



Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

May
2024

A Message From the Superintendent

Dear Scotch Plains–Fanwood
Community,

We are lucky here in Scotch Plains–Fanwood Public Schools to have exceptional, dedicated teachers and staff. They inspire, educate, and nurture our students every day and play a profound role in shaping our students' and our communities' futures.

Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week is coming up from May 6 – 10. The week serves as an important reminder to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of our teachers and staff. During this week, please join me in expressing your gratitude. A heartfelt note or a kind gesture for the teachers and staff in your life can go a long way to ensuring they understand how much we value them.

And, to all SPF teachers and staff, thank you for your incredible dedication and unwavering commitment to excellence. I feel privileged to call you all my colleagues.

Sincerely,
Dr. Joan Mast
Superintendent of Schools



Hot off the Presses: SPF's Teaching Academy for Social Justice Featured in NJSBA School Leader Magazine

Teachers are the backbone of public education and one of the greatest influences on student success.

Yet, the United States is facing teacher shortages that could cause lasting harm, especially for students of color and students in low-income districts. The problem is only getting worse as the number of college students obtaining teaching degrees declines and turnover

within the profession remains high following the pandemic.

The shortage is even more troubling when combined with the long-standing fact that there are too few teachers of color across the country. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that during the 2020–2021 school year, 80% of public school teachers were white, while only 45% of students in their schools were white.

Superintendent Joan Mast, Ed.D., saw this national trend in Scotch Plains–Fanwood Public Schools, a pre–K–12 district in Union County that she has led since 2019. Finding solutions to complex social issues isn't easy, but Mast has never shied away from working collaboratively and creatively with community members in Scotch Plains and Fanwood to ensure the district's eight schools are welcoming places for all students.

"I heard community members say, 'We can't have a child of color go through the public school system and never have a Black or Hispanic teacher,'" Mast said. "They are right – it's a disservice to students."



In partnership with community member Dr. Leland McGee, Mast wondered, "How do we create a deep pipeline of future SPF teachers who reflect the diversity of students in our towns?" and "How do we ensure our future teachers are guided by our district's commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion?"

The district's creative, long-term solution was to develop a Teaching Academy for Social Justice to train and recruit a diverse pool of future teachers by looking inward at Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School's own freshman class.

[Read more in the Spring 2024 issue of New Jersey School Boards Association School Leader magazine](#)

Online applications for the preschool program

Online applications for the Preschool Program are open for the 2024–2025 school year.

Applicants must be residents of Scotch Plains or Fanwood. New students enrolling in the program must provide proof of residency and an original birth certificate. The child's age as of Oct. 1, 2024, will

determine their placement in either a 3-year-old or 4-year-old class. Typically, 3-year-olds attend the morning session from 8:25–11:20 a.m. and 4-year-olds attend the afternoon session from 12:20–3:10 p.m. All classes meet five days per week.

Tuition for the half-day program will be \$410 per month, with a 10 percent sibling discount. In addition, free or reduced tuition may be available for families who qualify per federal guidelines or a district review.

Visit spfk12.org/preschool. For additional information, please contact the SPF Preschool Office at (908) 889-8600 x31402 or preschool@spfk12.org.



See How SPF is Celebrating Autism Acceptance Month



Brunner Elementary students celebrated the diverse minds of SPF through hand-drawn pictures.



School One students learned about autism from Robbie, the penguin, and school mascot, Blaze! The author of the book *Robbie's World and His Spectrum of Adventures* helped students understand what some autistic traits might look like through the fun and lovable penguin's tales.



Evergreen Elementary clubs have been sharing what they learned about autism in displays throughout the school. They're becoming educated about the very important Communication Bill of Rights and discovering that while there are similarities within the spectrum, autism looks different for everyone.

Spiffy and His Classmates Visit the AKC Museum of the Dog in NYC

Spiffy and four of his classmates ventured to the [AKC Museum of the Dog](#) in New York City. Through unique, interactive exhibits the 'pack' learned about the role of dogs in society.

