



Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

Nov.
2023

A Message From the Superintendent

Dear Scotch Plains–Fanwood
Community,

The month of November is about giving thanks, especially for our communities and the people in our lives. That's why I want to share my deepest gratitude for *you* and your contributions to SPF.

I also want to thank the community for making its collective voice heard on a future bond referendum. A survey distributed earlier in the month has already garnered over 1,600 community responses and almost 200 student responses. This input is critical to helping us craft a referendum that matches the community's priorities and our district's need for more space, while still being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. If you haven't yet completed the survey, please do so [here](#). We'll continue to provide updates on this process.



I hope you enjoyed Thanksgiving and took time to reflect on your own reasons to be grateful!

Sincerely,
Dr. Joan Mast
Superintendent of Schools

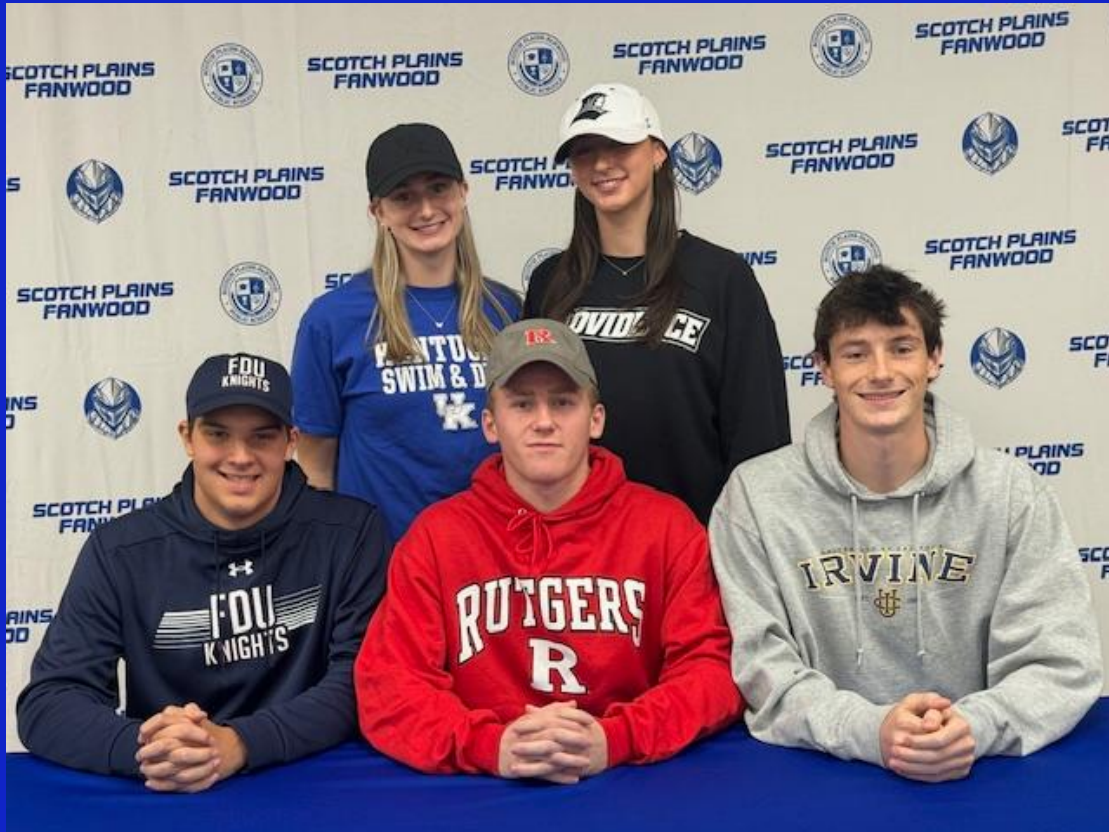
Division 1 Signing Day

Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School celebrated student athletes who will continue their athletic careers at a Division 1 college or university. The fall National Signing Day was held on Nov. 8.

The five Raider athletes included:

- **Evan Doyle** (Baseball) – Fairleigh Dickinson University, Metropolitan Campus
- **Tim Ennis** (Volleyball) – University of California, Irvine

- Keira Kelly (Track) – Providence College
- Graham Kois (Soccer) – Rutgers University
- Billie Sherratt (Swimming) – University of Kentucky



Students Have a Voice in Naming School One's Mascot

School One Elementary's beloved cardinal mascot finally has a name – meet Blaze!

On Election Day this year, students at School One took to the voting booth to pick one of three names for the school's mascot. The next day the cardinal's new name was revealed to cheers at a whole school assembly.

