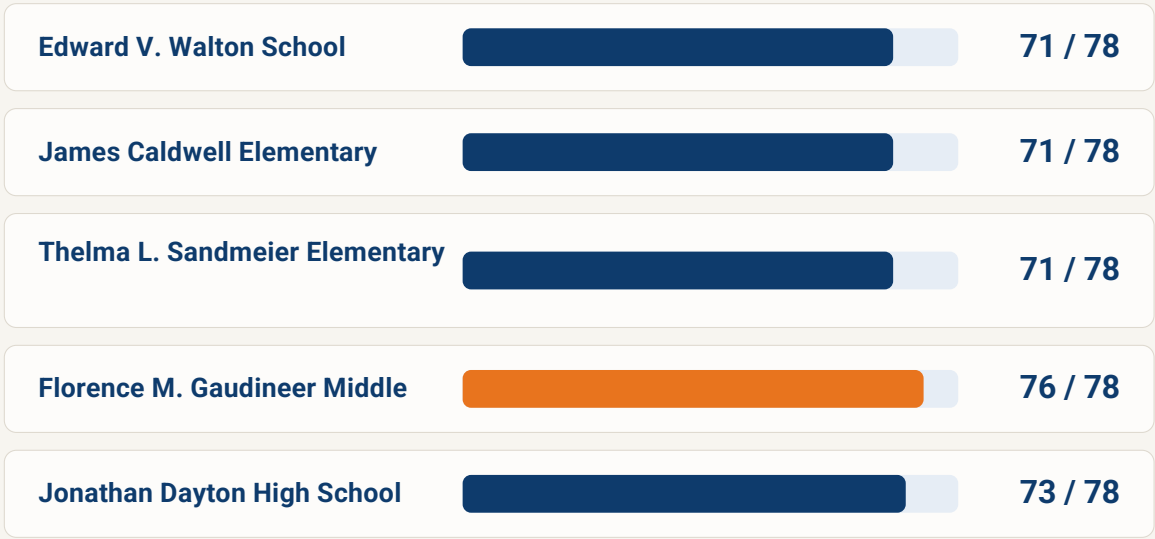
District-wide HIB Grade Summary

DISTRICT GRADE

72

out of 78 possible points

Based on each building's self-assessment for the 2025–2026 school year



2025–2026 HIB SELF-ASSESSMENT

School Scores by Domain

Domain	EVW	JCS	TLS	FMG	JDHS	Max
Programs, Approaches, or Other Initiatives	13	13	14	14	13	15
Training on the BOE-Approved HIB Policy	8	8	8	9	9	9
Other Staff Instruction & Training Programs	13	12	13	14	13	15
Curriculum & Instruction on HIB & Related Information & Skills	4	6	5	6	5	6
HIB Personnel	9	8	9	9	9	9
School-Level HIB Incident Reporting Procedure	6	6	5	6	6	6
HIB Investigation Procedure	12	12	11	12	12	12
HIB Reporting	6	6	6	6	6	6
School Grade	71	71	71	76	73	78

Strongest areas: **HIB Reporting** (every school 6 of 6) and the **HIB Investigation Procedure** (four of five schools 12 of 12).

HIB PROGRAMS & TRAINING

Staff Training

Mandatory Annual HIB Training

All staff complete annual training on New Jersey's law on Harassment, Intimidation, & Bullying: **"Bullying: Recognition and Response."**

Information Distribution

Anti-Bullying Specialists and principals share information at the start of each school year with students and all staff who have contact with students.

Other Staff Trainings

- Child Abuse Prevention
- Student Alcohol & Substance Misuse
- Crisis Prevention Training
- McKinney-Vento Homelessness Awareness and Identification
- Creating a Respectful Workplace and Learning Culture
- Youth Suicide: Awareness, Prevention, and Postvention

NEW FOR 2026–27

Nurtured Heart Training

Grief and Loss Specialist Training

Counselors only

DISTRICT INITIATIVES

Core Programs & Curriculum

Heroes and Cool Kids

6th graders receive three key decision-making lessons led by high school student “Heroes.”

