



# Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

May  
2023

## A Message From the Superintendent

Dear Scotch Plains–Fanwood  
Community,

As the end of the school year approaches, some may say they see the light at the end of the tunnel. That may be especially true for our students who are wrapping up testing season. However, I think we are already full of light at Scotch Plains–Fanwood.



Instead of racing toward the end of the school calendar, let's enjoy the many bright spots that will guide us to the conclusion of a memorable year. Our athletic teams are closing out a successful spring season. Cheer them on at a final game or meet and celebrate their hard work and camaraderie. Our choral and instrumental groups are preparing for end-of-year performances. Enjoy an evening admiring their talents and professionalism.

I also want to celebrate the 180 SPFHS seniors who are engaged in their senior projects and internships. This year's record number of participants foreshadows a bright future for the Class of 2023. These self-motivated students seized opportunities to learn more about an academic area or career field of interest. They did not do this for a grade, but to gain greater clarity about the path they take after graduation to build fulfilling and successful lives.

I invite you to spend the next few weeks celebrating the culmination of all our students' hard work. Check our [\*district calendar\*](#) for activities, art shows, and performances. I will see you there!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Joan Mast  
Superintendent of Schools

## First Annual Softball Youth Day is a Home Run

The SPFHS varsity softball team held its first annual Softball Youth Day on Tuesday, May 9. All local youth softball players in grades K through

8 and their families were invited to participate.

After watching the varsity team take on David Brearley High School, won handily by the Raiders 9–1, the youth and varsity players took the field for batting, running the bases, fielding and other softball drills.

“I am incredibly proud of my team for setting up and running this event,” said head coach Matthew Giannacio. “There were 55 youth athletes in attendance, and our varsity girls set up stations to teach them some skills and to begin to establish relationships with them. Making these kinds of community connections goes a long way toward improving our programs and increasing participation.”

The team provided giveaways for each of the younger players, including hats, shirts, softballs and pretzels.

“By helping out with Youth Day, we were able to feel like we were giving back to what the game gave us,” said pitcher Sairah Llano, a junior at SPFHS. “I know that for me softball plays a huge part in my life. Creating this opportunity makes me happy that I might have sparked a light in them that I have in myself.”



## Kindergarten Teacher’s Surprise Broadway Role Kicks Off Staff Appreciation Week

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As an extraordinary gesture of teacher appreciation, one of our parents arranged for kindergarten teacher Lori Anne Travers to appear in the Broadway musical “Aladdin” at the New Amsterdam Theater.

A six-year teaching veteran at Coles Elementary School, Travers has been performing on stage for most of her life.

“The arts had a great impact on my life, and I originally thought I’d major in musical theater,” Travers said. “I have brought components of musical theater into the classroom and translated them into academics. I believe that children can learn through the arts and performing.”

On April 20, Travers received the “gift” of a ride into Manhattan to

prepare for her performance as the fortune teller. She rehearsed with stars Sonya Balsara (Jasmine) and Michael Maliakel (Aladdin). After a costume change and make-up, Travers joined the cast on stage for a dazzling performance. See how it all unfolded in the video below.

“This was a unique way to honor one of our marvelous teachers, and I appreciate the fact that members of our community recognize the quality and dedication of our staff,” said Dr. Joan Mast. “In SPF, we celebrate Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week all year long!”



## SPF Senior Wins DAR Scholarship

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Joseph W. DeSantis, a senior at SPFHS, is the recipient of the 2023 DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) Good Citizens Scholarship Award.

The DAR Good Citizens Award and Scholarship Contest, created in 1934, recognizes and rewards high school seniors who possess the qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism in their homes, schools, and communities.

“Joseph has served as president of the Junior Statesmen Association and as a school representative to Jersey Boys State Leadership Program,” said Dr. David Heisey, SPFHS principal. “I was not at all surprised to learn that he was being honored by the DAR; I know he is going to go on to do great things.”

DeSantis' award-winning essay addressed the topic, "How Civics Education can create better citizens." After graduating from SPFHS, DeSantis will attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and will major in Physics.



# Featured Events

**June 2** – Field Day at McGinn, Evergreen and Brunner elementary schools

**June 2, 7 – 11 pm** – SPFHS Junior Prom

**June 5, 7 pm** – Student Recognition Ceremony, Evergreen Elementary School's gymnasium

**June 6, 6:30 – 8 pm** – Art Show at School One Elementary School

**June 7, 7 – 8 pm** – Meet the Coaches Night at SPFHS

**June 8, 8 pm** – Board of Education Open Agenda Meeting

**June 19, 6 pm** – Nettingham Middle School 8th Grade Recognition Night at SPFHS (Perry Tyson Field)

**June 20, 6 pm** – Terrill Middle School 8th Grade Recognition Night at SPFHS (Perry Tyson Field)

**June 20** – Single Session Day for all students

June 21 – Last Day for Students; Single Session

June 21, 6 – 9 pm – SPFHS Graduation

June 22, 8 pm – Public Board of Education Meeting

Full calendar of events: [Scotch Plains–Fanwood Public Schools / Calendar \(spf12.org\)](http://scotchplainsfanwoodpublicschools.org/calendar)

## The Moonglowers are State Champions

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The SPFHS Honors Jazz Band, the Moonglowers, placed first in the New Jersey Association for Jazz Education (NJAJE) Division 2 State Finals, held April 29 at Princeton High School.



