



**SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD
HIGH SCHOOL**

**9TH GRADE PARENT
ORIENTATION**

**TUESDAY
AUGUST 27, 2024**

Mission Statement

- *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District educates and empowers our community of individual learners to be successful citizens of the world.*
- Culture - who we are as a school
- We pledge to value & welcome our students while engaging in powerful learning experiences w/them every day.

High School Faculty

- There are more than 130 faculty members, consisting of 120 Teachers as well as a team of counselors, child study team members and nurses. In addition, we have a superb team of custodians, administrative assistants and paraprofessionals.
- Nearly 1,600 students will attend SPFHS this school year.
- High School Administrators:
 - Dr. Warren Hynes, Principal
 - Dr. Tim Donahue,
Assistant Principal for College and Career Readiness
 - Dr. Brooke Kaska-Esposito,
Assistant Principal for Innovative Programs
 - Dr. Ryan Miller,
Assistant Principal of Athletics & Student Activities

Building Information

- Visitors are directed to Door #1 (front of the building-Attendance/Athletic Office)
- Visitors are required to show valid identification prior to entering the building
- We do require that all visitors procure an appointment prior to entering the building

Department Supervisors

- **Counseling – Ms. Kristine Iarussi**
- **English Language Arts – Dr. Elizabeth McKenna**
- **Family & Consumer Science – Ms. Guida Faria**
- **Mathematics & Business Ed. – Mr. Matthew Aurand**
- **Science, Engineering, Gifted & Talented – Ms. Guida Faria**
- **Social Studies – Ms. Noel Baxter**
- **Special Education – Ms. D. Peneno & Ms. A. Tomesko**
- **Music/Fine Arts/Health and PE – Dr. Wayne Mallette**
- **World Language – Ms. Lisa Howard**

Important Information

❖ Program of Studies

- Course Selection
- Grading
- Drop/Add Procedure

❖ Student Handbook

- Attendance
- Discipline Guidelines
- Athletics

❖ High School Website: spfk12.org/spfhs

❖ BrightArrow - messaging system

❖ PowerSchool: sp.powerschool.com/public/home

PowerSchool, PTA

- ❖ PowerSchool- same login as middle school
 - Having problems accessing your PowerSchool Parent Portal account? Please email parents@ps.spfk12.org

- ❖ PTA - all are welcome to join
 - Any questions or suggestions, please reach out to ptaspfhs@gmail.com

Contacting Staff

- Each staff member checks their email on a regular basis. The best way to access a staff member's email is by going to the high school website.
- Teachers are assigned voice mailboxes (extensions are found on the website).
- Google Classroom parent invitations

Academic Schedule

- Classes are either 77 or 79 minutes in length.
- Block 2 has additional time for announcements, distribution of material, and other types of business. When necessary, a limited number of announcements can be made at the beginning of Block 4.
- Lunch for all students is served between 10:54-11:40
There are various stations throughout the building for students to purchase and eat lunch.
- Health/PE teachers are assigned by marking period.

FULL DAY

TIME		BLOCK	A-DAY	B-DAY	LENGTH (MIN)
Start	End				
8:08	9:25	1	1A	1B	77
9:30	10:49	2	2A	2B	79
10:54	11:40	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	46
11:45	1:02	3	3A	3B	77
1:07	2:24	4	4A	4B	77

Shared-Time Students

AM Vo-tech Students: Arrive @ 10:15 AM (Attend Lunch & Blocks 3 & 4).

PM Vo-tech Students: Depart SPFHS @ Noon (Attend Blocks 1 & 2 and Lunch)

Work Habits

- Study Hall - time for working on assignments
- Extra help - reaching out to teachers
- Homework routines
- Remaining busy
 - Studies show that students engaged in extracurricular activities have better attendance, cut fewer classes and have higher grades.

Public School Transportation

*The Transportation Department is located in the District Office.
Bus information should be received (via email) by the end of this week.*

Ms. Marisol Rodriguez, Director

908.232.6161 x41309 or (mrodriguez@spfk12.org)

Students who rely on district transportation must get to the front of the building in a timely fashion after Block 4 concludes. A bus location map will be available in the front of the building and in the Attendance Office to assist students.

The after-school late bus begins on Monday, September 9 for students who are eligible for busing, and who were engaged in a supervised after-school activity.

