



2019 STEM Symposium & Awards Ceremony

“Equity in STEM”

The Fifth Annual Delaware STEM Symposium was held at DuPont Country Club in Wilmington on Oct. 8. The event was hosted by the Delaware STEM Council in conjunction with the Delaware Foundation for Science and Mathematics Education (DFSME), with primary sponsors Ashland and DuPont.

Tackling Inequality in STEM

The 2019 Symposium theme was “Equity in STEM”. Educators, business leaders, and policy-makers tackled head-on the challenges of working to make STEM in Delaware more equitable for all students, educators, and workers alike. Participants specifically looked at how and why minority groups are underrepresented in STEM.

STEM Council co-chairs Teri Quinn Gray and Jud Wagner welcomed authentic conversations dealing with issues in the STEM workforce and classrooms, and invited opinions on what enables change.



The Symposium included a discussion panel comprised of the student, educator, and business leader perspectives. They addressed their own experiences with equity or inequity, as well as barriers they faced in their educations or careers in STEM fields. Leading the session was moderator Dr. Susan Bunting, Delaware Secretary of Education. Bunting herself was a veteran Delaware educator and former superintendent of the Indian River School District. She is well-attuned to the worlds of equity, diversity, and accessibility in the classrooms with having visited over 100 Delaware schools over the course of a year.

Another major point discussed by panelists and audience members was the importance of being a mentor to young learners and encouraging positive relationships with students.

For information about the Equity in STEM Conference on Friday, April 24, 2020 go to www.DelawareSTEM.org



Challenging Comfort Zones

The panel discussion was followed by a “Cross the Line” activity, in which participants engaged in an exercise which challenged their comfort zones, introducing them to the complexity of pursuing equity in the classroom or workplace. The activity, which instructed participants to “cross a line” every time an announced quality of race, gender, or identity was applicable to them, highlighted the dynamics of diversity and difference, community versus isolation, setting an example versus joining a crowd.



In concluding the first half of the Symposium, remarks were made by DFSME Executive Director Randy Guschl, FAME Director of Education and Strategic Outreach, Lakia Belcher, and Lt Gov Bethany Hall-Long.

**“A strong science background is a must for the Delaware workforce.
And young children, whether it’s our inner cities or our rural communities,
should have the same opportunity. Equity is paramount.”**

— Bethany Hall-Long, Lieutenant Governor, Delaware

The second half of the Symposium included video correspondence and messages from Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester, Senators Tom Carper and Chris Coons, and Governor John Carney, all leading up to the evening’s Delaware STEM Educator Awards ceremony.

The symposium concluded with a final opportunity for its educators, students, business and industry leaders to collaborate, socialize, and network.

STEM EDUCATOR AWARDS CEREMONY

First place DE STEM Educator Awards were received by Smyrna Elementary school library media specialist Heather Fitzgerald, Millsboro Middle School science teacher Sarah Betlejewski, and Caesar Rodney High School computer science teacher Margaret Birch. Second and third place winners also included, respectively, William Penn High School agriculture teacher Karen Ferrucci and Sussex Technical High School science teacher Michele Thomas.



(L to R) Jud Wagner, Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long, Heather Fitzgerald, Margaret Birch, Karen Ferrucci, Michele Thomas, Sarah Betlejewski, Vito Consiglio, Teri Quinn Gray

Join us as at the Equity in STEM Conference on April 24, 2020. For information, visit: DelawareStem.org

To register for the ceremony in November 2020 or to apply for the Delaware STEM Educator Awards: DelawareStem.org/symposium-educator-awards/



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