



Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

April
2025

A Message From the Superintendent

**Dear Scotch Plains-Fanwood
Community,**

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools is here to educate every student so they can become confident and caring life-long learners. At the heart of this mission are our teachers and staff, whose dedication and passion shape lives and leave a lasting impact on students. Now, it's time to celebrate them!

Teacher Appreciation Week is May 5-9, and we want to show the incredible impact of **SPF teachers and staff.** I invite you to submit a 'thank you' message using this [Google form](#). Your words will be shared on our district's Facebook and Instagram during that week.

Thank you for helping celebrate the teachers and staff who make our district shine and for showing what it means to be #SPFProud!

Sincerely,
Dr. Joan Mast
Superintendent of Schools



CELEBRATING SPF'S TEACHERS & STAFF

Click the banner above to share your 'thank you' for teachers and staff! Messages will be used on the district's Facebook and Instagram.



Arts Integration sparks creative connections across district

Arts Integration in Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools isn't just a teaching method – it's a powerful way to unlock student creativity, confidence, and critical thinking across all grade levels.

One recent highlight came from Brunner Elementary School where the district's Arts Integration Specialist/Coach Barbara Prestridge collaborated with third grade teacher Charlene Hall on a creative project inspired by *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo. After reading the story and exploring the china rabbit's journey of emotional growth, students reimaged the ending of the book. They worked together to write and illustrate their new version. They proudly shared the finished product at last week's Board of Education meeting and sent a letter to the author, who wrote them back and praised their work.

The Arts Integration program merges the arts with students' core curriculum to simultaneously build deeper understandings of both the core subjects and the art forms. The program's philosophy is based on the belief that to prepare students for the future, teachers must create a learning culture of innovation and meaning making through creative problem solving.

This year, the program has led initiatives such as:

- Inspiring all second-grade students to blend poetry, visual art and music by writing and illustrating their own poems and sharing the finished works with their families and school communities.

- Leading second grade students at Brunner through science and storytelling lessons about goats, with real-world connections to a Vermont farmer.
- Guiding high school environmental science students to artistically show where they stand on issues surrounding public trust lands.
- Holding five live opera performances for third grade students across the district.
- Connecting Latin drummer Hector Morales with McGinn Elementary students through a Young Audiences grant.

The program also continues to provide professional development opportunities for teachers and staff through painting classes and trips to opera performances. Prestridge said these opportunities are truly building a culture of creativity and arts appreciation in the district.

“Arts Integration is fun for students and staff,” she added. “If it’s rooted in truth and value, then it’s fun – and incredibly powerful.”

Organizational Administrative changes for the 2025-2026 School Year

Please see a recap of a message from Dr. Joan Mast that highlighted organizational and staffing changes in the district. These changes will allow the district to continue meeting the evolving needs of SPF students and addressing budgetary constraints.

- The District Social Studies supervisory position will be eliminated effective June 30, 2025. To ensure continuity and excellence in our Social Studies curriculum, we will implement a collaborative leadership that will leverage teacher leadership in close collaboration with building administrators and coordination across buildings.
- The Technology/Communications Specialist position will be eliminated this fall. These services will be outsourced and overseen by the Superintendent’s Office.
- Ralph Gerace will move from Terrill Middle School to SPFHS as Assistant Principal.
- Brooke Esposito will move from SPFHS to Terrill Middle School as Assistant Principal.
- Ryan Miller, Assistant Principal for Athletics, will also assume supervision of the Health and PE Department.

Our primary focus is to preserve our quality of instruction and to make reductions as far away from the classroom as possible. We appreciate your understanding and continued partnership. Thank you!

SPFHS represented at Festival of Music Competition in Virginia Beach

In April, the SPFHS Music Department took 140 students to compete in the Festival of Music competition in Virginia Beach. The students represented Scotch Plains-Fanwood with dignity and professionalism:

- Moonglowers - 1st Place, SUPERIOR RATING, Best Overall Jazz Band, Best Overall Section (Trombones)
- Wind Ensemble - 1st Place, SUPERIOR RATING, Best Overall Concert Band
- Rhythmsense - 1st Place, SUPERIOR RATING
- SPF Jazz - 1st Place, EXCELLENT RATING, Best Overall Jazz Soloist (Knevin Pilley)
- Concert Band - 2nd Place, SUPERIOR RATING
- Chamber Choir - 3rd Place, SUPERIOR RATING
- Virtuoso Voices - 1st Place, SUPERIOR RATING
- Select Choir - 1st Place, SUPERIOR RATING, Best Overall Choir, Best Overall Vocal Soloist (Isabella Rocha)
- Concert Choir - 2nd Place, SUPERIOR RATING
- Fortis Forum - 1st Place, SUPERIOR RATING

Congratulations to Jan Allen, Durand Thomas, Kelly Ruggeri, John Gillick, Charlie Jackson, and Joe Reo for their leadership and musicality in leading these groups. Thank you to the chaperones and volunteers who made this trip a success.

SPFHS alumni to film 'Back 2 School' comedy special at their alma mater

Two Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School alumni turned entertainment powerhouses – comedian Mike Marino '81 and Emmy-award winning director/producer Daniel Catullo III '90 – are joining forces to tape a TV comedy special in the exact place where it all began: the High School auditorium.

