

COMMUNITY CONTACT



Winter 2012

SOUTH PLAINFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

"CREATING A COMMUNITY OF LIFELONG LEARNERS"



4 A's.....

*** Academics.....**

*** Athletics.....**

*** Arts**

*** Activities**

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UPCOMING DATES OF IMPORTANCE

Jan. 16—Schools Closed, Martin Luther King Day
Feb. 1—End of Second Marking Period
Feb. 16—Early Dismissal/parent Conference (Grant & Middle Schools only)
Feb. 17 & 20—Schools Closed
Feb. 23—HS Parent Conferences (Evening)
April 26 & 27—Elementary School Parent Conferences

Please be advised that there is a change to the 2011-12 school calendar. Feb. 7 has been changed from a staff only professional development day to a regular day of school for all students and staff.. In addition, Tuesday, June 5 has been changed to a day for staff only.

WINTER CLOSINGS

As we enter the winter season please be reminded of the procedures involved in announcing emergency closings. You will receive a district phone call, and have access to information regarding a closing on the website, and NEWS 12 (news12.com).

2012-13 SCHOOL BUDGET

Each fall the district supervisors and administrators meet to begin to design a budget for the next school year. This process involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each component of the program and providing for required areas plus those determined to be in need of improvement. This needs assessment includes the academic program, co-curricular program and all other activities in regards to supplies, technology, staffing, professional development, texts, instructional software, etc.

At some point in January these tentative draft figures will be discussed with the board of education. The process continues until priorities are determined and State aide is announced. The final step is presenting the budget to the public for a vote in April.

STATE TESTING DATES 2011-12

Grade 3 NJ ASK (Lang. Arts & Math) -	May 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 2012
Grade 4 NJ ASK (Lang Arts, Math & Science) -	May 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 2012
Grades 5 & 6 NJ ASK (Lang. Arts & Math) -	April 30, May 1, 2, 3, 2012
Grades 7 & 8 NJ ASK (Lang Arts & Math) -	April 23, 24, 25, 26, 2012
Spring HSPA (Lang. Arts & Math for all first time 11 graders, retained 11 graders, 12 graders, Adult HS students) -	March 6, 7, 8 2012
NJ Biology Competency Test—	May 15, 16, 2012

CURRICULUM



The assessment of the current curriculum guides is ongoing in preparation of the revision in several content areas to ensure that they are in line with revised State Standards and new national Common Core State Standards. These include language arts, science, world languages, physical ed/health,, social studies, technology (K-8), math (gr. 3—12) and visual & performing arts. Mr. Parisi, Mathematics & Science supervisor, has been working with the administrators in regards to presenting the state recommended template, defining terms and the process of matriculating from one set of standards to another. These curriculum guides will be in place for September 2012.

DISTRICT TESTING REPORT

Dr. Cocchiola presented the district testing report for the 2010-11 school year at the Oct. 19 board of education meeting. It can be accessed in full on the home page of the district website. This included the high school HSPA, the NJ ASK 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8, the SAT and AP results. The district should be proud of the students' overall performance, which includes:

- An increase in language arts (2.6%) and math (4%) on the grade 11 HSPA.
- An increase in 9 of the 12 language arts and math assessments in grades 3—8; including an increase in math at every grade level.
- Extremely successful AP exams. Seventy-six percent scored at a level of 3 or better (scale of 1-5) which makes them eligible for college credit. Twenty-four of the 128 exams taken (19%) scored a 5, the highest scorer a student can earn.

Additional emphasis will be placed on the language arts component of the NJASK and the integration of SAT content level material into the regular high school math and language arts literacy curriculum.

WARM WELCOME

Welcome to our new South Plainfield HS Asst. Prin., Mr. Ron Springs. Mr. Springs has been with the East Orange School District for the past 6 years as a member of the school's administrative team and the drop-out coordinator. He also has a law degree and was a practicing attorney for 8 years before entering the field of education. He holds certificates as a K-5 Elementary School Teacher, Social Studies, School Administrator, Supervisor and Principal. The district looks forward to adding his background and experience to our staff.

Barbara Scarcella has recently been promoted to the position of Accountant II in the business office.

Michael Stallone has been appointed as a mathematics teacher in the Middle School.



Paul Rafalowski has been appointed as the district K-12 Curriculum Coordinator, effective Jan. 3, 2011. This is the latest step in the District's initiative to provide sufficient leadership in curriculum development and implementation in all content areas. Paul will be working with Vincent Parisi, Supervisor of Math and Science, Annemarie Stoeckel, Supervisor of Technology and Interim Asst. Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Cocchiola in the revision of all curriculum guides, K—12.

TECHNOLOGY

Authors Talk to High School Students about Bullying and Motivation via Skype

The South Plainfield HS World Language classes recently had the opportunity to Skype with authors Seth Godin and Nicholas Sparks. On Monday, October 17th, the students met with Seth Godin, author of Poke the Box, to discuss his experiences with bullying. On Tuesday, October 18th, Nicholas Sparks, author of the Notebook, spoke about motivation to our students as well as to students in another HS who were also participating in the session from their school. The authors took about 15 minutes to discuss their personal experiences and then spent the last 15 minutes answering student questions from the audience.

