

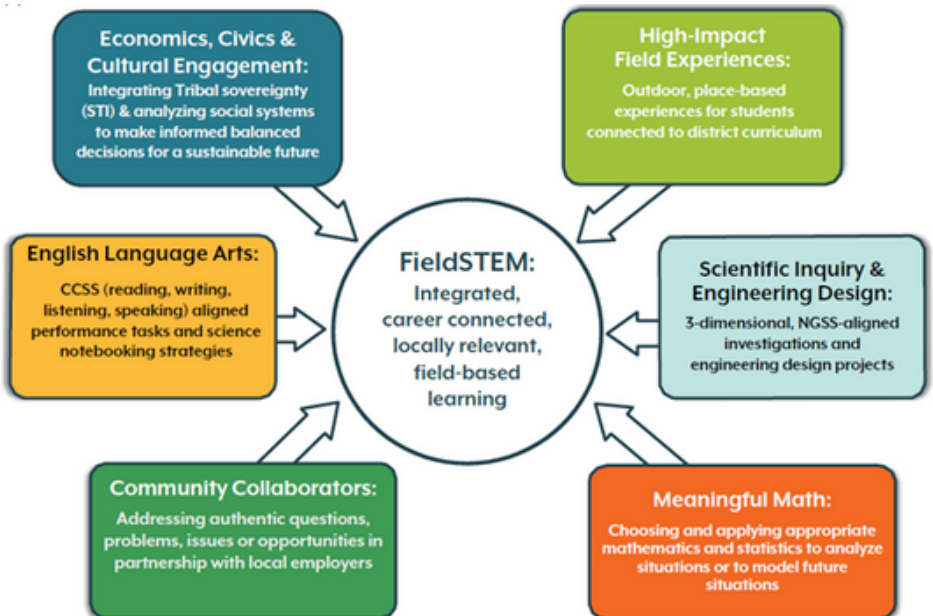


PEI's Introductory Workshop Series is a Bridge to Outdoor-Based STEM for Educators

June, 2022 - Heidi Smith

This spring 96 teachers from across Washington State attended one of PEI's five introductory workshops and gained tools for implementing outdoor-based STEM learning with their students, regardless of their grade-level. The workshops served as an entry point for educators, many of whom have heard about PEI's FieldSTEM framework from their colleagues.

The series included introductions to FieldSTEM, English Language Arts Performance Tasks, Field Investigations, Civic Engagement and Field Design (PEI's engineering and design framework). Participants learned through a combination of instruction, hands-on activities, and collaborative planning time with peers. This is the second year PEI has offered the introductory workshops.



Teachers responded positively, with 96% responding ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ to statements like ‘I am prepared to take my students outside.’ “The workshop was well thought out and organized,” said one participant. “It was very practical, with ideas and resources, guest speakers and time to collaborate around actual implementation.”

Of the nearly 100 educators who attended at least one of the series, 23 were from the Puyallup School District (PSD). Like several others around the state, Puyallup has fully embraced the FieldSTEM model and committed to implementing it across grade levels and subject areas. This approach circumvents the challenge that districts face in attempting to create equitable access to sustainability education. That access can vary depending on individual teacher interest and confidence, availability of STEM resources and materials and schoolwide framework adaptations.

“Puyallup is committed to providing every student with equitable access to rigorous and rich experiences,” says Heather McMullen, PSD Director of Instructional Leadership Mathematics and Science K-12. “This includes FieldSTEM investigations. We believe that all students should benefit from outdoor education and that all teachers should also benefit. When professional learning is optional or reserved for those who have time outside of the school day, we tend to see inequities from one school or classroom to the next. When we create opportunities for professional learning on designated teacher learning days, we see growth across the system.”

PEI will be offering another series of introductory workshops in the fall. Check our website or contact your regional FieldSTEM coordinator to learn more.