

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Boys Of E-STEAM Carnival Troupe Participate In Coding Workshop

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ST. CROIX -- Young revelers from the Department of Education's Boys of eSTEAM carnival troupe were treated to a STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics) workshop, where they learned how to build websites using Hypertext Markup Language (HTML).

The hands-on session took place at the Claude O. Markoe Elementary School on January 3, one day before the troupe made its debut at the 2019 Crucian Christmas Festival Children's Parade.

St. Croix District Technology Coordinator Everette Ryan, Ph.d, partnered with Department of Education STEM Director Shamika Williams-Henley and Elementary Programs Coordinator Jeselle Cruz-Peter to deliver the two-hour coding workshop.

Students practiced problem-solving skills as they examined the intricacies of syntax, and employed critical reading and writing skills to construct their sites.

Dr. Ryan shared the need for students to become more immersed in coding concepts. "We need to move students from just being consumers of technology to being creators," he said. "This is where the coding comes in. The students can create their own apps and websites and things that have more authentic meaning in the real world. We want to help them develop these skills. So now they are more engaged because they are not just consuming, they are building and creating."

Dr. Ryan also said coding provides a unique opportunity for educators to get students more engaged with auxiliary content, such as English Language Arts.

"When we teach HTML, the students have to read, write, and use critical thinking, recognize patterns, and troubleshoot all at once," he explained. For example, Ryan said a webpage could be created "around a social studies concept or to present a science project. It gets the students more engaged with the content versus making a PowerPoint."

Students, such as fourth-grader Ahmali Benjamin, practiced HTML by building their own websites and adding visual content to it. Ahmali said the activity made him more confident to try to learn other coding languages.

"This is my first time coding, but now I want to do other types of coding, like to build video games," he said. "I would like to build racing games and fighting games because those are my favorites."

The group of 17 students participated in the Children's Parade the following day as characters from their favorite video games, such as Super Mario, Minecraft, and Fortnite.