Skype in the Classroom is a free global community that invites teachers to collaborate on classroom projects using video calls over the Internet. World Languages teacher, Mrs. Shannon Lorenzo, was instrumental in organizing the sessions.

CAD Class Receives Google Sketch-up Pro

The High School Computer Assisted Drawing (CAD) class has received Google Sketch-up Pro for 20 computers through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Education. Google Sketch-up Pro is a 3D modeling software application that normally retails for \$495 per user license.

- Each school will soon be receiving one new Smartboard and projector purchased through NCLB funds
- A grant from the Department of Education has provided funds for the purchase of Google Sketch Up Pro for the HS CAD class. This includes 20 laptops.
- The district's Websense software was updated to provide another 200 licenses to bring our total to 1200 users.

ACADEMIC INITIATIVES:

- A group of high school students were treated to a presentation by author Elizabeth Bettina, who wrote It Happened in Italy a true story of how Jewish captives of the Germans were protected and kept safe by the citizens of Campagna, Italy during WW II. Ms. Bettina's family was originally from this little town.
- Sen. Barbara Buono spoke to the Grant School children on Oct. 28 about Bullying & Harassment.



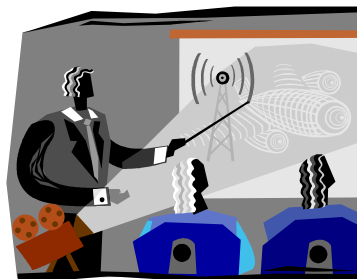
- On Nov. 17 upper level Spanish and Art students visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC focusing on Pre-Columbian art from Peru.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

On Nov. 8 all instructional staff were involved in professional development sessions coordinated by Vincent Parisi, Supervisor of Math and Science, Annemarie Stoeckel, Supervisor of Technology and Dr. Cocchiola, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools. The day was broken into three two-hour sessions. The area covered included:

Right to Know Training	Instructing Hard of Hearing Students
Unit Lesson Plans	Substance Abuse Trends
Grief Counseling	Assistive Tek
Smartboard Basics	Learn 360 software
Go Math curriculum (K—6)	Ipads & IEPs
Understanding Autism	Making Meaning (language arts)
Cicero American History software	



.....THERE IS POWER IN PRIDE.....

- Rotary Students of the Month at South Plainfield HS were Casey Butrico and Matthew Valencia for September, and Dylan Dorey and Rachel Scrudato for October .
- The SPSHS tiger marching Band, Drumline and Pit who finished second in the GR. III Class A band competition at Somerville HS on Oct. 22, and the Drumline and Pitt who took first place in the Group III Class A Percussion. The South Plainfield Music Boosters & Music Association also hosted the very successful 30th annual Marching Band Festival/US Scholastic Band Assoc. Competition on Oct. 15.



- The Middle School Global Justice Club collected over 50 pairs of sandals to needy people in Haiti that were collected from Nov. 1 — 4.
- The December 2011 edition of Runners World has a feature article called “Who Inspires You?” in which a former, South Plainfield graduate, Ted Biribin, talks about Mike Capizola, his high school running coach. Ted reached out for “Cap” a few years ago because he could no longer run like he used to. He came back to work out with “Cap” and his Tiger team and was soon running marathons again. He cites “Cap’s” help and inspiration as the reason why.
- The Spanish Honor Society students went to Grant School on Nov. 1 to do a mini-presentation for Ms. Arriola’s Spanish students explaining the Mexican holiday Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) as it related to Halloween.
- Ms. Barbara Habeeb entered the Kennedy School 3rd grade chorus in the 101.5 holiday concert contest. She was notified that they were one of the three finalists in the elementary category . Their song was aired on the radio on Dec. 21, and votes were solicited for them to win a \$1,000 prize for their school. Congratulations to Miss Habeeb & our 3rd grade singers!
- 609 students from across the district sent holiday letters to our servicemen and women overseas as part of a Middlesex County initiative.
- Congratulations to Lisa Parker, Kennedy School Principal, who earned tenure on Nov. 12.

All of our schools have been holding programs and assemblies to honor the seasonal holidays and veterans in November and December.



HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

.....Rotary Students of the Month—October: Rachel Scrudato and Dylan Dorey

.....Homecoming King & Queen: Shawn Gorman & Alexis Alba

.....Anthony Ashnault has been named the #1 pre-season wrestler in the country at 126 lbs.

.....Selected students are involved in on-line coursework in several Advanced Placement classes.

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.....Junior Patrick Boyle's article, *The Game of Basketball*, was selected for publication in Teen Ink (teenink.com)

.....Senior Jack Green, was selected as the Grand Prize winner of the Hulk Hogan main Event Sweepstakes sponsored by Channel One. The prize is \$3,500 for use in the high school athletic department and an Xbox 360 Kinect Gaming System.

.....The following SPHS students scored at a level of "5" on last spring's national Advanced Placement testing, the highest score a student can earn.