Start with Hello

K–12 program empowering students to reduce social isolation, build peer connections, and foster community support.

Say Something Anonymous Reporting

24/7 Sandy Hook Promise system for tips that help prevent violence, bullying, and self-harm.

No Place for Hate

District-wide pledge and 3 events per building each year on safety, diversity, equity, and inclusion, in all 5 schools.

Springfield Leadership

High school upperclassmen course creating student-led, adult-supported transition lessons for underclassmen.

Peer Mediation Program

Running at TLS and JC, and expanding to EVW for 2026–27.

DISTRICT INITIATIVES

Awareness Weeks & Support Services

Awareness Weeks

- **Week of Respect**
- **School Violence Awareness Week**
- **Red Ribbon Week**
- **Wellness Day & Mental Health Action Day**

Support Services

Ongoing SEL Groups

Lunchtime and after-school social-emotional learning groups, K–8

Soluna Partnership

NEW FOR 2026–27

Marble Health Partnership

Virtual mental health service connecting students with licensed therapists for individual and group therapy, in collaboration with school counselors and families. Accepts most commercial insurance plans and Medicaid.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING · ALL GRADE LEVELS

SEL Curriculum & Counselor Lessons

Self-Awareness | Self-Management | Social Awareness | Responsible Decision-Making | Relationship Skills

Elementary

Monthly character education lessons developed by counselors for each grade level.

Key topics: anti-bullying, empathy, respect, personal safety, and character building.

New for 2026–27

Second Step Bullying Prevention and Child Protection units added to the elementary counseling curriculum map.

Middle School

Counselor-led push-in and pull-out lessons, one per semester for each grade level.

Key topics: anti-bullying and suicide prevention awareness.

New for 2025–26 and 2026–27

Erika's Lighthouse depression education; small-group counseling on empathy and empowerment with Union County DCF.

High School

Counselors lead grade-level discussions throughout the year.

Key topics: anti-bullying and suicide prevention awareness.

New for 2026–27

Sandy Hook Promise "Know the Signs" pilot for the 8th grade to high school transition.

NEW INITIATIVES · DISTRICT-WIDE

NJ Goes Gold and Blue

WE TOOK THE PLEDGE

A statewide movement uniting New Jersey schools in a shared commitment to preventing harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

To celebrate Springfield taking the Blue & Gold Pledge, our community wore blue or gold on **Friday, October 9**.

How You Can Help

Talk it through: encourage your child to share what they learn and how it feels to participate.

Lead by example: model respectful behavior at home, in public, and online.

Stay involved: follow your child's school for updates during the Week of Respect and all year.

Resources & Events

Our district HIB policy and resources are on the district **Anti-Bullying website**.

We held our **first-ever HIB policy and procedure Lunch & Learn** for parents on 10/21. The recording is on the school counseling website.

Wellness resources and past program recordings are there too.

WHO TO CONTACT

Anti-Bullying Coordinator & Specialists

School	Name & Title	Ext.	Email
District Coordinator	Lillian Abadir Chou, School Counselor	5521	lchou@springfieldschools.com
Walton (EVW)	Alexis Bellardino, Assistant Principal	2515	abellardino@springfieldschools.com
Caldwell (JCS)	Adrianna Oliveira, School Counselor	4515	adoliveira@springfieldschools.com
Sandmeier (TLS)	Marie Purcell, School Counselor	3020	mpurcell@springfieldschools.com
Gaudineer (FMG)	William Douma, School Counselor	1516	wdouma@springfieldschools.com
Dayton (JDHS)	Darlene Hill, School Counselor	5518	dhill@springfieldschools.com

MAIN NUMBER

973-376-1025, then the extension

STATE SCHOOL CLIMATE COORDINATOR

hib@doe.nj.gov

This information, our HIB policy, and additional resources are on the anti-bullying page of the district website.

Questions?

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Springfield Public Schools will challenge every student through meaningful, engaging experiences — empowering all students to flourish and contribute in an evolving world.



