



Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

Dec.
2023

A Message From the Superintendent

Dear Scotch Plains–Fanwood
Community,

My message to you this month was to be one of joy and celebration as we head into the holidays and winter break.

Our district was called in a different direction, however, to respond to a shocking act of antisemitism in one of our own schools.

On Dec. 20, we discovered a number of drawn and etched swastikas in a bathroom and on a hallway locker at Terrill Middle School.

This incident has deeply saddened me and our entire school community. We feel violated and distraught that this could happen in one of our schools.

But we also feel strong, standing up for SPF values as we respond unequivocally and as one to condemn this hateful act and support our Jewish students.

As the authorities investigate, we will do what we do – teach. We have always taught our students the importance of tolerance and diversity, that **“all to here belong”** at Scotch Plains–Fanwood. This personal, real-world incident is a moment to talk very frankly with our middle school students to ensure they understand the gravity of what a single word, sign or symbol can mean. We want them to know where hatred can lead, and why we will never, ever tolerate it in our schools.

We appreciate acting principal at Terrill, Dr. Barry Haines, for helping to initiate learning by sharing a very personal story about his own family's experiences with antisemitism. Read an excerpt from his talk, [here](#).

Our partnerships with the Ministerium and Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation will also help in the healing process as we plan community outreach.

We are a community, which means we come together when called – in

**ALL TO HERE
BELONG**

- SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD SCHOOLS -

good times and bad.

Of course, I wish you good, joyous and memorable times with your families over the next week. Thank you for being part of our community.

Sincerely,
Dr. Joan Mast
Superintendent of Schools

Class of 2002 Makes Generous Donation to SPFHS

Over 20 years ago, the Class of 2002 graduated from Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School. And yet, these alumni remain tied to the school through both the memories and lessons they took with them and now how they are giving back.

The 2002 Class Committee organized a fundraiser for its 20-year reunion, which supported a donation of television monitors for the high school to display announcements, news and student highlights.

Members from the committee recently gathered on Dec. 9 alongside Dr. David Heisey, who has led the school as principal since they walked the halls. They received plaques to commemorate the donation.

Committee Members Present:

Dave Baumwoll
Josh Finkelstein
Brian McGonigle
Caitlin Mahony Romero
Rob Mattar



[Read more on TAPinto Scotch Plains–Fanwood](#)

Come Out to Super Sports Saturday!

The Scotch Plains–Fanwood School District, PTA Council and SPF PTAs are inviting the public to the inaugural Super Sports Saturday on Jan. 6 at Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School.

Super Sports Saturday is set to become a new tradition in Scotch Plains–Fanwood, as it will feature a wide range of activities including thrilling varsity boys and girls basketball games, wrestling matches, and sports clinics for elementary and middle school students. Additionally, a vendor fair and delightful breakfast and lunch services will be available.

Funds raised during the event will contribute to supporting PTA scholarships for Scotch–Plains Fanwood High School students.

Please visit [this website](#) for more information or email spfptacouncil@gmail.com.

13 SPFHS Students Accepted to Region II Honors Choirs

Thirteen student vocalists from Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School were accepted into the Region II Honors Choirs. The students auditioned with over 385 students from the state of New Jersey for spots in these choirs.

Two SPFHS students (Gayatri Phatak and Emersyn Teicher) placed in the top 10, and two other students received the No. 1 score in their selections (Graeme Daniskas for the Tenor 1's and Hannah Solomon for the Soprano 1's).



Dr. Raul Dominguez, the Director of Choral Activities at Regis University, will conduct the Mixed Chorus and Ms. Jessica Pomeroy, Director of Vocal Music at Hackettstown School District, will direct the Treble Chorus. The concert will be on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024, at 3 p.m. at Monroe Township High School.

“

We are incredibly proud of the SPFHS students whose commitment and hard work has led them to the Region II level. They put an astounding amount of effort and preparation into preparing for the auditions and successfully securing the spots. We can't wait to hear them perform!

Jan Allen

SPFHS CHORAL DIRECTOR

”

The 2023–24 Region II Chorus students are:

Mixed Chorus:

- Graeme Daniskas (Senior) – #1 score of the Tenor 1 Section
- Juilee Joshi (Sophomore) – Alto 1 Section
- Anusha Magdum (Junior) – Soprano 1 Section
- Teresa Jackson (Freshman) – Alto 1 Section
- Gayatri Phatak (Sophomore) – #3 score of the Alto 1 Section
- Knevin Pilley (Freshman) – Tenor 2 Section
- Cooper Pomponio (Sophomore) – Bass 2 Section
- Hannah Solomon (Senior) – #1 score of the Soprano 1 Section
- Arielle Solomon (Freshman) – Soprano 1 Section

Treble Chorus:

- Jordin Iazzetti (Freshman) – Soprano 1 Section
- Isabella Rocha (Junior) – Soprano 1 Section
- Emersyn Teicher (Senior) – #7 score of the Alto 2 Section
- Jaralin Truselo (Junior) – Soprano 1 Section

SPF Celebrates Excellence with 16 Governor's Educator of the Year Awardees

We are pleased to recognize 16 exceptional teachers and educational services professionals nominated for the 2023–24 Governor's Educator of the Year Recognition Program.