The show, titled “Mike Marino Back 2 School,” is a homecoming celebration for both – filled with laughter, nostalgia, and a shared appreciation for the foundation of SPFHS. Members of the public are encouraged to purchase tickets for the event, scheduled for Saturday, May 10 at 8 p.m. in the SPFHS Auditorium. All proceeds will benefit the music and theater programs in the district.



“This is personal now,” Catullo said. “I’ve filmed shows all over the world, but never did I think I’d be shooting a TV special at my hometown high school. The last time I was on that stage was for Battle of the Bands in high school. It’s surreal – and incredibly special – to come home.”

Both Marino and Catullo were deeply involved in SPFHS’s music and theater programs as students. Their paths crossed for the first time during last year’s Hall of Fame induction; Marino commented at the ceremony that he and Catullo should work together on a comedy special.

That fateful meeting sparked the idea and relationship behind the filming of “Back 2 School”.

“This isn’t just a comedy special,” Marino said. “It’s a full circle moment. I want to give back to the place that shaped me.”

Catullo’s team from California will be working all week to transform the stage into a 1981 classroom and the auditorium into a real comedy club experience. The atmosphere will match Marino’s antics as he’ll take the audience through his teenage misadventures, Italian-American family, and enough laughs to make you wish you’d paid attention in class. Central to the fun will be the SPFHS marching band and other surprise guests.

“We want Scotch Plains to win an Emmy,” Catullo said. “Our careers started on that high school stage. Now, it’s time to shine a spotlight on the town and school that helped launch us.”

Tickets available
here!

SPFHS students accepted to 2025-2026 NJ All-State Choir

Congratulations to the SPFHS students who were accepted to the 2025-2026 New Jersey All-State Choir. This is a tremendous accomplishment. Congratulations to Ms. Jan Allen for preparing the students for these prestigious ensembles!

- Alejandro Bailey (Mixed Choir)
 - Sofia Cesario (Mixed Choir)
 - Logan Griffiths (Mixed Choir)
 - Teresa Jackson (Mixed Choir)
 - Juilee Joshi (Treble Choir)
 - Gayatri Phatak (Treble Choir)
 - Knevin Pilley (Mixed Choir)
 - Aaron Pinsky (Mixed Choir) - Scored 8th Place in the Bass 2 section!
-



Registration opens for Creative Summer Workshops

WHO? Classes are open to students in grades K-8 from Scotch Plains, Fanwood and the surrounding communities. Our Instrumental Music Program is open to students in grades 4-9.

WHAT? The Creative Summer Workshop was developed and is conducted by the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education. It is designed to offer a variety of enrichment for students. An experienced and talented professional staff will once again lead progressive, challenging, and exciting courses in a fun and engaging atmosphere.



WHERE? The workshops are all held at Malcolm E. Nettingham Middle School, located at 580 Park Avenue in Scotch Plains.

WHEN? The courses run from 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. and most courses are an hour in length.

Registration closes on June 1, 2025.

Learn More and Register
Here!



New Director of Special Services

We are excited to welcome Marisa Stefani as the new Director of Special Services. Marisa comes to us with a wealth of experience in special education and related services.

Currently, she serves as the Interim Supervisor of Special Services at Rumson Fair Haven Regional High School. In this role, she has demonstrated strong leadership in overseeing the Special Services Department, ensuring compliance with regulations, and supervising Child Study Team members, teachers, and related service providers.

We welcome her to the SPF team, effective July 1, 2025!

Featured Events

- **May 6, 8 p.m.** - Board of Education Regular Public Meeting in SPFHS Media Center
- **May 7, 7 – 9 p.m.** - HS Spring Choral Concert in HS Auditorium
- **May 8, 2:45 – 4 p.m.** - Terrill Grades 5 & 6 Spring Social
- **May 8, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.** - Coles Art Show
- **May 9, 3:30 – 4 p.m.** - Evergreen Color Run
- **May 9** – Brunner Spirit Day ‘Dress Like a Teacher’
- **May 10, 8 p.m.** - Mike Marino’s Back 2 School Comedy Special in SPFHS Auditorium
- **May 19, 6 – 8 p.m.** - Brunner Multicultural Night
- **May 20** – Staff Recognition at 3:30 p.m. in HS Auditorium and Student Recognition at 7 p.m. in HS Auditorium

- **May 21, 7-7:55 p.m.** - Nettingham Grades 5 & 6 Band Concert in Nettingham Auditorium
- **May 21, 8 – 9 p.m.** - Nettingham Grades 7 & 8 Band Concert in Nettingham Auditorium
- **May 21, 7 – 8 p.m.** - Terrill Grades 5 & 6 Concert in Terrill Auditorium
- **May 22, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.** - NJ Seal of Biliteracy Awards Ceremony in HS Auditorium
- **May 26** - Schools are Closed for Memorial Day
- **May 28, 6 – 7 p.m.** – Evergreen Art Show at Evergreen
- **May 28, 7 – 8:30 p.m.** - HS Senior Music Awards in HS Auditorium
- **May 29, 7 – 8:30 p.m.** - HS Scholarship Night at SPFHS
- **May 30, 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.** - McGinn Helping Hands Picnic

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