CULTIVATING COMPASSIONATE AND EXTRAORDINARY LEARNERS

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

We are excited to begin a new learning journey together. This year will be full of new experiences, knowledge, and opportunities for growth.





SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFFING

Current Paraprofessional Needs:

- 10 openings
- Based on students moving from early intervention to preschool child with a disability, two of these have been newly added.
- Delta-T Substitutes-working with agency to continue consistent services while we hire SPSD staff.
- In the last 13 months of my tenure in Springfield, I have conducted well over 80 interviews, with the majority of them being for paraprofessionals.
- Working with human resources to identify a way to build capacity for current non-instructional aides to take the para-pro, which is a requirement for staff to be considered ‘instructional’ and hold certification.

NURTURED HEART APPROACH



NHA is a relationship system which teaches significant adults how to strongly energize and recognize the child's experiences of success while not accidentally giving more relationship to their experiences of failure. Structured around Three Stands, or tenants NHA is a strategic, systems approach designed to build the capacity of children (and the adults who work with them) to manage life's inevitable challenges.

SAFETYCARE TRAINING



Reinforcement-based supports that reduce the frequency and severity of behavioral crises, grounded in evidence-based behavioral science. Developed by Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) using errorless teaching (structured practice that minimizes mistakes while learning) and fluency-based mastery.



STUDENT CENTERED

FOCUSED ON RELATIONAL LEARNING

Our goal is to create a positive learning environment where students can develop knowledge, skills, and confidence.



OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
TRAININGS AND PARTNERSHIP



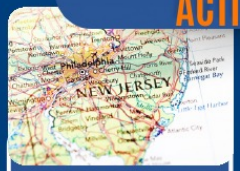
SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TO SEARCH ★ TO LEARN
TO SERVE
SPRINGFIELD NJ

A Journey to Improve Access, Opportunity & Outcomes

COHORT2 | 2026–2027



WELCOME TO THE LEAST RESTRICTIVEENVIRONMENT (LRE) ACTION LEARNING GROUP



Location

LRC – North Satellite
William Paterson University
1600 Valley Road, Suite G001
Wayne, NJ 07470



Session Dates and Times

FullDay: 9:30AM – 2:30PM

October 8, 2026 | November 17, 2026 | January 7, 2027 | February 25, 2027 | April 29, 2027 | June 3, 2027



The Process

Gap Identification→ Root Cause → Stakeholder Voice → Implementation Team → Theory of Action → Monitoring & Sustainability

SESSIONS START OCTOBER 8TH

Contact Us

Eileen.osieja@doe.nj.gov | Erice.reid@doe.nj.gov | Alexandra.pensiero@doe.nj.gov | Damian.petino@doe.nj.gov | OSEinfo@doe.nj.gov

