

Getting Down to Business with Science and Mathematics: A K-12 Investment in Our Future

In September, 2007, DFSME invited businesses involved in K-12 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education to participate in a convocation. This event was designed to allow the sharing of activities and successes so that businesses would better understand the totality of their activity in this area, see the potential for new areas of involvement and partnerships, and develop a better perspective for shaping a more effective strategy toward their philanthropy in STEM education. Representatives from 11 organizations attended the event. We believe these companies and agencies comprise well over 75% of the dollar value of business philanthropy in support of STEM education in Delaware.

Two keynote speakers addressed attendees. Jean Allen, President of the Delaware State Board of Education, provided a historical overview of valuable business-education partnerships in the state, while Jim McMurtray, Executive Director of the National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions, expanded participants' vision of potential opportunities by describing unique and innovative programs in support of STEM education created by some of his member coalitions, and discussed creative ways in which state coalitions are engaging businesses and government.

The major portion of the meeting gave participants the opportunity to visit the businesses' displays, some of which were quite elaborate, and talking with their colleagues. Conversations about STEM education involvement were both animated and in-depth, creating a high level of enthusiasm and electricity among participants.

DFSME solicited input from both the attendees and the speakers; their feedback indicated that the convocation had been useful and that there is a high level of interest in having a repeat of the event in the near future.

Bank of America was the major financial sponsor for the event. In-kind support was provided by Agilent Technologies, Inc., Creative Communications, Delaware Biotechnology Institute, and the University and Whist Club of Wilmington.



DFSME Executive Director Ross Ambrecht listens as Lisa Lindsay of Valero and Bob Lydum of Agilent Technologies discuss STEM education.



Peggy Vavalla and P.J. Simon of DuPont explain their company's STEM activities to Janis Julian of WSFS.



One of the keynote speakers, Jim McMurtray of the National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions, talks to Ambrecht and Randy Guschl, of DuPont.