The Governor's Educator of the Year recipients are:

- **Brianna Tufaro**, 1st Grade Teacher, Brunner
- **Mandee Leonardis**, Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTTC), Brunner

- Harry Musto, 3rd Grade Teacher, Coles
- Cailin Frantz, Student Assistant Specialist, Coles
- Kathleen Farrell, 2nd Grade Teacher, Evergreen
- Grace Baik, Instructional Aide, Evergreen
- Perri Fuerst, Special Education Teacher, McGinn
- Thomas MacWilliams, Classroom Aide, McGinn
- Torrie Kochanowicz, Special Education Teacher, School One
- Sarah Bennett, Basic Skills, School One
- Kyle Banghart, Physical Education, Nettingham
- Collin Grainger, Classroom Aide, Nettingham
- Carrie Solomon, English Language Arts, Terrill
- Karen Lambo, Nurse, Terrill
- Suzanne Aguero, Special Education Teacher, High School
- Catherine Phelps, School Counselor, High School

[View a full photo album of the Governor's Educators of the Year](#)



SPFHS Inducts New Members to National Honor Society

The High School was proud to induct 172 members into the National Honor Society on Dec. 4.

The National Honor Society is a nationwide organization that recognizes high school students who meet high academic standards. Students are selected based on their exceptional scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

Congratulations to this year's new inductees!



TMS Students Announced Winners of VFW Patriot's Pen Essay Contest for Post 10122

Three Terrill Middle School students topped the competition in the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Patriot's Pen Essay Contest for Memorial Post 10122, located in Scotch Plains–Fanwood. Students were tasked with writing a 300-to-400-word essay on this year's topic: How are you inspired by America?

The winners are, first place: Mythri Pathrose – seventh grade; second place: Hutton Davis – seventh grade; third place: Arianna Blanco – sixth grade. As winners for Post 10122, the young writers advance to the VFW District 5 (Union County) level of competition, where they'll continue competing against other students for a chance at the national competition.

The VFW Patriot's Pen Essay Contest is a yearly national competition inviting students in grades six through eight to express their perspectives on democratic or patriotic themes. Students at TMS participated in the competition in their English Language Arts course and the winners grabbed the judges' attention with their heartfelt descriptions of America.

Arianna's compelling essay explained how Americans in history are "courageous" and "fought for what they thought was right." She wrote, "I think it takes a lot of determination and perseverance to put your country before yourself and your family." She remains inspired by how America continues to persevere in times of conflict.

"We are so proud of our winners' hard work," said Mr. Ralph Gerace, assistant principal at TMS. "Their essays thoughtfully captured experiences in modern and past American society and how we can take

inspiration to create a better future.”

Congratulations Hutton, Mythri and Arianna!



"Sometimes when you hear the word conflict, what comes to mind is that it is bad. However, the conflicts we've had for this country have led to amazing things such as the end of slavery, women's rights, and taxation with representation."

– Arianna Blanco –

Raiders Robotics Competition Team Hosts NJ First Tech Challenge

The Raiders Robotics competition team recently hosted the **New Jersey First Tech Challenge**, where 23 teams from schools across the state came together, formed alliances, and participated in a series of events that demonstrated the students' engineering skills.

The Raiders placed 13th in the competition, and are already preparing their robot for the next event held on Jan. 28 at Livingston High School. The team of 15 dedicated students meets every Thursday and Friday after school, and sometimes during their lunch breaks, to work on their robot. They are hoping to progress to the state tournament held in February.



"This is a great STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) opportunity, and I love witnessing the students' growth," said Matthew Ducker Duffy, Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School's Technology Education Teacher and Robotics Advisor. "They have the ability to get us to the state championship. It is rewarding to see their excitement."

Duffy has been the advisor for the robotics competition team and the robotics club, which also has 15 members, for five years. He assists the

students with help from the robotics technical advisor, Thomas Bradley, and assistant advisor, Kristine Lockwood.

Duffy said the team consists of students with a variety of skills, including programming, mechanical, business, and communication to build the robot and maintain community outreach.

“We spend so much time together we become a second family,” he said. “And, ultimately, the robotics team and club are about having fun.”



Featured Events

Dec. 25 – Jan. 1 – Winter Break – Schools Closed

Jan. 9, 7 pm – HS 8th Grade Parents' Night in HS Auditorium

Jan. 11, 7 pm – Terrill Winter Concert 5th & 6th Grades at Terrill Middle School

Jan. 12, 7 pm – McGinn Bingo Night

Jan. 12 – School One Family Skate Night

Jan. 15 – MLK Day – Schools Closed

Jan. 19, 6–7:30 pm – School One Sock Hop

Jan. 19, 7 pm – Evergreen 4th Grade Social #2 Amazing Race

Jan. 24, 7 pm – HS POPs Concert at High School

Jan. 25, 6:30 – 8:30 pm – McGinn Global Family Night

Jan. 25, 8 pm – Board of Education Meeting

Jan. 26, 7 pm – Evergreen Multicultural Night



Full calendar of events: [Scotch Plains–Fanwood Public Schools / Calendar \(spfk12.org\)](http://scotchplains-fanwood.org/calendar)

WE'RE HIRING!

Interested in joining the
Scotch Plains-Fanwood
Public Schools? Please
check our website
regularly to see current
vacancies.

**CLICK HERE TO
LEARN MORE**



www.spfk12.org • (908) 232 6161
512 Cedar Street, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076



Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education | 512 Cedar St, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

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