Samual Alvarado (Spanish)

Michaela Fore (English)

Joseph Ifrach (Biology)

Michael Krusinowski (Calc AB, Span)

Erin O'Connor (English)

Ruchi Patel (Calc AB, Biol)

Joana Sa (Calc AB)

Rajath Kenath (Biol)

Andrea Guerrero (Spanish)

Bjorn Delacruz (English, US Hist, Calc AB)

Charles Huber (Calc AB)

Lauren Keane (Calc AB)

Thalia Lopez (Calc AB, Spanish)

Michael Parelo (Biol)

Cincy Ruiz (Spanish)

Ellen Zinsky (Calc AB)

Albert Vill (Biol)

HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

The holiday season found our music program very busy in preparing for and performing in seasonal productions. The Franklin School Holiday concert was held on Dec. 12. Winter concerts were also held in Roosevelt School on Dec. 13, Middle School on Dec. 15, Kennedy on Dec. 16, Grant on Dec. 19, the high school on Dec. 20 and Riley School on Dec. 21. These programs required weeks of preparation, and according to all in attendance the time was well invested. Thanks to the music teachers under the direction of Team Leader Andrew Veiss.

On Dec. 11 many South Plainfield Public School students performed at the 38th Annual TubaChristmas Concert. This concert was conceived by tuba virtuoso Harvey Phillips to honor his teacher, the late great William J. Bell. The first Tuba Christmas was presented in Rockefeller Center in 1974. This unusual Christmas tradition is firmly established in over 200 cities around the world.

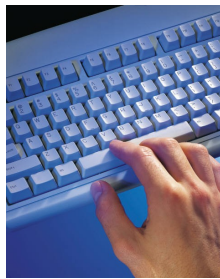
Despite low temperatures the turn out for this year's concert was the largest on record. Approximately 582 tubas, baritones, and euphoniums performed thirty minutes of Christmas carols on the ice rink under the gigantic Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. The conductor of the celebration was C. Christian Wilhelm, who is the former conductor of New York's Famous Goldman Band and is the current conductor of the Ridgewood Concert Band. This event has become a tradition in the Middle School and throughout the district over the past nine years. The Middle School students involved were Brian Csobor, Jonathan Blanco, Tony Le, Tim Nuber, Scott O'Brien, Joe Reo, and Samantha Reo. Chris Cieszkiewicz and James O'Connor represented the High School. Also attending was South Plainfield Alumni, Richard Rotella. All of the students were accompanied by Middle School teacher, Mr. Veiss and Riley School teacher, Mr. Baldwin.

DISTRICT WEBSITE

<http://spboe.org>

The district has contracted with a new website provider this year. The result is a site that has enhanced capabilities.

- Information may be translated into selected languages.
- All teachers will have the ability to design their own individual websites.
- Students with disabilities can better access the information.
- Listing of several important district policies such as Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying available on the home page.



As of Dec. 21 the website had 236,068 hits since its inception on July 1. In order to provide the best communication between our district and the community we are offering the opportunity to register on our website and subscribe to areas that are important or of interest to you through E-Alerts.

- ◆ What are E-Alerts?
E-Alerts allows your school staff to easily communicate with you via email or SMS text messaging.
- ◆ Broadcast E-Alerts
Administrators can use Broadcast E-Alerts to communicate with parents and community members. This requires only email addresses. Information can be disseminated to individuals or groups. In addition, users can elect to receive Broadcast E-Alerts on their cell phones.
- ◆ Content E-Alerts
Editors, including teachers and secretaries, use contact E-Alerts to send emails to interested individuals when they make changes to their specific areas of the website or building calendars. In order for you to receive Content E-Alerts you must be a registered user and you must subscribe to the areas that you are interested in.

How do you register?

Go to spboe.org for instructions on how to register and subscribe to E-Alerts. Click on "Register" in the dark horizontal band at the top of the home page of our website.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

As this school year nears the midpoint, I wish to thank everyone for their support of our educational missions throughout the year and during the forthcoming months. This community's reputation regarding interest, inclusion, and participation in school-related programs and activities is well-known. It is also well-known that students learn and grow in direct proportion to how well we partner together as caring adults with one purpose in mind – the children. Many hundreds of people contribute the time and energy necessary to make all South Plainfield schools wonderful centers for teaching and learning. We are so very proud of the many wonderful accomplishments by our students, staff, parents, and supporters. In fact, I continue to enjoy the pleasure of getting to know many individuals who serve as members of our staff, parent-school organizations, elected officials, the Education Foundation, various school volunteers, athletic, performing arts and academic boosters, and numerous stakeholders throughout the South Plainfield educational community.

As reflected in the pages that follow in this newsletter, I am proud of what our students and staff have recently achieved and look forward to even greater strides in the future. I hope you enjoy the many accomplishments shared with you in this edition of *Community Contact*.

Gary R. Bowen, Ed.D.

Interim Superintendent of Schools

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

On behalf of everyone associated with the Assistant Superintendent's office I want to wish each and every one of you a Happy and Healthy Holiday and New Year. We are all looking forward to meeting the challenges facing us the remainder of the school year to provide your children the best educational program possible.

Frank A. Cocchiola, Jr., Ed.D.

Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools

***Best Wishes to All for a Happy Holiday
Season from the South Plainfield Board of
Education***

