

# ON THE LEVEL

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**FCFT wishes you a very happy and joyful Thanksgiving!**

## SHOW YOU CARE AND BE AWARE!

Accompanying this month's edition of *On the Level*, you will find an FCFT 'Teachers Care' bumper sticker (First-year members will receive theirs in December). FCFT launched the 'Teachers Care' campaign over the summer to reinforce to our community that we are deeply invested in improving public education and our world. FCFT members care about our students, their parents, and our community. Although each FCFT member is different, we all care. We hope you will proudly display the bumper sticker. It will encourage others to ask you, "What do teachers care about?" It may provide us all with more opportunities to share our passions and perspectives, as educators.

The School System implemented a new math 'series' this school year that is primarily online. The fact that the series is online versus the traditional textbook approach was never emphasized to the School Board by the FCPS administration. Last year upper elementary and middle schools received online texts for some of their social studies classes, with enhanced pdf files embedded in ineffective interfaces that both teachers and students found difficult to use. Even with that happening with social studies online, the School System still moved to online math books which include a combination of Flash, pdf, and web-based materials.

The books are online and cannot be put on a stand-alone reader, that means they won't work on the most affordable devices available like Kindles and Nooks. The materials are inaccessible in places without an internet connection, and difficult to use in homes with multiple people all trying to access a single computer.

There is the matter of the Flash and Java-based content that isn't playable on IOS devices and, it turns out, is inconsistently supported on Android devices running a variety of different versions of the OS.

Neither the parents, community, principals, nor teachers were genuinely consulted on the new math implementation before upper administration made the decision. No effective pilot was run on the program. None of the stakeholders had any buy-in, nor were any comprehensive steps taken to discuss this with them beforehand. The workforce was given no training. Parents were unaware of the online impact. Principals were not given proper support. Issues of access, equity, and instructional effectiveness in schools were never considered or addressed. FCFT thinks something needs to be done quickly to fix the problem with the online math situation. Contact your School Board member!

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[www.fcft.org](http://www.fcft.org) is the website. Please read it.

FCFT—703-451-6840

## A ‘CHEER’ FUL LITTLE EARFUL

The holidays are now upon us with Thanksgiving Break very soon. This is a time for celebrating our bounty and our blessings with good food, wonderful friends and family, and a little holiday cheer.



A little holiday cheer can go a long way. As models in our community, we are held to a higher standard. What we do after work can reflect upon us in our work. So if the holiday spirit moves you a little too far or the Friday ‘Happy Hours’ last a little too long, do the sensible thing.

**YOUR JOB MAY DEPEND ON IT.**

Take a cab home, get a ride with a friend, or call for a family member to pick you up if you are intoxicated. **DO NOT DRIVE WHILE YOU ARE IMPAIRED** due to alcohol or anything else. You place yourselves and others at risk. **AND**, you put your job on the line. You can be terminated for inappropriate or criminal behavior outside of work.

## From **DRAB** to “FAB”

FCFT and JCPenney partnered to bring our members an informative professional dress presentation. Over twenty members learned tips and tricks for looking their best. Members snacked on delectable cookies and punch that JC Penney provided as the event began. Members were then divided into groups and each group visited one of each of six stations within JC Penney. In accessories, the group learned how to tie a scarf in different ways for different looks; in the salon they learned how to create a simple, beautiful hairstyle in just three minutes; in the Sephora cosmetic area they were taught what makeup to use to enhance appearances. Other stops were in the shoe department, ladies clothing, men’s, and the optical shop as well. One attendee said, “The event was totally worth attending. I learned how to enhance my eyes. I was amazed by the different styles created by simple scarves. I can even make my waist appear smaller with a scarf tied around it. I am able now to change my hairstyle with a flat iron and a headband to look like I went to a salon.” The event ended with giving away four \$25 JC Penney gift cards, a gift basket full of Sephora products, and a high-end ionizing blow dryer with hair salon product. Even if members didn’t win one of the door prizes, each got a goodie bag filled with items from Sephora, the Salon, the optical department and more! The event was created to address concerns under Standard Six of the teacher scale evaluation and performance expectations.



## WATCH OUT WHILE DRIVING!

Be extra alert and cautious when you are out driving from now through December, because deer are ‘fattening’ up for winter. It is also mating season. Deer will graze at dawn and dusk, particularly, but they seem close to Fairfax County roads at all times of day. There are ‘Deer Crossing’ signs posted throughout Fairfax County, in areas which are known for high deer-traffic. These are also the same areas which have high incidents of deer/automobile collisions.

Remember, too, that all animals are preparing for winter ahead and are crossing the roads with increasing frequency. Don’t forget to watch for fox, possum, squirrels, and the occasional domestic animal. To quote an old saying, “The life you save may be your own.”

