

# Creativity with Adobe Spark leading to learning in every class.



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*Fiona Hill, Principal, Cave Spring Middle School, Roanoke County Public Schools*

## SOLUTION

Adobe Spark

## RESULTS



Students start working in **MINUTES**



Enhances **LEARNING** and engagement in lessons



Teaches vital **CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING** skills

**15K+** Accounts deployed by a small staff in **DAYS**



## Roanoke County Public Schools

Established in 1856

Students: 13,800

Roanoke, Virginia

[www.rcs.k12.va.us](http://www.rcs.k12.va.us)

### CHALLENGES

- Enhance classroom learning by engaging students
- Teach creative problem solving to prepare students for future education and careers
- Introduce technologies that are secure and easy to manage

"Adobe Spark was really amazing. It's really easy, and it was fun to play around and figure stuff out. You can have pictures of beaches, but then you can use themes and add music and words wherever you want."

*Tania, Grade 6 Student, Cave Spring Middle School, Roanoke County Public Schools*

## Teaching tomorrow's leaders through technology

Located in the southernmost end of the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, Roanoke County is a community known for its beautiful mountain ranges, thriving economy, and excellent education. Roanoke County Public Schools (RCPS) have received numerous state and national awards, including multiple silver medals in the annual *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. By providing a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment, RCPS aims to empower its more than 13,800 students to become tomorrow's leaders, workforce, and citizens.

One important way that RCPS supports learning is through technology. A laptop program puts laptops into the hands of all middle and high school students. Increasing availability of computers, whether through individual laptops or computer labs, creates new opportunities for teachers to engage students and enhance learning.

"Technology plays an important role in the modern classroom," says Fiona Hill, Principal at Cave Spring Middle School, Roanoke County Public Schools. "We're trying to prepare students for jobs that haven't even been created yet. This makes digital literacy extremely important, as we teach students the 4 Cs: creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking—skills that will be important in any future."

### Expanding resources for students

As the Instructional Technology Resource Teacher at Cave Spring Middle School, Stephanie Schilling specializes in helping teachers bring relevant technologies into the classroom. When she first heard about Adobe Spark at a conference, she realized that it would be a game-changer and immediately recommended it to the district.

With Spark for K-12 (Primary and Secondary), any K-12 school can provide access to Adobe Spark, Adobe's storytelling product for web and mobile, for free. That includes premium features and easy, centralized management through the Adobe Admin Console, which are also included for free. This gives schools powerful creative technology while helping to maintain security and control—an essential role for any school's IT organization. In particular, Adobe Spark addresses privacy needs for younger students in a way that is consistent with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

Once RCPS decided to bring Adobe Spark onto its campuses, it fast tracked deployment so students could start taking advantage of it right away. Adobe Spark turned out to be very easy to deploy, taking just a few members of the IT team a few days to deploy to more than 13,800 students and 2,200 staff members across RCPS schools. Through the Admin Console, RCPS set up single sign-on that allows students to log in using their school ID—no need to remember and manage additional passwords.



Photo Courtesy of Chuck Lionberger, Roanoke County Public Schools

"The confidence and communication skills that students gain through Adobe Spark will equip them for taking on even bigger projects in the future."

*Paige Mitchem, English 6 Teacher, Cave Spring Middle School, Roanoke County Public Schools*

## Studying the Winter Games

Paige Mitchem, an English 6 teacher at Cave Spring Middle School, was one of the first teachers to use Adobe Spark with her students. For a unit based around the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Games, each student was instructed to choose a country and dive deep into what makes the country unique. At first, students researched the symbols, foods, history, and geography of their chosen country, then were asked to turn that information into standard presentations.

"Teaching can be difficult because we have a wide variety of learners and learning styles in a single classroom," says Mitchem. "The important thing is to challenge each student based on where they are, and then help them meet and then raise their expectations."

Halfway through the unit, Mitchem saw the potential to make the lesson more interactive. She decided to have students make videos advertising a product or place from their chosen country. After talking with Schilling, Mitchem decided to have the students create their videos using Adobe Spark.

Schilling and Mitchem quickly introduced students to Adobe Spark at the beginning of one class period, but then they stepped back. Within minutes, the students were choosing visuals and adding text, music, and animations to bring their videos to life.

"We've tried a lot of video editing tools with sixth graders, and it's just too difficult and time consuming," says Schilling. "With Adobe Spark, it was the exact opposite. It was very easy, and students got very engaged within minutes. It's great when you have a program like Adobe Spark where kids can explore and use their critical thinking skills to get answers without even needing your support."

One sixth grade student, Carson Ray, had researched Belgium. "I didn't know a lot about it," says Ray, "But I knew they had waffles." As a result, Ray decided to use Adobe Spark to create a *video* advertising the famous Belgium waffles. "One word I'd use to describe Adobe Spark is definitely 'fun,'" says Ray. "It was really cool that I could record a voiceover with my own voice. I just clicked on the microphone button and started speaking."

Another sixth grade student, Tania, was inspired by her Caribbean heritage to take a closer look at the Dominican Republic. After studying the Dominican culture, Tania created a *commercial* for flan with Adobe Spark. "Adobe Spark was really amazing," says Tania. "It's really easy, and it was fun to play around and figure stuff out. You can have pictures of beaches, but then you can use themes and add music and words wherever you want."





Photo Courtesy of Chuck Lionberger, Roanoke County Public Schools

## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Adobe Spark

To get Adobe Spark for free for yourself, school, or district, go to:

<https://spark.adobe.com/edu/>



Adobe Systems Incorporated  
345 Park Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95110-2704  
USA  
[www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

In just one 90-minute class block, Schilling and Mitchem introduced Adobe Spark and then watched as students used this previously unknown technology to create a video from scratch. “Being creative in the classroom helps bridge the gap between different learning styles and helps everyone succeed,” says Mitchem. “The kids think that they’re just having fun, but as the teacher, I can see them learning through these projects. The confidence and communication skills that students gain through Adobe Spark will equip them to take on even bigger projects in the future.”

“People would be amazed if they could see what sixth grade students created with Adobe Spark,” says Hill. “Students are having fun with Adobe Spark; they’re engaging with the material, and that ultimately leads to greater learning for our students.”

## Keeping students engaged and learning

Adobe Spark is catching on across RCPS, from elementary schools all the way up to high school. The ease of use makes Adobe Spark a good choice for younger students and beginners, but older students can still appreciate the professional results achieved quickly and easily. The possible applications of Adobe Spark are endless, from creating a presentation about Abraham Lincoln in history class to publishing results on a chemistry experiment through a polished website.

Adobe Spark lets students use themes that help keep the appearance consistent across pages. Students can easily search for images in Adobe Spark from the millions of high-quality photographs, graphics, and illustrations available through Adobe Stock. This means that students don’t need to worry about copyright issues when choosing their visuals. And since the results can be published online, students can freely share their ideas with teachers, friends, and parents.

“Creative problem-solving is one of the most important skills that we as educators can cultivate and foster in our students,” says Hill. “We need to nurture student collaboration, communication, and innovation, so students can grapple with real-world problems. Adobe Spark is a fantastic tool that teaches our students to hone and showcase their creativity, communication, and collaboration skills. These skills are essential for the development of strong, successful citizens of tomorrow.”