

TECHSPLORATION®



BRIGHT MINDS ***BOLD FUTURES***

2026 Grade 9 Programming Recap



The Grade 9 Program Model

Techsploration is a mentor-led experiential learning program that empowers young women and gender diverse youth to explore careers in Science, Engineering, Technology and the Trades. The grade 9 program uses the following base program model:

Step 1

Create a Team

Each participating school forms a Techsploration Team of up to 8 female and gender diverse students in grade 9, led by two teachers.

Step 2

Team Role Model Matching

Each team is matched with a "team role model" - a female or gender diverse individual working in a STEM or trades field.

Step 3

Research & Safety Training

Teams research their role model's career, and complete online safety training.

Step 4

Techsploration Goes to Work

Teams visit their role model's workplace to learn more about the career (and role model!) first hand, often meeting other female+ STEM/trades employees at the same time!

Step 5

Techsploration Goes to School

Teams spend several weeks/months creating a presentation about their role model's career. They deliver their presentation at school as a trial run, and use feedback from that to further refine their presentation.

Step 6

Techsplorer Event

Each team attends one of three regional Techsplorer Events - 1.5 day conferences where students engage with dozens of female+ role models, hear from inspiring speakers, take part in workshops, and deliver their presentations as part of a friendly competition.

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2026 Grade 9 Programming Recap



What an incredible season for the grade 9 program!

Nearly **200 female and gender diverse students took part in the program** - building confidence, developing critical soft skills, learning about careers and career pathways into science, engineering, technology and trades sectors, and engaging directly with dozens of female and gender diverse role models working in these fields. Students left feeling empowered, and eager to continue challenging outdated stereotypes around gender and career!

Techsploration Goes to Work

February - April

Students took part in worksite visits across the province at places like Bird Construction, Nova Scotia Power, and Irving Shipbuilding. During the visits students got to learn about their role model's career and career path, and often met other female+ employees working in STEM and trades as part of the visit!



Pictured Above/Right: St. Agnes Junior High students got an up-close look at the Canadian Hydrographic Service.



Pictured Above: Cobequid Education Centre students visit Bird Construction's Head Office.



Pictured Left: East Antigonish Academy students experience sitting in an airplane at Oceanside Aviation Ltd.

Techsploration Goes to School • February - April

Following the worksite visits, teams met regularly at their school to create a presentation highlighting their role model's career - typically a combination of a Powerpoint and something interactive, like a skit. They delivered a "dry run" of the presentation at school, using the feedback they received to further strengthen and refine their work.



Did you know?

Each year, approximately

250

students apply to Techsploration across our 25 participating schools.



Pictured Left:

A student stands next to her artwork submission, which won one of the three top prizes at the Division. A Techsplorer Event. At the beginning of the school year, students apply to Techsploration in the form of an essay, a poem, or artwork, focusing on STEM and Skilled Trades.



Earlier in the program, students complete WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) online training, provided by Construction Safety Nova Scotia.

Division A Techsplorer Event

April 15 - 16 • NSCC Strait Area Campus

Banquet Dinner

With the support of **Presenting Sponsor Nova Scotia Power (NSP)**, students from nine schools took part in the event. NSP's Shannon Connors, P.Eng, kicked off the event with an inspiring message about diversity in the energy sector.

Fun fact: Shannon is a Techsploration alumna!



Workshops

After dinner, students took part in two workshops: a public speaking workshop led by **Jenn Piske** from **REDspace**, and a math workshop led by **Lisa Lunney Borden**, a Math Professor at St. FX, and a former Techsploration teacher!



Student Presentations

One of the biggest highlights of every Techsplorer Event is the student career presentations on Friday. Each team took the stage to showcase their role model's career, combining a PowerPoint with a creative, interactive element. This year's presentations featured everything from skits and trivia games to song and dance performances, bringing careers to life in fun and memorable ways.



Students highlighted careers with organizations including Nova Scotia Power, DP Energy, St. FX, Canada Border Services Agency, and more, demonstrating not only what they've learned, but also their teamwork, creativity, and confidence!



*As part of their presentation, the Allison Bernard Memorial High School Girls' Drum Group performed the **Strong Woman Song**, a traditional honour song recognizing the strength, resilience, and important role of women in Mi'kmaw culture.*

Did you know?

The on-campus **Nautical Institute** is home to a wave pool, lifeboats, simulators, and even a fire school! Before lunch, students explored these world-class training facilities and watched the annual **"Abandon Ship!"** activity, where Techsploration alumnae from 2025 suited up and plunged into the wave pool to demonstrate teamwork and water safety skills.



