



# Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

September  
2022

## A Message From the Superintendent



Dear Scotch Plains–Fanwood Community,

The new school year is off to a great start! SPF was recognized for our Arts Integration Program by [NJ Monthly Magazine](#). Our very own William J. McGinn Elementary School was named by the U.S. Department of Education as a 2022 National Blue Ribbon School in the Exemplary High Performing School category. Congratulations to the educators, families, and

students who made this prestigious honor possible! We also are celebrating McGinn First Grade Teacher Candice Testa, who was named Union County Teacher of the Year by the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Every staff member is giving 100% to ensure that each student is having the greatest experience possible, and that every one of them knows and feels they belong in SPF!

As you can see, SPF is receiving the attention it deserves and is making us all #SPFProud! Let's keep that momentum going for the 2022–2023 school year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joan Mast

Superintendent

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## SPF Logo Contest: It's Time to Vote!

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Logo 1

Logo 2

Logo 3

Which logo is your favorite? Have your voice heard for SPF's future logo.

Logo 1

Select

Logo 2

Select

Logo 3

Select

## A Blue Ribbon School: McGinn Elementary

We are proud to share that William J. McGinn Elementary School was named a 2022 National Blue Ribbon School in the Exemplary High Performing School category. The honor was awarded to 297 schools across the nation, including nine from New Jersey.

"We are honored to be amongst the nation's top schools in earning this recognition," said McGinn Principal Sasha Slocum. "Our school's mission to provide 'The Foundation to Grow, The Compassion to Give, The Imagination to Dream' drives our work each day."



The coveted National Blue Ribbon School award recognizes the school's overall academic performance and reaffirms the hard work of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood community of educators, families, and students in creating a welcoming, thriving school community.

"We are proud that the U.S. Department of Education recognized what we have always known: McGinn Elementary is a very special school that is providing exceptional support to students and their families," Dr. Mast said.

Congratulations!

Our Very Own Candice Testa is

# Union County Teacher of the Year

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Congratulations to Candice Testa, a William J. McGinn Elementary School first grade teacher and Scotch Plains–Fanwood Education Association (SPFEA) president! She was named Union County Teacher of the Year 2022–2023 by the New Jersey School Boards Association.



“Candice is the entire package,” said Dr. Mast. “Her passion and talent for education shines in and out of the classroom, and she embodies what we strive for in all our schools here.”

Testa’s kind, caring, and compassionate approach to education pairs effectively with her desire to challenge students for their own growth. Providing individualized attention to students and serving as a leader among her colleagues are two of her many strengths.

“I am pleased to be recognized with such a high honor,” Testa said. “Having spent my entire career prioritizing the needs of students and families in Scotch Plains–Fanwood Public Schools, it is so fulfilling to be celebrated for those efforts.”

Read more: [TapInto Scotch Plains/Fanwood](#)

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## Featured Events

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- Sept. 29, 6 pm: Middle School Back to School Night
- Oct. 3 – 7: Week of Respect and Wellness Week
- Oct. 6: National Walk & Bike to School Day
- Oct. 6, 8 pm: Board of Education Open Agenda Meeting
- Oct. 13, 6:30 pm: SPFHS Back to School Night
- Oct. 14, 6 pm: Coles – Fall Family Night
- Oct. 14, 6 pm: SPFHS Homecoming Game
- Oct. 17 – 21: Violence Prevention Awareness Week
- Oct. 19, 7:30 pm: Board of Education Candidates’ Night (Live/In–Person)
- Oct. 20, 8 pm: Board of Education Regular Public Meeting

*\* Check the calendar for picture days at all the schools!*

[District Calendar](#)

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# Welcome Two New Principals and Supervisor of K–5 Literacy

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We are pleased to welcome Erin Mullman as Principal of Evergreen Elementary School, Sandra Fehte as Principal of Coles Elementary School, and Kelli Dunston as Supervisor of K–5 Literacy.