The late bus departs from the front of the school at 3:45 pm

Drop-Offs

- Students can be dropped off starting at 7:15, which is when Door 1 opens. Door 12 opens after 7:30.
- Library media center is open from 7:23 onward for those who wish to get some work done before school begins.
- Cafeteria is open early, as is 2nd Floor Walkway. Students can buy food before school.
- Please drop off your student at the front of the school. If needed, use Door 12.
- Please do not drop off in the Evergreen lot or in the senior lot (Cedar St.)

Lockers

- Freshman will be assigned a hallway locker upon request. There is a built-in combination lock that comes with the locker. Those 9th-graders interested in a hallway locker must see Ms. Jill Rebuth in the attendance office.
- All students will be issued a padlock and a locker to be used during their Physical Education class.
- We constantly remind students to lock their valuables.
- Students may use their lockers as needed.

Unit Lunch Information

- Main Cafeteria
- Multi-Purpose Room
- 2nd Floor Media Center
- Bridge / Walkway Connecting Wings
- Gymnasium (Auxiliary/Old Gym)
- *Take a seat, relax, enjoy the break*
- *Find a place and stay there*

Lunch Payment

- Funds can be deposited into a cafeteria account for your student through the secure internet-based payment system, [PaySchoolsCentral](#) or by check. All checks are to be made payable to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, with the student's name and school-issued identification number clearly noted, and turned into the Main Office.
- Application and instructions for Free and Reduced-Price Meals is available on the district website, and can be obtained in the main office.

Back-to-School Night

- Back-To-School Night is scheduled for
Tuesday, October 1, 2024
This is a single-session day for students
(12:08 p.m. dismissal)
- Additional information to be communicated
in the near future

National Honor Society

- Criteria is available in the Program of Studies.
- Academic Performance— 3.75 GPA
- 100 Hours of Community Service
- Leadership and Character
- Eligible Juniors and Seniors
- Eligible Sophomores are notified during spring

Student Management

- Grades 9 & 11: Dr. Tim Donahue
- Grades 10 & 12: Dr. Brooke Kaska-Esposito
- Attendance Coordinator:
Mrs. Lisa DeGaetano

Attendance

Early Dismissals

Please send your child in with a note the morning of their early dismissal. They will receive a pass out of class to sign out and meet you in the lot. Dismissals without a note are disruptive to class.

Reporting an Absence

Please complete the form on PowerSchool.

If you are unable to access PowerSchool, email spfhs-attendance@spfk12.org.

Either the PowerSchool form or an email are the preferred methods of communication with the Attendance Office.

Absences

Students may **lose credit** after **5 absences** in a semester course and **9 absences** in a full year course. You will be alerted if your child accumulates absences.

Verified absences are not excused absences

Attendance (cont'd)

- Tardies
 - 3 tardies = office detention, with another added after each subsequent tardy
 - 7 tardies = loss of credit
- Class cuts
 - Willingly skipping class (classic cut)
 - 20 minutes or more outside of classroom
 - Saturday detention for each cut
 - 2nd cut for same course = loss of credit
- Loss of privileges

Handbook Highlights & Most Common Freshman Infractions

- Category I Infractions
 - Office Detention, Saturday Detention, Supervised Lunch
- Category II Infractions
 - Saturday Detentions, Suspensions
- Dress Code
- Vaping / Multiple Use of the Bathroom
- Defiance
- Rough-Housing

Cell Phones

- Phone caddies in every classroom
- Phones go in caddies upon class entry
- Students may not take phones with them when going to the bathroom
- Students have phones upon entry and exit from the building, during common lunch, during passing time, and during study hall
- This boundary is intended to support student attention on schoolwork
- Community dialogue

iPads


- 9th-graders will swap out current iPads for new one during social studies class on Sept. 9 and 10
- iPads are required in school each day
- They will be used for class instruction, in-class assessments, standardized testing
- Any repair needs, email help@spfk12.org
- Power strips in classrooms for charging if needed

ID Scanning

- Student ID cards will be used for school entry, open lunch, and entry/exit for bathrooms and office spaces
- The ID software will give us real-time information to support our students' safety and accountability
- This shift involves some purchases and installation, so it may not be ready by Sept. 5
- When students enter class, they will put their phones in the caddy but keep their IDs with them in case they need to use the bathroom

What can you do to support your child?

