STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

SET UP FOR SUCCESS

E-Cubed Academy's Matthew Velasquez is preparing for future success with his utilization of computer science in and outside the classroom

Matthew Velasquez, class of 2026, sits back in one of the chairs in the school's main foyer.

PROVIDENCE, R.I. -- Sophomore **Matthew Velasquez** has been connected to the concept of computer science (CS) since he could press the keys on a keyboard. It's why he's joined the CS pathway at Providence Public Schools E-Cubed Academy and has **dove headfirst into courses he's passionate about**: classes that allow him to get hands-on experience in the realm of CS and "**expand his mind**."

"You know, the natural world, it all has its own things going on," said Matthew. "I feel like computer science is just a **whole different world** that I could dive [into] and expand my imagination towards anything."

So far, he's taken three CS classes at his school, all of which have given or are giving him college credits from the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) and University of Rhode Island (URI). Two of these courses were taught by CCRI professors, which he enjoyed.

At E-Cubed Academy, **all students** in grades nine through 11 are enrolled in CS career and technical education (CTE) classes. Whether it be courses in networking (cybersecurity and cloud

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computing), computer support specialization, or CS via programming and web development, they are **able to choose which path** they would like to follow to prepare them for the future with the skills they need to succeed. The school also follows the **Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)'s CS4RI pathway**, which includes college credit courses at no cost and a Work-Based Learning (WBL) experience.

Matthew analyzes his code from a previous project.

When he's not in the classroom, Matthew incorporates his CS skills into his hobbies as well. Whether it's playing video games such as Roblox or Minecraft or coding on his new laptop as a side quest, he enjoys exploring the subject for fun. Video games work in tandem with his interest in CS;

he has also served as the captain for E-Cubed's esports team.

According to Matthew, his experience in the pathway has him excited for the future.

"It's definitely made a **positive outlook**," he said. "I have been looking towards computer science for my future."

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!**