

TEACHER INSPIRES STUDENTS THROUGH TECH

How this veteran teacher passes down her passion for computer science to her students to help them excel



Mount Pleasant High School (MPHS) teacher Marta Hidalgo in her classroom.

PROVIDENCE, R.I. -- When **Marta Hidalgo** decided at 12 years old that she wanted to study computers, it wasn't surprising. She had been fascinated with **science and technology** since she was a little girl, when her father sent her mother a postcard with the three men aboard the Apollo 11 who landed on the moon in 1969.

That **launched her career in computer science (CS)**. Her first job in the field was at a computer lab at 17, working as a lab assistant at Johnson & Wales University in Providence. Now a veteran educator at Mount Pleasant High School (MPHS) within the

Providence Public School District (PPSD), she hopes to **expand access** to and help students **excel in the field**.

"I think that I'm here to give them access," Hidalgo said. "I just want people who want to do this. **That's my philosophy.**"

Hidalgo has spent her career in PPSP, first at MPHS beginning in 2001, then at the former Academy for Career Exploration (ACE) for the 2004-05 school year, onto Hope High School from 2005 to 2010, and back at MPHS since then. A graduate of Hope, Hidalgo's **journey in education has come**

full circle.

The CS pathway is one of four career and technical education (CTE) pathways at MPHS, 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



Robots Hidalgo uses in her CS classes.

no cost and a Work-Based Learning (WBL) experience.

Throughout her career, she has had **multiple students go onto college with full scholarships** to study STEAM-related subjects. She's also witnessed several "aha" moments that students have

when it comes to their learning.

"This child figured out how to use a robot and he yelled out in Spanish, 'I just found out what I'm good for!'" Hidalgo said. "It was like, 'oh wow.' He noticed he's good at something...**I'll never forget that.**"

*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!***