Luncheon sponsored by Build Right Nova Scotia

After a morning of presentations and activities, everyone was ready for a well-deserved lunch, generously sponsored by **Build Right Nova Scotia**. Port Hawkesbury Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton served as emcee, introducing the keynote speaker, Victoria Henneberry (pictured right), now a 4th-year pipefitter apprentice with Irving Shipbuilding. Victoria shared her journey from a Techsploration participant to skilled trades apprentice, offering a powerful full-circle story that demonstrated how early exposure to career opportunities can shape a successful future.



Impact



Following the event

85%

of students expressed a specific interest in entering the Skilled Trades or Engineering sectors.

By the numbers



69 Students



18 Teachers



23 Role Models



22 Guests

Career Round Robin

The final activity of the day was the career Round Robin, where students rotated through **16 stations** to meet female and gender-diverse professionals in STEM and the skilled trades, learning about their careers and career paths.



Dr. Angela Seigel, Associate Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Computer Science, has a talent for connecting with students, using fun, everyday examples to show how computer science is woven into the world around them.



Hana Nelson from ShanDaph Oysters demonstrates to students how their sustainable oyster farming helps advance regenerative aquaculture practices and fosters positive environmental change.



St. Francis Xavier's Dr. Erin Mazerolle introduced students to the fascinating world of neuroscience and brain health research.

The event was absolutely phenomenal and it had such a significant impact on the way I now think about women in all types of excellent careers.

Saanvi, grade 9



The event wrapped up Friday afternoon with closing ceremonies, including the announcement of the presentation competition winners, **Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional High School** (see photo below/left). Students were also welcomed as Techsploration alumnae, who are encouraged to take advantage of future opportunities through our alumnae program and post-secondary scholarships, **a fitting end to an inspiring event!**

Division B Techsplorer Event • May 7 - 8 • NSCC Truro Campus



Our special guest at the opening banquet on Thursday evening, The Honourable Nolan Young, Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration, spoke about the importance of available pathways to careers in the Skilled Trades in Nova Scotia

Each team showcased their creativity by building its own LEGO centrepiece. Pictured Right:

Tatamagouche Regional Academy's LEGO centrepiece, showcasing their role model Christine Sullivan's career as Manager of Development and Resource Control at IMP Aerospace & Defence.



Dinner was followed by a public speaking workshop led by Laura King from Skills Nova Scotia, and an electrical technician workshop led by Deborah Rayworth, Skilled Trades Instructor with NSCC.



Division B Techsplorer Event • May 7 - 8 • NSCC Truro Campus

One of the biggest highlights of every Techsplorer Event is the student career presentations on Friday. Each of the nine school teams took the stage to showcase their role model's career, combining a PowerPoint with a creative, interactive element. This year's presentations featured everything from skits and trivia games to song and dance performances,

bringing careers to life in fun and memorable ways.



Students highlighted careers with organizations including IMP Aerospace, Bird Construction, Michelin, REDspace, and more, demonstrating not only what they've learned, but also their teamwork, creativity, and confidence!



Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional High's team put their skills to the test in a gluten-free brownie "Bake Off" inspired by Dr. Marcia English, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Human Nutrition at St. FX. One group followed the recipe carefully, while the other learned from common baking mistakes, highlighting the importance of attention to detail and learning through experience. They finished by sharing their homemade brownies with everyone in the audience!



Division B Techsplorer Event

May 7 - 8 • NSCC Truro Campus

Did you know? Techsploration has been holding Techsplorer Events at the NSCC Truro Campus since 2008. With a central location in the town of Truro (which is also the HUB of Nova Scotia), the campus is accessible and can house all of our Techsplorers overnight! The students love the (recently renovated) dorm experience as it facilitates bonding, laughter, and unforgettable memories.

Pictured Right: Students enjoy a beautiful day on the campus commons and collaborate on a fun project in their dorm rooms.



Partner Recognition Luncheon sponsored by Michelin

After all those presentations in the morning, the students were definitely ready to eat! Michelin's Crystal Archibald served as the emcee for lunch, getting the students energized and highlighting the incredible opportunities available at organizations like **Michelin**.

Students also heard from the keynote speaker, and Techsploration alumna, **Katherine Martin** (pictured left). Her journey into ocean tech offered a powerful full-circle story, showing how early exposure can lead to impactful careers.



Impact



100%

of participants expressed interest in future STEM pathways, with half considering skilled trades careers.

By the numbers



63 Students



10 Teachers



29 Role Models



30 Guests

Division B Techsplorer Event • May 7 - 8 • NSCC Truro Campus

Career Round Robin

The final activity of the day was the career Round Robin, where students rotated through **17 stations** to meet female and gender-diverse professionals in STEM and the skilled trades, learning about their careers and career paths.



