Lawrence County High School, drumbeat for the future.

Title I school students gain confidence, learn marketable skills with Adobe software donated as part of the White House’s ConnectED initiative.

"With software grants from Adobe as part of the White House’s ConnectED initiative, my students are discovering talents, learning new tools, enjoying class, and getting access to software we otherwise couldn’t afford."

*Gina McCarley, computer science and business teacher, Lawrence County High School*

**RESULTS**

**NEW EQUIPMENT**
Won brand-new, previously unaffordable percussion equipment worth $10,000 through video storytelling

**CONFIDENCE**
Students’ confidence soars as they gain career-enriching, marketable software skills

**EMPOWERMENT**
Access to Adobe software lets students champion their own unique, creative ideas

**INSPIRATION**
Students in economically challenged area are more excited about learning and see new possibilities for the future

**SOLUTION**
Adobe Premiere Elements, Adobe Photoshop Elements, Adobe Presenter, Adobe Captivate, and Adobe EchoSign
New horizons
For many high school students, staying inspired and focusing on a path to successful careers can be daunting. Many students do not have enough opportunities to discover untapped talents and reach for their dreams. This can be especially true in Title I schools in the United States, where financial assistance is provided to schools with high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

U.S. President Barack Obama launched the ConnectED initiative to help increase learning engagement and outcomes by providing 99% of American students with industry-leading technology and access to a world of ideas through high-speed broadband connections. President Obama asked the nation's top technology companies to help through donations.

As part of its contribution to ConnectED, Adobe is donating more than $300 million in software and professional development services to K-12 Title I schools over four years. Lawrence County High School (LCHS) in Alabama, a Title I school with 640 students, was among the first recipients.

“Our tax revenues to fund schools have taken a big hit since our area’s largest employer shut down last year,” says Gina McCarley, computer science and business teacher at Lawrence County High School. “Grants, such as the one we received from Adobe, are essential for us in helping students acquire digital skills that will improve their success after graduation.”

Last year’s closing of the largest employer in the area cost the region 1,100 jobs. The county’s schools are now the largest employer, but they are reliant on tax revenues to operate. With dwindling tax income, it has become even more difficult for LCHS to afford even the basics, such as technology and new band equipment. Furthermore, more than half of students at Lawrence County High School are eligible for federally subsidized or free lunch.

Adobe software grant in action
Sometimes challenges at school and in the local economy can lead to a sense of hopelessness. Teachers have had to work with limited resources and equipment. In her Multimedia Design class, McCarley resorted to pairing two students or more on one computer due to limited access to software.

Today, students and teachers at LCHS can envision and explore a broader range of career possibilities with access to Adobe software through the White House’s ConnectED initiative. Adobe creative software such as Adobe Premiere Elements is now available on every computer in the school’s lab so everyone can contribute their best work. Students have their own digital canvasses to express their unique ideas and more successfully build skills for future success.
“Each student can sit down at an individual computer with Adobe software and be creative in their own way, so their personalities really come through,” says McCarley. “Students now take more ownership of their projects and are really proud of their ability to work with industry-standard, recognized tools from Adobe.”

**New drums, please**

Through video storytelling powered by Adobe Premiere Elements software, students are finding new ways to be creative and communicate their ideas to the world. The resulting projects are impressive.

As part of a collaborative effort between McCarley and school Band Director Blake Ferguson and his drum team, students created a video for Zildjian's "My Pits The Pits" video contest. A compilation of individual class assignments from McCarley’s Multimedia Design class were cut together using Adobe Premiere Elements and scenes were set to music and audio created by Ferguson and his students.

The video starts with a student’s hand knocking on an office door with a Zildjian logo, superimposed onto the door using Adobe Premiere Elements. It continues on to ask Zildjian in song, “Do you want to buy us new drums?” After that, the school’s talented drum team showcases an impressive performance that won first place, resulting in a grand prize award of $10,000 in percussion equipment from Zildjian.

This sophisticated video was LCHS’ second contest entry. The first, which was part of a top five finalist group, was for the Compass Learning Classroom Refresh Contest. The LCHS student video shows the desire for a new approach to learning through online tools. The video explains the impact Compass Learning would have on the school by engaging them every day and helping them better understand concepts.

“The Compass Learning video contest was our first video project, so students were just starting out,” says McCarley. “The second project resulting in the first-prize Zildjian video is a real testament to how quickly students can learn and gain confidence and creative skills using Adobe software. Students were quickly adding layers and using more advanced, ‘Expert’ features to make the Zildjian video more sophisticated.”

Looking to the future, LCHS is expanding beyond video. McCarley plans to start incorporating photo editing and stop motion animation—topics students are keenly interested in—into her classes. A combination of both Adobe Premiere Elements and Adobe Photoshop Elements on every computer will allow students to explore these new areas.
New confidence, new hope for the future

McCarley is also beginning to record eLearning content and develop a library of sessions so that students can study when and where it is most convenient using Adobe Presenter and Adobe Captivate software. As well, she is taking advantage of professional development opportunities provided by their grant from Adobe to take self-paced online courses to learn from Adobe and other teachers and share her newfound skills.

"As a teacher at a Title I school, I can't overstate how important it is to give students creative outlets," says McCarley. "With software grants from Adobe as part of the White House's ConnectED initiative, my students are discovering talents, learning new tools, enjoying class, and getting access to software we otherwise couldn't afford. Gaining skills using Adobe software opens students' eyes to new career possibilities and—even more important—gives them hope."

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

- Adobe Captivate
- Adobe EchoSign
- Adobe Photoshop Elements
- Adobe Premiere Elements
- Adobe Presenter

For more information
www.adobe.com/products/captivate.html
www.echosign.adobe.com/
www.adobe.com/products/photoshop-elements.html
www.adobe.com/products/premiere-elements.html
www.adobe.com/products/presenter.html