- Nurture reading at home; show your child that **you are a reader.**
- Respond first not to the grade but to the **content** of their work.
- Continuously **discuss newspaper reports** on science discoveries and world events.
- Expose children to a variety of art forms and help them be **empowered, not awed, audiences.**



COUNSELING & SCHEDULE CHANGES

Counseling Services

- **9th Grade:**

- *Counselors meet individually with students to assess their progress in school.*
- *Begin career counseling.*

- **10th Grade:**

- *Continue career assessment and career options.*
- *Scheduling based on career interests*

- **11th Grade:**

- *Junior Conference - Focused discussion on post-high school plans*
- *This is a joint parent/guardian and student conference - beginning in December of 11th grade.*

- **12th Grade:**

- *College Applications - Begin in September*
- *Assist in completing each college application including transcripts and letters of recommendation*
- *Support and resources for post-secondary plans and careers.*

Student Schedules & Changes

- Once school starts, students are given a chance to experience their classes and determine if level placements are correct; changes to student schedules are not permitted until the 11th day of class (9/19).
- Should a student want to change a course level, they will need to meet with their counselor to initiate the change. A conference with the teacher and supervisor is also required.
- Schedule changes are permitted until Mid October (1 week after progress reports are received).
- Semester courses cannot be dropped.

Counseling Services (cont'd)

Counselors are excited to begin the school year and to develop meaningful relationships with the incoming 9th grade.

The counselor/student connection is important for the success of our students and to begin thinking and planning for their post-high school plans.

For the first month of school, counselors prioritize their time to address the various needs of students transitioning from 8th to 9th grade.

Counseling Services (cont'd)

It is important that students take ownership of their academic success. Grade 9 is the foundation for a successful high school experience, as well as for a strong college application.

As students continue throughout high school, they should look to challenge themselves by exploring and taking courses that might be out of the current comfort zone.

Students should get involved in the activities that most interest them. Colleges and employers like to see that students are involved and have a sustained commitment to those activities.

Wellness Center

- Located across from the Counseling Department.
- Students can enter the Wellness Center during school hours, for a brief time (10-minute maximum), with a pass from a teacher, counselor or nurse.
- This room has multiple modalities to allow students to re-center and prepare themselves to participate in school. It is a quiet space that requires respect; cell phones are prohibited



ATHLETICS

Athletic Benefits

- Extension of the academic classroom
- Allows students to compete, apply values and morals, and instill camaraderie among others
- Promotes a healthy active lifestyle
- Involves an additional strong role model for students

Athletic Information

- SPFHS is a member of the Union County Conference (UCC), Union County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (UCIAC) and the NJSIAA (North II Group 3 or 4, depending on the sport)
- Athletic season starts every year on or about August 15
- Incoming freshmen still have opportunity to join certain squads (tennis, cross country)
- Information re. subsequent seasons are released through the school to the athletes

Athletics at SPFHS

- Strong tradition of success through athletics, including some professional athletes. Many students play at the collegiate level
- Outstanding record of both individual and team success
- Becoming a part of this great tradition can enhance the high school experience

Athletic Offerings

- Fall season: Boys' and Girls' Cross Country, Football, Gymnastics, Boys' and Girls' Soccer, Girls' Tennis, Girls' Volleyball, Cheerleading, Field Hockey
- Winter season: Boys' and Girls' Basketball, Boys' and Girls' Wrestling, Ice Hockey, Boys' and Girls' Track, Boys' and Girls' Swimming, Bowling, Cheerleading
- Spring season: Baseball, Softball, Boys' and Girls' Track, Boys' Tennis, Boys' and Girls' Lacrosse, Golf, Boys' Volleyball
- Many opportunities for participation.

Academic Eligibility

- Incoming freshmen are academically eligible to participate immediately
- After the first semester they must have accumulated 15 credits
- After the first year they must have 30 credits
- All sports programs work with the teachers to breed academic success

Athletic Boosters

- Booster club supports the SPFHS sports teams through scholarships, recognition awards, and approved equipment purchases
- On the web at: spfhsathleticboosters.com
- Matt Tibbals - current President
- All are welcome to get involved and join

Athletics

Contact Information

- High School Website: spfk12.org/spfhs
- Email coaches directly
- (908) 889-8600 ext 31007 Athletics Office
 - *Bethany Carr – Athletic Secretary*
- Athletic Trainers:
 - Laura Friedman & Tyler Horsch
- Questions or Concerns

Referendum

Sept. 17 – 2 p.m. - 8 p.m.

- Voter approval of the referendum would bring SPFHS electrical improvements to accommodate AC and outlets in various classrooms, as well as HVAC upgrades to the auto shop and wood shop.
- Roofs, bathrooms and auditorium at the high school could be updated using capital reserve funds

Thank you!

Please share any questions you have.

“Education is all a matter
of building bridges.”

- Ralph Ellison