

My name is Mira Jayant and I attend Minnetonka Middle School West.

I'm lucky to go to a school where my classmates and I are able to learn computer science at any age. Learning computer science, for me, began by coding a bee robot to move around with buttons, in kindergarten. In elementary school, my friends and I enjoyed participating in code.org's Hour of Code program by playing games and collaborating in online challenges. Now, in eighth grade, I'm studying how to create graphics in JavaScript, a programming language used to build websites. Learning computer science is unlike math or English, in that learnings come from examples and trials, not just from textbooks or lessons.

When we're in class, we solve problems and grasp concepts by analyzing and experimenting with an example before applying the knowledge to an exercise. My classmates and I like that this format gives us the independence and freedom to problem solve on our own.

It's often said that computer science encourages skills beyond programming. For us, this means learning new skills that apply to other subjects, whether it's learning how to speak or write more effectively or acquiring new math skills through coding. It also means learning how to be more independent and resourceful. My friends comment on how, through computer science, they feel more comfortable trying new ways to solve problems and asking for help when they need it. These skills are necessary for us to learn in order to prepare us for future professions.

For me, I'm planning on taking more computer science in high school to pursue a career in research. Not as many kids are as lucky as we are to be able to take coding throughout grade school. Every student in Minnesota deserves the opportunity to study computer science, not only as a valuable skill, but as a ticket to success in our modern world.

Thank you for your time and consideration.