

# THE WORKING WATERFRONT



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Article

## CREST students and teachers highlight projects from past five years

by Ben Odgren

Anyone walking through the Hall of Flags in the State House on March 18 would have been greeted by students and teachers from both island and mainland schools taking part in an event that helped cap off five years of CREST programming at their schools.

In total, 57 students and 18 teachers from 12 different schools attended the event. They set up shop at fold-out tables, and filled them up with white Apple laptops and big folding pieces of cardboard, covered in information about the CREST projects they were doing at their schools.

CREST, or Community for Rural Education Stewardship and Technology, has been a part of the classrooms of these student's schools for the last five years and has been run by the Island Institute's Shey Conover, senior programs director, Hope Rowan, technology education specialist, and Ruth Kermish-Allen, education director.

The students, dressed in button-down shirts, ties, and dresses, presented what they have learned to Maine representatives. They presented Web sites, GIS mapping projects, short documentaries, and recorded oral histories from island citizens.

"Studying ethnographic documentaries at CREST made me want to do more video projects and has made me consider a career in directing or editing films," said Jalina Brown, a freshman at Camden High School.

Speaker of the House Hannah Pingree, a North Haven native, walked the hall, going from table to table, huddling around tables with the students as they explained their projects and answered her questions.

She spoke briefly to the students as well. "I am so proud of all of you." Pingree said. "This is a great basis for your education and future of our state." Before she left, she told the students that their projects were diverse and impressive. "Keep being innovative and stay involved." She ended with a special thanks to Louis Carrier, her former science teacher at North Haven school.

"Technology has made students clear, effective communicators and problem solvers," said Kimberly Larsen, an English teacher at Deer Isle-Stonington High School

Joshua McPhail, a history teacher at the St. George School said that "CREST is the model for teaching technology at school." He talked about how adept students are at learning new technologies. "Within 20

minutes, the student is ahead of the teacher." But he seemed proudest when talking about the "real research" that CREST has promoted. "These days it is so easy to copy and paste any of the information you are looking for. CREST students are creating real products, doing authentic research, and collecting brand new data."

Adam Paruzzi, a sophomore at Mount Desert Island High School, has been part of the CREST program for two years. He said that CREST has allowed him to focus on improving his leadership skills and has influenced his decision to go to college for engineering.

Lastly, Bette Manchester, part of the Maine International Center for Digital Learning (and partially responsible for all the open laptops on tables), called the students "Trailblazers. We are preparing the work force of the future, and the most astute workers in the world," said Manchester.

CREST ends its five-year run with a three-day program for high school and middle school students in July.

*Ben Odgren is the Island Institute's Island Scholars Network coordinator.*