Spiffy appreciated visiting the exhibit *Dogs on the Job*, where they learned how to train a working dog. Working dogs can hold many roles in society, from comforting others as therapy (like Spiffy for SPF

schools!) to working with the police, and on search and rescue teams.

“I liked the interactive computer. When I took a picture of my face, it told me what kind of dog I would be,” said Thomas Broadbent, a second grader at Evergreen. Trying to get Spiffy to sit patiently for photo breaks also made for an amusing memory for the students.

After the big day in NYC, Spiffy returned to duty, visiting with students at SPF schools. He even got to see one familiar face from the trip.

“I was so lucky to see Spiffy two times in one week,” said Sid Moshenberg, a third grader at Coles. “It was so much fun to show him the museum. My favorite part was showing Dr. Mast how to see what breed of dog she was.”



“

I got to meet Spiffy at the museum for the first time. It was really great. My favorite part was showing the other boys around and looking at *Dog Man* books together.

- BEN MOSHENBERG
FIRST GRADER AT COLES ELEMENTARY

”

Join the District in Celebrating Achievements from The Union County Club

The Union County Club, National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. honored SPF Student Assistant Specialist April Chestang and student Sara Fevrier at the 51st Annual Founders' Day Awards Celebration.



April Chestang won Professional Woman of the Year in recognition of her outstanding role in the district as Student Assistant Specialist (SAS) at Evergreen Elementary School and District Specialist for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. April's work reaches beyond the walls of the elementary school through her roles as co-advisor of the SPFHS Black Student Union and co-coordinator of the SPF Black Educator Association. Her impact is immeasurable, and we are lucky to have her here in SPF!

Sara Fevrier won the 2024 STEM Scholarship for her dedication and drive both academically and personally. She has maintained an impressive academic record, earning top grades in all of her classes while also taking on leadership roles in various organizations. In addition to her passion for social justice, she is deeply committed to the field of medicine research. Congratulations to Sara for this scholarship and for the significant impact she continues to have in our community!

Featured Events



See the full calendar of events at
spfk12.org

May 7, 8 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting

May 8, 7 p.m. – SPFHS School Choral Concert at HS

May 10, 3:30 – 5 p.m. – Evergreen Color Run (rain date May 17)

May 13, 5 – 7 p.m. – Brunner Multi-Cultural Night

May 15, 7 – 9 p.m. – SPFHS Spring Instrumental Concert at HS

May 17 – High School Relay for Life

May 20–24 – Coles Wellness Week

May 20, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. – Nettingham Grades 5 & 6 Instrumental Concert

May 20, 8 – 9:30 p.m. – Nettingham Grades 7 & 8 Instrumental Concert

May 21, 3:30 – 5 p.m. – Staff Recognition in Evergreen New Gym



May 21, 7:30 – 9 p.m. – Student Recognition in Evergreen New Gym

May 27 – Schools Closed for Memorial Day

May 28, 7 – 9 p.m. – SPFHS Senior Music Awards at HS

May 29, 7 – 9 p.m. – SPFHS Senior Scholarship Night at HS

May 29, 7 – 8 p.m. – Coles Art Show

May 30, 7 – 8 p.m. – Terrill Grades 5 & 6 Spring Concert

Testing calendar: [District Testing Calendar 2023–2024](https://www.spfk12.org)
([spfk12.org](https://www.spfk12.org))



\$197*
Per Class

SPF SCHOOL DISTRICT

JUNE 24
TO
JULY 26

CREATIVE SUMMER WORKSHOP

Kindergarten - 9th Grade



FUN & CREATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

**COOKING, WRITING, TECHNOLOGY, MUSIC, ART, ATHLETICS
BUILDING, CREATIVE, IMAGINATIVE, ENGAGING
ALL COURSES TAUGHT BY SPF CERTIFIED TEACHERS**

**SAVE THE
DATES**

**M-F
8:30am
-1pm**

CLASSES HELD AT SPF HIGH SCHOOL, SCOTCH PLAINS

REGISTRATION OPENS IN APRIL

Questions? Email Jenn Passuth- jpassuth@spfk12.org

*Some courses may be higher in price.



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