Website

nj.gov/education/specialed/engagement/LREALG.shtml

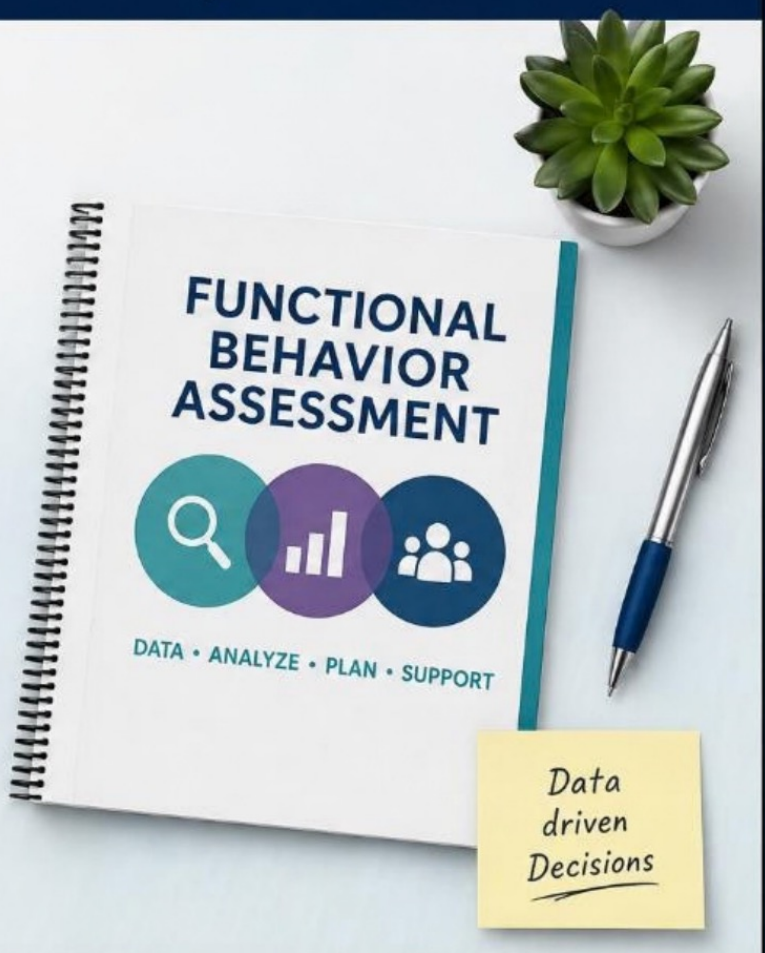
Learning Outcomes

- Develop a foundational understanding of inclusion and LRE by distinguishing among inclusion as a philosophy, inclusive education as a set of practices, and LRE as a legal requirement.
- Build a shared understanding of what meaningful inclusion looks like and inform current perspectives and practices.
- Consider how legal requirements, placement decisions, and inclusive practices work together to support access, participation, belonging, and learning for students with disabilities.

NJDOE
Office of Special Education

OSE Office of Special Education

FBA TRAIN THE TRAINER SERIES



Welcome to the FBA Train the Trainer Series.
This series is designed to build your knowledge and confidence in conducting high-quality Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and training others in effective FBA practices.

OUR GOAL
Strengthen capacity, improve practices, and support positive outcomes for students.

AUTISM PROGRAM QUALITY INDICATORS

PARTNERING WITH THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AUTISM SPECIALISTS AND SPSD STAFF TO EVALUATE OUR CURRENT PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES. THIS PROCESS WILL ALLOW US TO IDENTIFY OUR STRENGTHS AND ANY WEAKNESSES, SO WE CAN CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR PROGRAMS.

Evidence-Based Practices

Evidence-Based Practices for Students with ASD

High-quality programs for students with autism share common characteristics (or indicators), which, in practice, set standards that can serve as best practices. This document, the New Jersey Autism Program Quality Indicators-Revised (APQI-R), reflects current evidence-based practices (EBP) for students with ASD.

As IEP teams develop measurable annual goals and short-term objectives to address the needs of students with ASD, they should adhere to the IDEA mandate that educational interventions and instructional methodologies must be validated by scientifically-based research.

Over the past few decades, a considerable amount of research has been dedicated to understanding the educational needs of students with ASD, resulting in the expansion of evidence-based educational practices that address their complex learning needs. IEP teams must be knowledgeable about the range of EBPs (e.g., interventions, pedagogies, strategies, methodologies, and accommodations) and identify those that can address the student's needs.

> The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (NPDC-ASD) and The National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice defined EBP as those practices for which efficacy is established through peer-reviewed research in scientific journals. They have collectively identified 28 interventions that were demonstrated to be effective when instructing students across the spectrum and various age ranges and skills.

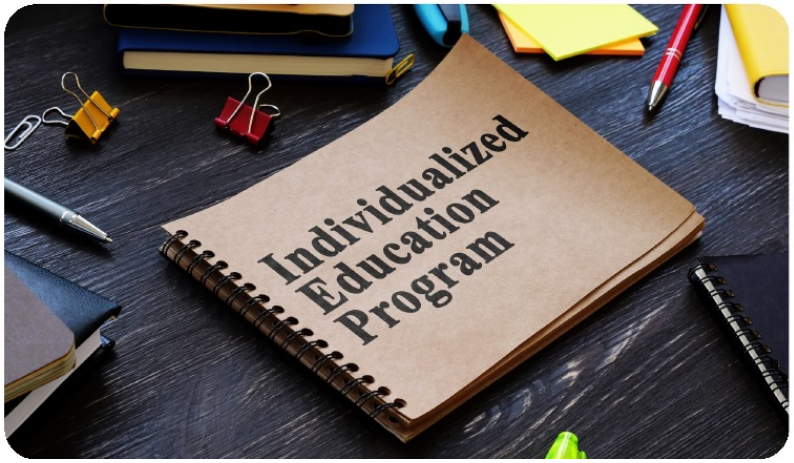
The information contained in this guidance document pertains to all students with ASD in New Jersey school districts. This document is intended to be a tool to guide districts in developing, implementing, and monitoring quality autism programs.

