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Dr. Bobbi F. Johnson's opening comments at the E Squared Kickoff

February 5, 2015

My early days as superintendent of Culpeper schools, six years ago, were filled with meetings. I met with people from all walks of life; church groups, civic groups, parent groups, law enforcement, and business leaders, and as hard as I tried, the meetings began to blur and run together as did faces and the opinions of what was right and wrong with Culpeper Schools.

But in this whirlwind of activity, one experience continues to stand out in my mind. I was invited to a Career Partners meeting and really didn't know what I was getting into. I found myself at a table with former CEOs of major corporations, a member of the Board of Supervisors, the county administrator, a member of the General Assembly, leaders from successful area businesses, higher education, non-profits, and the CTE administrator for the school system. My first instinct was to ask what is this all about? I was curious and a bit suspicious. My fear was that I had encountered a group of influential people ready to tell me what the school system should do better and then leave me to figure out how to do it.

But this was not the case. I was brought up to speed with the mission of Career Partners, and I was particularly interested to learn about this thing called E Squared. At the time there had only been one E Squared competition but it had been a success, and the Career Partners board was energized and talking about ways to make next year's teaching, coaching and competition even better. The concern of the board was whether or not I was going to support the program as the new superintendent.

My answer was and still remains " Heck Yea!" This program is amazing.

Through E Squared, Career Partners has brought this community together with a common objective and a common source of pride. Whether through financial donations, coaching, teaching the curriculum, organizing the event, or judging, Career Partners found a way to unite all aspects of the community in a program that really makes a difference.

To the students: as participants, you will be better at so many skills after you participate in E Squared. Your confidence will grow, your ability to speak to and defend a point of view will improve, as will your ability to manage your time. Wherever you are today with these skills, you will be better in three months. And you will have learned well beyond the basics of entrepreneurship.

Enjoy and learn. Appreciate the adults who are supporting you. I know they appreciate the opportunity to work and learn from you. And as for the future, E Squared is part of Culpeper culture. I am confident it will continue to thrive.