



# FCFT's Year in Review 2022-2023



The Fairfax County Federation of Teachers is your union comprised of all non-administrative FCPS employees. Our membership includes teachers, IAs, PHTAs, specialists, office staff, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and more. FCFT is committed to organizing around better working conditions for all FCPS staff and winning a collective bargaining agreement.



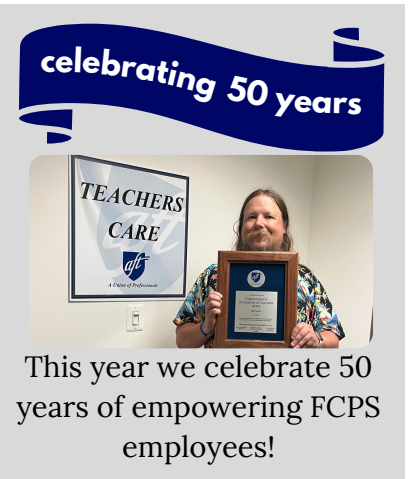
Member Eirik speaking at the FCPS Collective Bargaining Public Hearing

## Collective Bargaining and FEU

Collective bargaining gives employees a voice in their working conditions and a seat at the table where decisions are being made. Public sector workers have been denied this right in Virginia since 1977, but this ban was overturned in 2021 after years of advocacy from FCFT members and union members across the commonwealth. On March 9, 2023, the Fairfax County School Board passed a resolution allowing collective bargaining for FCPS employees. We are now in a critical moment to educate and engage our colleagues and build strength as we enter the next phase in securing this right.

FCFT and FEA, the two labor unions representing FCPS employees have decided to come together for the purposes of collective bargaining. We have formed a joint bargaining agent: The Fairfax Education Unions, FEU. While we remain separate unions, we are coordinating our efforts to win collective bargaining together. We have hosted joint collective bargaining rallies and have hosted several joint informational webinars on collective bargaining. We have also hosted a number of issue-based listening sessions to begin to gather feedback from members on priorities when we get to the bargaining table. Most importantly, we are building support among employees as we prepare to call for a union election.

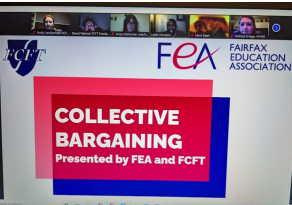
This year, FCFT hosted our 2nd summer Member Organizing Institute, a 5 week program in which members learn and practice the skills of a union organizer. Our 10 member organizers visited and called fellow FCFT members to learn about the issues important to them, share about collective bargaining, and gain support for a union election win.



This year we celebrate 50 years of empowering FCPS employees!

## This Year's Wins At a Glance

- Collective Bargaining Resolution Passed
- FEU Agreement signed between FCFT and FEA
- Pay step and 3% MSA for all employees
- Increased elementary planning time and updates to teacher workday regulations
- Primary wins for 7 of 8 endorsed candidates
- Building member power through the Summer Member Organizing Institute
- Increased worker voice in FCPS decisions including SPED Enhancement Plan and elementary planning



Joint Collective Bargaining Webinar with FEA



Collective Bargaining Rally



Recognition by NOVA Labor for our collective bargaining progress



Member Durann speaking at a Collective Bargaining Rally



At the Collective Bargaining Resolution vote



The FCPS School Board voting to pass the Collective Bargaining Resolution



The 2023 Summer Member Organizers

# Building Political Power

This year our union has built political power at the local, state, and national level. Legislative Committee members lobbied legislators throughout the legislative session, promoting bills that increased public education funding and teacher pay and pushing back on bills that limit our ability to teach honest history and protect LGBTQIA+ students. We had our first AFT Virginia Lobby Day in Richmond with members from the 3 AFT Virginia locals, holding meetings with our representatives about education legislation and funding in the state budget. Members spoke at the VDOE public hearings on the revisions to the social studies standards and submitted written comments. We participated in a national town hall on teacher pay at the US Capitol.



The November 2023 election brings critical races in the School Board, Board of Supervisors, and General Assembly. Our Endorsement Committee interviewed candidates and reviewed candidate questionnaires. 7 of the 8 candidates we endorsed won their primary in June. We are gearing up for more endorsements and campaign support in the general election. Education is inherently political and we will continue to do the work to elect pro-public education, pro-labor leaders.

## Advocacy Wins

**Pay:** Ongoing advocacy from FCFT members to the School Board and County Board of Supervisors has secured a step increase for all employees plus a 3% MSA in the FY24 budget totaling an average 5.22% pay raise for all employees. An extra step was added to all pay scales so that those at the top of their scale would receive the full raise. Other budget wins include elementary teacher leadership stipends, continuing the extended contract for special education teachers, and a follow-on motion to look into restoring the sick leave bank - a long-time FCFT advocacy point.

**Elementary Planning Time:** Years of advocacy from our Planning Time Task Force brought the first step to increasing elementary planning this year with classroom monitors. Members participated in an FCPS workgroup on elementary planning time which led to a commitment to provide all elementary teachers with the regulation-mandated 240 min/week and an update to Reg 4421 protecting teacher-directed time on workdays. We continue to push for equal planning to secondary teachers and we have a commitment from FCPS leadership that this is not the end of this work.

**Special Education:** Our Special Education Committee was spurred to action by the OCR compensatory services ruling. The committee is engaging in ongoing advocacy to ensure that special education staff are part of the conversation on decisions that impact them such as including educator voice in the Special Education Enhancement Plan. The committee is also advocating for FCPS to adopt the recommendations from the AIR Special Education Audit.

## Member Benefits

- 2 Kings Dominion tickets offered to each member
- Up to \$500 scholarship for a college level course for 1 teacher member and 1 support staff member
- Up to \$250 member Excellence in Education Grant
- Reimbursement for state licensure renewal
- Support from our Member Relations Representatives and legal representation in employment issues
- Plus extensive member benefits from AFT!

## Community Involvement

- Sponsorship of the Fairfax County Spelling Bee
- Partnership with community groups including FCPS Pride, Fairfax NAACP, 4 Public Education, Stand And Deliver Virginia, FABSE, FCCPTA, SEPTA, Fund Our Schools, NOVA Labor Council, and more.



President David Walrod at the spelling bee

## Get Involved!

If you have not yet joined FCFT, you can become a member at [www.fcft.org/join-now](http://www.fcft.org/join-now). We have staff organizers ready to get you plugged in and involved in your worksite team. Organizing around collective bargaining and negotiating a contract is our top priority this year. We are excited to continue our organizing and advocacy work as the 2023-2024 school year begins.

