

PEI's FieldSTEM Celebration Leaves Attendees Inspired

by Heidi Smith

Listening to the honorees at PEI's 2022 FieldSTEM Celebration on September 22nd lit a spark in many of the evening's attendees. The event highlighted outstanding efforts of educators and legislators around the state to bring PEI's model of outdoor-based STEM learning to life.

Representative Alicia Rule of the 42nd legislative district was both an audience member and an awardee. "It was so fulfilling to see so many partners who have been dedicated to this work for years," she says, "and I left feeling inspired by what we will do together in partnership as we continue to implement and build nature education for our kids."

If you would like to be similarly inspired, click on any of the links below to watch the honorees' videos. The 2022 awardees were: Teacher of the Year Dale Sweet who teaches 6th-grade science in Cle Elum Roslyn School District; School of the Year Waskowitz Environmental Leadership & Service (WELS); District of the Year Riverview School District; Community Collaborator of the Year City of Spokane Urban Forester Katie Kosanke; Legislators of the Year Representative Alicia Rule and Representative Alex Ybarra; and FieldSTEM Champion and PEI Founder .



and Executive Director (2003-2010), Lynne Ferguson.

According to attendee Greg Barker, the event served to gather likeminded people and remind educators that they aren't alone in the work they do. "The FieldSTEM Celebration showcased the amazing work being done around the state," says Barker, Director of the Association of Washington Student Leadership at the Washington State Principals Education Foundation. "Often those in education feel a bit isolated in their day-to-day and this celebration showed many that are working toward strong education for students."

During the celebration, Executive Director Kathryn Kurtz acknowledged her predecessor, Lynne Ferguson, as a visionary. “Lynne is a master at getting the right people into a room to make changes in education that put student and teacher needs first,” Kurtz shared. “I am honored to walk in the footsteps of this phenomenal educational leader.”



Each of the awardees took the opportunity to share about the work they do and what receiving the award meant. Representative Rule called it ‘an honor of a lifetime’. As she explains, “Knowing that our next generations will be outdoors exploring tide pools, learning math by measuring angles of the warm sun and falling in love with nature because of the work we did together is a gift I will treasure forever.”

Congratulations to this year’s FieldSTEM award winners!

A big thank you to our 2022 FieldSTEM Sponsors: Olympia Federal Savings, Little Creek Casino Resort, SCJ Alliance, Port Blakely, Taylor Shellfish and the Association of Washington State Principals.