Principal Justin Fiory explained that the vote was not only a lesson in civics, but also part of the school's ongoing character education initiative called PRIDE (Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Diversity, Empathy). Every week, students who show these core values can be nominated by their peers or teachers to earn a cardinal card. The dressed-up mascot calls their name over the public announcement system in a true show of pride.

Check out the photos of Blaze in action!



SPF Gymnastics Team Places Third at Sectionals



The Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School gymnastics team competed in the NJSIAA North Jersey, Section 2 Championships on Saturday, Nov. 4, and placed third. Congratulations to the Raiders on your achievement!

Senior Captain Ella Burgio had a significant performance, placing fifth in Bars with a score of 8.825. Additionally, Nicole Perez placed fourth in Beam with a score of 9.35 and Delany Farley placed second in Floor Exercise with a score of 9.475.

For the past few season the team has placed in the top three at Sectionals, continuing to leave their mark in the history books.

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The biggest attribute about our team that sets us apart from the competition is that we are a family. We love and support one another through every win and loss. We all want the same goal and that is to be the absolute best we can.

- COACH MARISSA DIBELLA -

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“The biggest attribute about our team that sets us apart from the competition is that we are a family,” said Coach Marissa DiBella. “We love and support one another through every win and loss. We all want the same goal and that is to be the absolute best we can. We are always rooting for each other and encouraging everyone to do their best. Our team is filled with such unique talent. We don't rely solely on one athlete to carry the team, but rather the combined talent of many athletes.”

The team also won the Union County Championship title for the fifth year in a row with a score of 108.675.

“We plan on keeping our streak going for years to come,” said Coach DiBella. “I love watching them achieve their goals.”

Featured Events

Dec. 1, 7 pm – Mr. Spiffy High at SPFHS

Dec. 2, 9 – 11 am – Breakfast with Flame at McGinn

Dec. 4, 6 pm – National Honor Society Induction at SPFHS

Dec. 8, 3:30 – 5:30 pm – Evergreen Holiday Craft Fair

Dec. 13, 7 pm – Terrill Winter Concert (Grades 7 & 8) at Terrill

Dec. 14, 7 pm – Nettingham Winter Band & Chorus Concert (Grades 7 & 8) at Nettingham

Dec. 19, 7 pm – Nettingham Winter Band & Chorus Concert (Grades 5 & 6) at Nettingham

Dec. 20, 7 pm – SPFHS Winter Choir Concert

Dec. 21, 1 pm – Evergreen Holiday Sing Along

Dec. 21, 8 pm – Regular Board of Education Meeting

Dec. 22 – Holiday Sing Alongs at Brunner, McGinn, and School One

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



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

Spotlight: Dr. Heisey Reflects on 24-years at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School

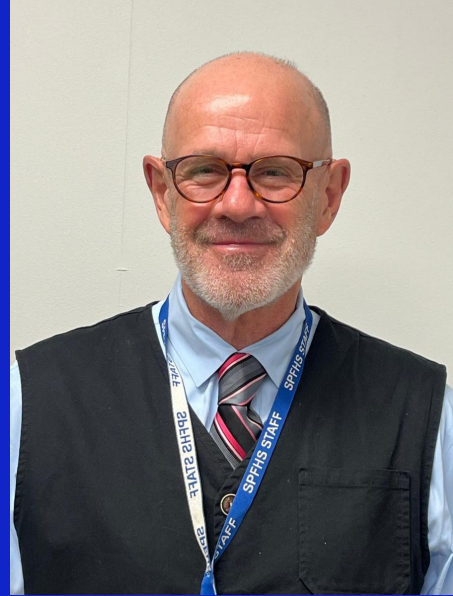
Dr. David Heisey will be retiring at the end of the 2023–24 school year after 24 years as principal of Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School. As he steps down, he does so with fond memories of his time with students and staff.

Let's reflect on his career as he offers advice for the SPF community, and his plans for retirement.

What is your background and

experience with Scotch Plains–Fanwood Public Schools?

I grew up in Pittsburgh, graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School. I attended Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and earned a bachelor's degree in history and political science. I received my master's degree in educational administration from Frostburg State. I earned a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Widener University in 1997.



I began teaching at North Star High School, located in Western Pennsylvania. I was a social studies teacher and coached football, wrestling, and track and field. In 1990, I accepted the position of assistant principal in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and two years later became a principal of a high school in Lancaster County. In 1999, I was offered and accepted the position of Principal at Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School.

What made you want to work at Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School?