Kaily White, Project Manager with Bird Construction, speaks with students about the many careers involved in bringing a construction project from concept to completion, including planning, design, budgeting, scheduling, and workplace safety.



EverWind's Hannah Matheson demonstrates how the development of wind power, green hydrogen, and clean energy infrastructure creates exciting career opportunities while helping build a more sustainable future.



Viviana Mora and Hayley Haner from REDspace are ready to show students how collaborative teams design and build innovative apps, digital platforms, and AI-powered solutions.

The event wrapped up Friday afternoon with closing ceremonies, including the announcement of the presentation competition winners, Bible Hill Junior High (see photo below). Students were also welcomed as Techsploration alumnae



I had a fantastic time and made a few friends, it was a really fantastic experience.

Emma, grade 9

are encouraged to take advantage of future opportunities through our alumnae program (Grades 10–12) and post-secondary scholarships, a fitting end to an inspiring event!

Marine Division Techsplorer Event Sponsored by Irving Shipbuilding

May 28 - 29 • Dalhousie University

Our very first Marine-Themed Techsplorer Event!



With support from Irving Shipbuilding, students from nine schools connected with dozens of female and gender-diverse role models in marine STEM and trades.

They explored diverse career pathways and saw firsthand that women+ are thriving in these historically underrepresented fields.

Irving Shipbuilding's team, Ridgecliffe Middle School, built a creative LEGO ship, complete with a flag bearing the message, "Strong Women Build Strong Ships."



Dinner was followed by a public speaking workshop led by Jenn Priske from REDspace, and a welding workshop led by Beth Hill, Megan Miller, and Krista Langille from Irving Shipbuilding. This provided a forum for students to build confidence in

their public speaking skills, while also introducing them to exciting careers in welding!



Marine Division Techsplorer Event Sponsored by Irving Shipbuilding

May 28 - 29 • Dalhousie University

Student Presentations

One of the biggest highlights of every Techsplorer Event is the student career presentations on Friday. Each of the nine school teams took the stage to showcase their role model's career, combining a PowerPoint with a creative, interactive element. This year's presentations featured everything from skits and trivia games to song and dance performances, bringing careers to life in fun and memorable ways.



Students highlighted careers with organizations including Atlantic Towing, Royal Canadian Navy, DeepSense, and more, demonstrating their teamwork, creativity, and confidence!

Ridgecliff Middle School's presentation was very creative, and they even made virtual Barbies representing all of their role models from Irving Shipbuilding!



Marine Division Techsplorer Event Sponsored by Irving Shipbuilding

May 28 - 29 • Dalhousie University

Did you know?

Techsploration teachers help make this program possible for our students. We are so grateful for their efforts! Our teachers are some of our best supporters. Many of them have been involved in the program for more than ten years.



Partner Recognition Luncheon

After all those presentations in the morning, the students were definitely ready to eat! Irving Shipbuilding's Beth Hill served as the emcee for lunch, getting the students energized and highlighting the incredible opportunities available at organizations like Irving Shipbuilding.

Victoria Henneberry, **Pipefitter Apprentice with Irving Shipbuilding** reprised her role as Keynote Speaker, and shared her story, encouraging students to embrace challenges, learn from setbacks, and never give up on their goals.



Impact



80+%

of participants reported increased awareness of careers in Skilled Trades and STEM careers in the marine sector.

By the numbers

 **64 Students**

 **16 Teachers**

 **43 Role Models**

 **30 Guests**

Marine Division Techsplorer Event Sponsored by Irving Shipbuilding

May 28 - 29 • Dalhousie University

Career Round Robin

The final activity of the day was the career Round Robin, where students rotated through **19 stations** to meet female and gender-diverse professionals in STEM and the skilled trades, almost all within the marine sector.



Sara Raymond from the Canadian Hydrographic Service introduced students to careers in hydrography while learning how to map Canada's waterways to support safe navigation and protect those who travel and work on the water.



Students heard from Melanie Patterson from Harbour Development, who shared how marine construction projects and the many rewarding career opportunities keep Canada's marine industry moving.



Kate Collins from NSCC is showing how science and innovation are advancing healthy aquatic ecosystems while opening the door to exciting careers in marine science and technology.

The event wrapped up Friday afternoon with closing ceremonies, including recognition of the presentation winners, **Graham Creighton Junior High!** (see photo below).

Students were also welcomed as Techsploration alumnae

are encouraged to take

advantage of future opportunities through our alumnae program (Grades 10–12)

and post-secondary scholarships, a fitting end to an inspiring event!



I'm super grateful I was selected to be a part of such an amazing program!

Brynn, grade 9

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Sincere thank you to all of our partners.
We couldn't do this without you!



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