

CompTIA Spark introduces free high-quality technology curriculum for middle grade classrooms



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On World Teachers' Day, the nonprofit organisation highlights the importance of middle school teachers, empowers them to teach technology skills

Responding to a critical gap in technology education, CompTIA Spark has launched free technology curriculum specifically for middle grade classrooms, grades 5-8. It aims to support teachers so that they can teach the critical skills students need to succeed in whatever path they choose. The nonprofit organisation worked with educators across the country to develop the curriculum.

*"World Teachers' Day celebrates how important teachers are," says **Randi Parker, Chief of Staff and Vice President of CompTIA Spark**. "And we know that middle school teachers in particular play such an important role in a student's journey which is why they are the key to bringing technology education to more schools. We could not have developed this curriculum without them, and we can't reach students without them."*

For about the past year, school districts as well as individual teachers have been implementing the CompTIA Spark curriculum in middle grade classrooms and providing feedback that allowed for a testing and development period prior to the full-scale launch. The schools that participated in this phase ranged from award-winning STEM schools to less-resourced ones, with all types of schools reporting the curriculum was a success and that students were engaged and excited to learn.

Getting students excited about technology and growing their confidence with hands-on learning is critical at the middle school level. Without access to quality technology education, students fall behind before they reach high school which means they do not have the digital fluency needed to

succeed in school and in life. Filling this critical gap is the mission of CompTIA Spark.

With the new free curriculum, teachers can guide middle grade students through engaging project-based lessons that build capability using common applications and 21st century skills. Students gain a solid foundation in key technology concepts to prepare them for future opportunities—in high school and beyond.

Delivered through an online learning platform, the curriculum sparks interest in technology and how it is used in a wide variety of careers. For example, the Tech Exploration units have interactive lessons that show how tech skills are used in roles like product design, market research, accounting, marketing and more. Meanwhile, the Emerging Tech units focus on artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and smart home technology. Full access to the curriculum is available to middle grade educators absolutely free — to empower more teachers to teach the subject, even if they have not taught it previously.

A recent special report from Education Week highlighted how schools have been "struggling to recruit and retain math and science teachers for decades," let alone educators who can teach technology subjects. The report also stressed the fact that current teachers need to be given opportunities to be able to teach new subjects related to emerging fields and technologies — with this being a solution to tackling the shortage.

"Because of the way the curriculum is intentionally designed, we are able to take the burden off the teacher by providing high-quality technology curriculum that middle grade teachers can use in their classroom regardless of their past experience with the subject," says Parker. "Getting this free resource into the hands of teachers can help close the gap in technology education that currently exists at the middle school level. CompTIA Spark curriculum is free, and always will be free, because it is a gift from the tech industry to future generations."

About CompTIA Spark

CompTIA Spark develops free high-quality technology curriculum for middle grade classrooms to close a critical gap in technology education that exists before high school. This work improves student outcomes and success, and helps ensure a diverse talent pipeline for the technology workforce. CompTIA Spark is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organisation that operates as the charitable arm of the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA), a leading voice and advocate for the global information technology ecosystem and a trusted provider of technical training and IT certifications.

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