Many factors led me to SPF. The primary factor was that I immediately felt at home in Scotch Plains–Fanwood. During the interview process, I met many stakeholders who helped solidify my decision to move to the Scotch Plains–Fanwood community. I have never regretted my decision.

What inspired you to become a school principal?

My path to being a high school principal does not have a single moment but rather an evolution. I loved teaching at North Star High School in Western Pennsylvania, and it was difficult for me to leave. But my principal at NSHS encouraged me to become a principal -- I thank him for that!

I was fortunate to have various colleagues inspire me to challenge myself. It was never really a goal to become a high school principal; it happened by chance and organically. I still refer to myself as being a teacher by trade.

What are your favorite memories at the high school or in the district?

I have so many fond memories of my time at Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School -- it is difficult to pin down just one memory. It boils down to many small events and experiences that will always be part of my life. Most of my memorable moments involve students rallying around and supporting a classmate.

Early at SPFHS, a group of students walked into my office trying to grapple with the fact that one of their classmates had been diagnosed with cancer. After we talked and I listened, the students formed The Student Movement Against Cancer (SMAC). I remember this like it was yesterday. The students were recognized by the New Jersey State Board of Education.

These memories stick with me and give me confidence for the future.

The same is true for our staff. The staff and faculty at SPFHS continually demonstrate that they have big hearts. Education is a Human Service Profession. Time and time again, I see faculty and staff acting as Servant Leaders and making our school and community a better place.

So, some memories are big, like SMAC, but most are those small interactions with students, staff, and parents that will stay with me forever.

What are your plans for retirement?

Being a former athlete, I do my best to keep in shape by running and other forms of exercise. I enjoy reading and plan to read more upon my retirement. I enjoy traveling and hope to do so more in the future. I will probably continue to teach a graduate course at a local university.

I am not 100% sure where this phase in my life will take me, but I will always have my closest friends and loved ones by my side. I hope to spend more time and be more involved with my family. Being a high school principal made this very challenging and family time was often sacrificed.

What do you enjoy about your job?

All the people I interact with daily can be overwhelming, but it is something I have always thrived on. Schools can be bureaucratic by design, but the people of SPFHS constantly show how personal connections can break down the bureaucracy.

One of my favorite parts of being a principal is working with others and solving what may appear to be impossible tasks. While it may not always work out how everyone expects, we work together.

What advice do you have as you reflect on your time as principal?

My advice to our school community is to never work in isolation. We all have the same fundamental goals as they relate to schooling. I hope SPF continues to harness that positive energy to allow the students to reach their full potential.

SPFHS Rocket League Team Advanced to Semi-Finals at Garden State Esports

Scotch Plains–Fanwood High School's Rocket League team recently advanced to the semi-finals at the Garden State Esports competition hosted at St. Elizabeth University.

Junior Matthew "Potato" Benedetto has watched the Esports team grow during his time at SPFHS. "It was great to have the opportunity to attend Garden State Esports and play in a structured environment with the added excitement of a crowd," he said.

Many Esports games are played online, but Garden State Esports gave the team the experience of playing on a stage with live commentary and a crowd. This is the second year the Esports team qualified for Garden State Esports. The team competed against Seneca High School in the semi-finals who ultimately went on to win the state title.

Esports encourages collaboration, team building and self-initiative as the team often continues to play together outside of school.

Matthew Benedetto was excited to be named a state all-star for the second year at the competition. "I've met many friends through Esports, and we've formed great chemistry as a team playing together. I'm excited for the next season and to continue playing together," Benedetto said. "We want to end on a high note for the seniors."

The SPFHS Super Smash Brothers team finished 8–2, losing in the state quarter finals, one game away from attending the live finals.



"It was a great experience. They fought the whole time and kept it very close for the majority of the matchups. We were well prepared and truly gave it our all," said Raymond Moskal, video production teacher and

advisor of Esports at SPFHS. “Each year we continue to get stronger and more strategic. All our teams had great seasons.”

The SPFHS League of Legends team also qualified for Garden States Esports, finished 5–1–2 and split the division championship with Edison and West Essex High School. Chance "CChrysler" Perez from the League of Legends team was also named a state all–star.

“Our division is a round robin, and we play best of two matches,” Moskal explained. “The highlight of our whole season was with this team and their playoff victory over West Essex. We tied them earlier in the year and the team spent time reviewing the game replay, coming up with a strong game plan, and we ended up sweeping them.”

SPFHS will have seven different teams competing in the winter. The team is excited to compete in the Valkyrie Division for Overwatch 2 with a team of girls and other genders for the first time.

Watch a replay of the Overwatch Team below.



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
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