In addition to placing first among competing school districts, the Moonglowers also won Best Rhythm Section, Best Sax Section, and a Solo Award for senior Hasan Ali's performance on the alto saxophone.

"I am very proud of the accomplishments of these hard-working, talented students," said Duran Thomas, SPFHS director of bands. "They maintain an intense rehearsal schedule, usually beginning at 6:45 a.m., from November throughout the school year. They wear many hats, pursuing interests in academics and athletics as well as music."

Although there are no additional competitions, Thomas encourages members of the community to attend **two upcoming concerts**: **Wednesday, June 7 at 6:30 p.m. at Scotch Plains – Village Green Municipal Building** and **Wednesday, June 14 at 6:30 p.m. at Crossroads in Garwood.**

## SPFHS Music Department Makes a Magical Return to Disney World

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The SPFHS Music Department took a magical trip to Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, and Hollywood Studios. Nearly 170 students participated in spectacular performances at the Orlando theme parks.

The trip, planned every four years, was cancelled in 2020. For the students and faculty alike, this year marked a return to normalcy.

“I’m ecstatic we could do this trip again,” said Jan Allen, music teacher at SPFHS. “It felt refreshing to get back to the joy of performing in front of a crowd. The students were exceptional.”

Members from 12 groups including the Chamber Choir, Las Cantadoras (the women's chorus), and the Moonglowers had the opportunity to showcase their performance skills. The SPFHS Marching Band even paraded down Magic Kingdom's iconic Main Street.

**“ The teachers in our district are dedicated to giving students multitudes of opportunities to enhance their performance skills.**

**- DR. WAYNE MALLETTE**

*SUPERVISOR OF FINE ARTS FOR SPF SCHOOLS*

## More Trips and Awards for SPF Music Programs

"The teachers in our district are dedicated to giving students multitudes of opportunities to enhance their performance skills," said Dr. Wayne Mallette, supervisor of Fine Arts for SPF schools.

Although the school year is wrapping up, our musical groups are not ready to take a final bow. There are many exciting performances still planned this school year, such as the SPFHS Chamber Choir's three-day trip to New York City to perform with the orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

The Nettingham Jazz Ensemble and the Nettingham Crimson Choir also recently competed at the Dorney Park Music in the Parks Competition.

Crimson Choir won First Place in the Mixed Chorus category and the NMS Jazz Ensemble won First Place in the Jazz Band category. NMS also brought home titles for Best Overall Jazz Ensemble and Junior High/Middle School Overall Jazz Soloist Award. These accomplishments depict our outstanding teachers' dedication to our students throughout their musical careers.



## “The Drowsy Chaperone” Captures 2023 Rising Star Awards Nominations

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The SPFHS Repertory Theatre is nominated in four categories of the Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards for its March production of “The Drowsy Chaperone.”

The Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards program encourages and rewards exceptional accomplishments in the production of New Jersey high school musicals. This year, the nominations pool was comprised of 115 schools across the state, including public, private, and performing arts magnet schools.

“The Drowsy Chaperone” was nominated for four awards and one Honorable Mention:

- Outstanding Supporting Performer in a Male Role: David Gomez
- Outstanding Achievement by a Chorus
- Outstanding Achievement by an Orchestra
- Outstanding Achievement in Music Direction: Jan Allen & Trey Shore
- Honorable Mention Costume: Joanne Sprague

More than 75 students, including the cast, crew and live orchestra, were involved in the March performance of “The Drowsy Chaperone.” The production team included Morgan Knight (Director), Jan Allen (Producer and Music Director), Courtney Nemec (Producer and Assistant Director), Trey Shore (Pit Orchestra Conductor), Peter Avagliano (Set Designer), Evan Perrotta (Technical Director and Crew Supervisor), Cat

Cusick (Lighting Designer), and Joanne Sprague (Costume Designer).

The Rising Star Awards Ceremony will be held at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn Township on Tuesday, June 13 at 7:30 p.m.



## SCOTCH PLAINS- FANWOOD'S CREATIVE SUMMER WORKSHOPS

Join us for five weeks of summer programming, including the SPF Summer Instrumental Music School.

Our talented professional staff will lead exciting and challenging courses in an engaging atmosphere.

**Where?** Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School

**When?** June 26 - July 28, 2023; 8:30am - 1pm

[CLICK HERE TO  
LEARN MORE](#)

Open to all public and private school students who reside in Scotch Plains and Fanwood, as well as all surrounding towns.

[www.spfk12.org](http://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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