



## **STEM Equity In Action Day Contest held on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

***"What will you Share with your Students from STEM Equity in Action Day?"***

### **"STEM Equity in Action Day Was an Honor to Attend"**

***By Erin Ahern, First Place Winner***

*10<sup>th</sup> Annual Delaware STEM Educator Awards*

*7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher, Skyline Middle School, Red Clay Consolidated School District*



It was an honor to be able to attend the STEM Equity in Action Day and be part of a group of local educators that were connected by the collective spirit of supporting our students not only where they are now, but in the realm of where they might choose to go later in their life journey.

On September 10, Agilent Technologies located in Wilmington, Delaware, opened its doors to educators, including me, and opened our minds to how what we do in our classroom can connect and relate to their workplace. Agilent Technologies is a global company recognized for their innovative tools that help drive advancements in multiple STEM industries, from biopharmaceutical research labs to food, beverage businesses, and many more areas.

I work very hard to encourage creativity and curiosity from my students. Their questions and their input are crucial drivers for their own learning and how we figure things out together in our classroom. We asked questions from a leadership officer who spoke with us about what qualities he wanted teachers to develop in the classroom that he looks for when he hires for the company. He responded that "curiosity and creativity" are the top two attributes that come to mind. That made a big impact on confirming the value of student voice. They told us, "speaking up productively and adding your perspective" drives innovation.

I also found that Agilent's philosophy has a direct connection with what teachers try to do in their classrooms every day. Agilent wants to create tools and technology that don't solve the world's problems, but help the world's innovators solve their targeted problems more successfully. Teachers do not want to solve their students' problems. We want to give our students the tools and skills they need to solve their problems independently as they get older. I felt the pride emanating from the people who spoke with us as they described how their products were used by renowned scientists, researchers, businesses, and other companies to make our world better. Agilent wants to make the world's problems easier to solve with the tools they create specifically for their customer's needs: from cancer cure research to sustainability challenges. They seemed to want to hire people and give them the tools they need to create that technology, and want people from differing backgrounds with different experiences to bring continuous improvements and product developments.

Teachers also want to have tools we can give to each one of our students that they can use to create their own solutions to challenges, no matter who they are or where they are from. While we are different in what the inside of our building walls look like, we are similar in what values we hold. So, from scientific concepts to solution-focused techniques to support problem solvers, I will be able to carry what I learned today back to my own school.

Thank you to all the people at Agilent and DFSME who made this day possible.