



ROOTED IN SCIENCE

How this Central Falls junior is using computer science to leap towards her medical career dreams

Central Falls High School junior Diana Tavares stands outside her computer science classroom.

CENTRAL FALLS, R.I. -- Diana Tavares' placement into her school's computer science (CS) pathway during her sophomore year is what some would call a "happy accident." While not initially her first choice, the class grew on her and **she is now in the second year of the pathway.**

A junior at Central Falls High School (CFHS), Diana's focus is on preparing for her time after graduation. She is earning college credit through the CS

pathway and other courses such as advanced placement (AP) biology, networking with professors at the University of Rhode Island during campus tours, and **planning for her career** in the medical field.

After being in the pathway for two years, Diana discovered that her favorite aspect of CS was coding, despite the level of difficulty increasing as time went on. She said the challenges of coding **only fueled her interest** in the topic and made her want



to learn more about it. One lesson that stuck out to her was when her class was designing an app using code, and she had to put her **problem-solving** skills to the test in order to fix technical issues that came up - also known as debugging.

The CS pathway is one of four career and technical education (CTE) programs offered at CFHS, made possible by the U.S. Department of Education and the Rhode Island Department of Education's \$2.5 million **CS4RI High School Grant awarded to 20 schools in 2019**, plus a \$1 million continuation award in the fall of 2022. The grant allows these schools to offer students up to 16 college credits at no cost and a Work-Based Learning (WBL) experience.

Aside from taking CS classes, Diana is involved in extracurriculars related to her studies. She is part of CFHS's Geek Squad - a group of students who, over the summer and afterschool,

repair broken computer screens and troubleshoot internet issues. Each student in the Geek Squad has their own schedule and are paid for their work, giving them real-world field experience.

According to Diana, she believes more students should try their hand at computer science.

"Some students think it's really boring at the beginning," she said. "**I feel like they would really like it if they get into it.**"

*Computer science proficiency is a graduation requirement within RIDE's recently passed **Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements** for the graduating class of 2028. **CS4RI is led by RIDE** and aims to strengthen industry partnerships and 21st-century learning for RI students. For more information, visit cs4ri.org. **Remember**, students can't learn if they aren't in school; it's critical they are present every day. **#AttendanceMattersRI!***