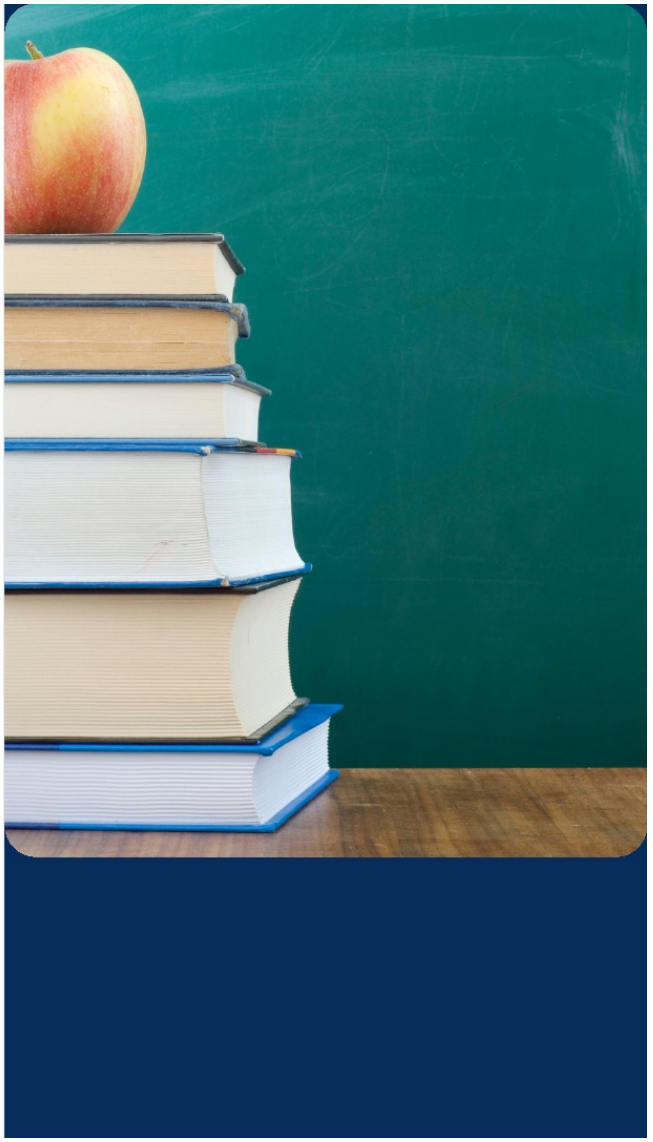
TEACHER TRAINING

FALL OF 2026: TEACHING STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENCES

FALL OF 2026: UNIVERSAL DESIGN-TIERED INSTRUCTION

NOVEMBER 2026: IEP DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL EDUCATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES





NEW IEP SOFTWARE PROGRAM: FRONTLINE EDUCATION

frontline education™

EASY TO ACCESS IEP SUPPORT FOR CASE MANAGERS

Case managers can easily look up how to use various elements of the program with Frontline Education's Learning Center for Support.

MORE SUCCINCT, LESS REDUNDANT

IEPs developed with Frontline may be easier to interpret and understand.

COLLABORATION PORTAL

Eventually, we will be sharing documents through the collaboration portal! Stay tuned and please be patient as our case managers learn how to use the program.