“We welcome all new staff to the district for the 2022–2023 school year, and especially want to recognize Sandy, Erin, and Kelli for the important roles they will play in leading and guiding our elementary schools,” said Superintendent Joan Mast.

As an alum of Scotch Plains–Fanwood Public Schools, Erin Mullman’s passion for education was shaped by the teachers she had as a child. Now, she’s hoping to play the same role in the lives of students as Evergreen Elementary School’s new principal.

Recognizing the importance of literature in young children, the Scotch Plains–Fanwood Public Schools recently created a new position for Supervisor of K–5 Literacy. Kelli Dunston was the perfect fit for that role.

Sande Fehte is an accomplished educator, bringing nearly three decades of experience in leadership roles to Coles Elementary School. Her enthusiasm and expertise is already making a positive difference in the Coles community.



[Read the full story about these new staff members here.](#)



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## Submit a Ticket? The Tech Team Has Your Back

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The district technology team consists of Adam Strugatch, District Technology Manager, and Ryan Onove and George Hamwi, both Technology Support Specialists. The team supports teaching and learning through the use of technology. Together they ensure the SPF technology runs smoothly. They're always ready to troubleshoot as they work with all 8 schools, staff, parents, and students.

"Our tech team seamlessly transitioned the entire district to a 1-1 platform deploying 900 computers, 5000+ iPads, hundreds of other devices, servers and pieces of network equipment," said Dr. Mast. "They demonstrate the expertise and are a valuable support to the district."

The typical day for the team starts early in the morning, before the students usually get in, to review open tickets from around the schools. From there they break up into teams with most members of the group going out to fix on-site problems. Students and staff most often see Ryan, and George; meanwhile, Adam holds down the fort, coordinating new tickets and solving what problems they can from their computers.

"We try to keep as organized as possible. When we have everything streamlined it makes our lives easier and helps us help others," said Adam Strugatch. "The tech team is always happy to help people so reach out! We can't fix a problem we don't know about."

Clear communication has become more important now than ever, with more and more districts like SPF integrating new technology. SPF's most recent 1-1 initiative has kept the team busy.

The start of the school year has been eventful as the team helps the 8 schools of SPF get back up to speed. Don't be afraid to contact them if you need their help! The Technology Department also has a wiki that covers many topics that might solve your problems without having to put in a ticket. Check it out at <https://wiki.spfk12.org>. If you are a parent having problems with the Powerschool Parent Portal, please email



## Senior Named National Merit Scholar Semi-Finalist

Let's hear it for SPFH Senior Dylan Fei! Dylan has been named as a semi-finalist for the annual National Merit Scholarship® Program, the first step in the process for receiving a scholarship.

Now that he has become a semi-finalist, Fei has the chance to advance. The next round will be announced in the winter, and throughout the spring, chosen finalists will receive a Merit Scholarship® award of \$2,500 or a corporate-sponsored or college-sponsored award of varying amounts.



**Congratulations, Dylan!**

## Winning Spring Teams Honored at Ring Ceremony



Winning Spring 2022 sports teams were honored at a special ring ceremony at the Sept. 16 football game. The ceremony took place at halftime, as the SPF Raiders football team took on Rahway at Perry Tyson Field. The athletes from Varsity Boys Volleyball, Varsity Boys Lacrosse, and Indoor and Outdoor Track were recognized at the ceremony.



# Meet the Board

## Tonya Williams, Board Member

**Committees:** Chair of the Wellness and Equity Committee, Member of the Facilities, Policy, and Negotiations Committees

**Profession:** Realtor at ERA Queen City and Senior Real Estate Specialist

Children attended Evergreen, School One, Nettingham Middle School, and SPFHS

### Why did you become a board member?

I believe in quality education and want to be a positive voice for the town I grew up in. I focus on student achievement and ensuring that all students have the same opportunities. I want to ensure that all students get the support and resources they deserve and make sure our school system is a level playing field.



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