

PEI's Expanded Introductory Course Series Attracts More Educators

by Heidi Smith

Between December and May 198 teachers from 72 school districts attended one of PEI's eight introductory FieldSTEM courses. It was the second year PEI has offered the series and attendance increased in 2023. Each two-hour session covered an aspect of PEI's tools and resources and the FieldSTEM model's components, from Math and English Language Arts (ELA) Performance Tasks (including a specific introduction for Dual Language teachers) and High Impact Field Investigations to Fostering Outdoor Observation Skills, Field Investigations, FieldDesign and Civic Engagement.

PEI Program Director Denise Buck believes that having two new regional FieldSTEM coordinators inviting teachers from their districts played a role in the increase. "We saw a lot of interest from districts that we haven't seen so much of before," she says. "The two-hour time commitment and clock hours also work well for teachers."

Some were brand new to PEI's FieldSTEM model while others had already attended multiple workshops. Participants appreciated the connection to resources and the opportunity to collaborate and plan with other educators.



A FieldSTEM workshop in action in 2021. The introductory workshop series was online, providing greater access to more educators from around the state.

"I loved the direct instruction followed by practice and planning," said one. "We had quite a few people from our district attending so I am excited to hear how they plan to implement their learning."

"[This workshop] presented real-world issues in the science/mathematical area that allow students to practice needed skills that can align with state standards," said another. "This contributed to my professional growth in showing me a fantastic way to engage students in science class as well as help prepare them for their SBAC testing in a way that will excite them."

An additional 17 leaders from 17 school districts across the state attended an Introduction to FieldSTEM for District and School Leadership workshop in December. They came away with ideas for how to integrate FieldSTEM with their instructional teams. “Systemic implementation is something we can use to meet the needs of not only outdoor learning but integration through FieldSTEM,” said one participant.

“Re-motivates me always,” another shared. “[I] want to do this with all of the students - district-wide!”

PEI plans to continue offering introductory courses each winter and spring.