LIFE SKILLS: BUILDING PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM TO SUPPORT LEARNERS TODAY, AND FOR THE FUTURE

Starting in 5th Grade: FMG

Students will begin to explore life skills curriculum through work-based curriculum and experiences. Have you heard about the Bull-Dog cafe?

Community-Based Instruction

CBI: is an educational strategy that teaches academic, social, and functional life skills in real-world, natural community environments rather than just inside a traditional classroom.

New JDHS Life Skills Classroom

This classroom will enhance our life-skills instruction and curriculum! We're excited to see it finished!

LET'S HAVE A GREAT YEAR

THANK YOU

Let's work together to make this school year successful, enjoyable, and full of achievements.

JONATHAN DAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

Dayton Collegiate Academy: Application Process

PHASE I

Initial Consideration

Choice deadline: Nov. 24, 2026 **In-District deadline: Jan. 8, 2027**

- Parental commitment
- Student application and questionnaire
- Transcripts for grades 6 and 7, sent directly from school
- Student Progress Report, Grade 8 Q1
- Standardized test scores from 6th, 7th, and/or 8th grade, if available
- Two academic references (no relatives) sent to Dr. Francis
- Supplemental test scores or materials (PSAT, TerraNova, etc.)

PHASE II

Invited Candidates

- Morning session at Jonathan Dayton High School (date TBD)
- Written assessment based on a specific prompt (about 1 hour)

QUESTIONS?

Dr. Norman Francis Jr., Principal
nfrancis@springfieldschools.com

Mrs. Jacqueline Ritter, School Counselor
jritter@springfieldschools.com

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Scenes from Week of Respect & Start with Hello





AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Assemblies on Kindness & Respect



At **Caldwell & TLS**, Jared Campbell presented an assembly centered on friendship, kindness, and respect.



At **FMG**, Richard Specht shared how random acts of kindness changed his life and can change the world!

JONATHAN DAYTON ALUMNI

Bulldogs Forever!

Class of 1976



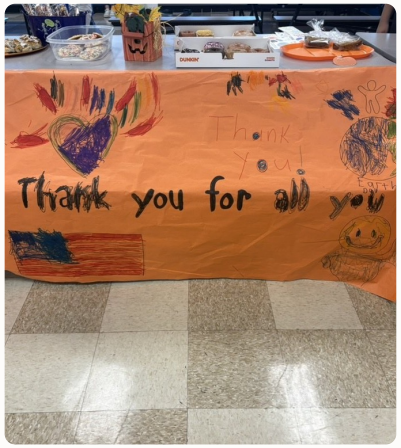
Class of 1966



AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Celebrating Our Community

FMG fifth graders welcomed first responders to the Bulldog Cafe!





JDHS Marching Band kicked off Fallapalooza and the opening of Oakland Park!





CALENDAR REMINDERS

Mark Your Calendars!

Tues., Nov. 3

Schools Closed for Students

Election Day / Staff Professional Development

Thurs. & Fri., Nov. 5–6

Schools Closed for Staff & Students

NJEA Teachers Convention

Mon., Nov. 16

Board of Education Meeting

Thurs. & Fri., Nov. 19–20

PK–5 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Wed., Dec. 2

Office Hours with Dr. Goldberg

9–11 AM at the Chisholm Community Center

MORE EVENTS

Visit the Calendars on our website to see events at all of our schools!



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community Park Cleanup

Sunday, November 1

11 AM – 2 PM · Laurel Park

- Gloves and bags provided for volunteers
- Dress appropriately: boots and long pants
- Community service hours offered for those who need them

Together we make a cleaner, greener community!



STUDENT-LED · FLORENCE M. GAUDINEER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Civics Day & Service Summit

Active Citizenship Through Local Impact

Tuesday, October 27

7th grade 8:00–9:00 · 6th grade 9:15–10:15 · 5th grade 10:20–11:20

FMG Orange Gym & IMC · Entry through the Rotunda

A morning of civic participation with **12 hands-on service and civics stations**, proudly led by our 7th and 8th grade student leaders.



HAPPY HALLOWEEN, SPRINGFIELD!

Stay Safe & Have Fun!

#SPSCompassionate&Extraordinary