



Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

March
2022

A Message From the Superintendent & Business Administrator

Dear SPF Community,

At the March 24, 2022 Board of Education meeting, the board unanimously adopted a school budget that supports our students and maximizes our community's investment in education. The General Fund budget of just under \$107.7 million is designed to support the goals of our new Strategic Plan, fund ongoing pandemic recovery, and provide for our students academically, socially, and emotionally.



Christopher Jones



Dr. Joan Mast

Funding highlights for 2022-2023 include:

- Curriculum support, including new engineering and mathematics courses, Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop, social and emotional learning, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives
- Continued focus on learning acceleration and intervention efforts, and our One-to-One technology device program
- Program enhancements at the middle school including the examination of time allocation

This year our district received an additional \$1.9 million in state aid and - like many of you balancing your home budgets – we face rising expenses and unprecedented inflation. We're challenged by national bus driver shortages, natural gas prices rising 50%, higher costs for workers' compensation insurance due to the pandemic, local pension contributions, and more.

To cover these expenses, the tax rate will rise slightly: 1.43% on average in Scotch Plains and 1.04% in Fanwood. That is under the 2% budget cap allowed by the state due to 38% debt reduction and translates to about \$133 for a home in Scotch Plains and \$84 for a home in Fanwood.

Our communities are growing. The new housing developments in tandem with the redevelopment of downtown Scotch Plains will increase our student enrollment. While our school buildings are near capacity, we're excited to meet these new challenges. We're in the early stages of planning a bond referendum that will help address this need for more space. We anticipate sharing more information and more details about this in the upcoming school year.

Community support for the budget is what allows the district to continue to provide access to world class academics, athletics, and the arts. We look forward to building on our strong foundation for a *strong future*.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joan Mast, Superintendent

Christopher Jones, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Student Assistance Coordinator Receives 2022 Jim Mulhern Award

Student Assistance Coordinator Liz Knodel-Gordon recently received the Jim Mulhern Award from the Association of Student Assistance Professionals of New Jersey (ASAP-NJ). The Jim Mulhern Award is named after one of the founders of ASAP-NJ and annually recognizes one student assistance professional who demonstrates perseverance, passion, and unfailing commitment to young people.

Liz is retiring in June after working in Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools for 34 years. As the Student Assistance Coordinator, she is trained to develop and support the district's Student Assistance Program, which is designed to provide prevention and intervention services to reduce high risk behaviors, including drug/alcohol use, mental health issues, violent behaviors, and more.



Congratulations, Liz! And, all the best in retirement!



Featured Events

March 31, April 1 & 2, 7:30 pm, and April 3, 2 pm: Repertory Theater Production: Les Miserables, [Tickets available](#)

April 8, 7 pm: McGinn Variety Show - Virtual

April 11-14: McGinn Food Drive

April 11-14: Coles Earth Day Shoe/Clothes Collection Week

April 27: Evergreen Spring Clothing Drive



April 28, 8 pm: Board of Education Meeting

April 29, 1:30 pm: School One Autism Awareness Celebration

June 2, 6 pm: Evergreen Variety Show at SPFHS

April 15-22: Spring Break!

District Calendar

A Round of A-Paws for Spiffy

Have you met Spiffy, yet?

He's Dr. Mast's almost 2-year-old soon-to-be-therapy dog and is affectionately named for the school district that is his second home.

Spiffy joined the school family in August 2020 and has been training to become a certified therapy dog. Once Spiffy passes this test, he'll be the tail-wagging star of the district's pet therapy program at de-stressing visits and read-alongs in the schools. His calm demeanor and love of children already makes him ideal for this work.

We're so lucky to have Spiffy as an honorary member of the district's administrative team. Keep an eye out for his visits to your school soon!



Moonglowers Shine at State Competition

Congratulations to the Moonglowers!

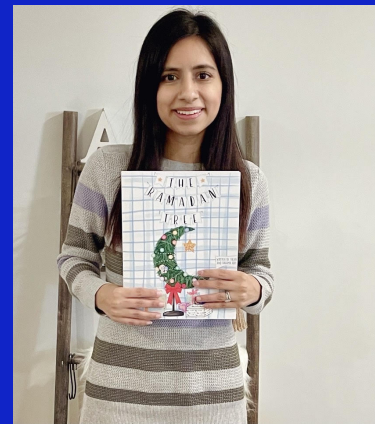
The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School jazz band, led by Mr. Durand Thomas, earned a top two placement in the Division 2 NJAJE State Jazz Festival. The Moonglowers were only one of two gold ratings in their division and fourth in the entire state.

We'll cheer them on as they head to Princeton High School for the State Finals on Saturday, April 30.



Coles Teacher Writes “The Ramadan Tree” Children’s Book

What do you do when you want to share a very personal side of yourself in a way that is informative and enjoyable, yet respectful of your religious traditions? Well, if you’re a talented artist and elementary teacher married to a man who majored in English, you write a children’s book. That’s the route Coles Elementary School Art Teacher Rahama Junaid-Alvi and her husband, Talha Alvi, chose by writing and illustrating “The Ramadan Tree.”



Students will enjoy the book and enrich their understanding of Ramadan, which begins on April 2 this year, as Mrs. Alvi and other Muslims move through the month-long observance focusing on fasting, prayer and charity.

[Read more about “The Ramadan Tree”.](#)

Meet the Board

Amy Boroff - Board Member

Committees: Member of Community Relations; Student Activities & Athletics; Wellness and Equity. She also is the liaison for the New Jersey School Boards Association and SEPAG.

Profession: Nonprofit Strategist

Child is a sophomore at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School

What do you enjoy most about being on the Board of Education?

I love seeing the amazing talent among our students and the way our teachers foster their abilities. A great example is the NASA TechRise Student Challenge. Four of our students



are finalists and currently working with NASA engineers to perfect their prototype and send it into space!

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

