

Reeves' love of technology helps him to keep teaching at Battlefield High School

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Teaching now requires knowledge of technology as well as subject matter. That's why Virginia's Department of Education created an instructional technology resource teacher position for high schools. The position, created in 2005, was designed to help teachers expand their knowledge of technology that could help them teach.

When Keith Reeves heard about the new position, he knew it was a perfect job for him. "I got my first computer at 7, and I haven't stopped since," he said. He realized he could meld his passion for technology and his love of teaching into one perfect job.

The state handbook, "Instructional Technology Resource Teacher and Technology Support Positions," requires the specialist to coordinate the development of technology-related curriculum, promote technology use in core curricula, serve as a resource person in technology education, provide assistance to classroom teachers in effective technology integration and more.

Reeves has held this technology position at Battlefield High since 2006. He still designs pro-



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Amy Ethridge-Conti, Battlefield High School principal, and Keith Reeves work closely to reinforce the school's technological resources for teachers and staff.

grams to "teach teachers how to teach. I provide on-site, on-demand assistance to teachers, instruction in teaching methodologies and training in modeling and coaching in the best practices," Reeves said.

"It's more about teaching practices than it is about the tools themselves," he explained. He collaborates with teachers to integrate technology into teaching practices and curriculum design. His job, however, is not tech support. Battlefield High has a professional

information technologist for that type of support.

Reeves said he thought Virginia has the only statewide program for this position. He described his position as the "role model expert for really good teaching practices."

A teacher's request for help "runs the gamut," Reeves said, which can range from a request to better understand how a system works to asking for help in imple-

menting a program in a certain time period.

Development of resources is an integral part of his job. He researches some technologies "to help the teachers and administrators," he said.

One of the big reasons Reeves chose Battlefield was the school's administrative staff. "Amy [Ethridge-Conti, principal] and Jane [Sumner, information technology and testing coordinator], more than any other school, demonstrated what the job was going to be and have helped me do just that. I know that's not happening at some places in Virginia."

Ethridge-Conti lauded Reeves for his work. "When he showed up for the interview, he came in with two laptops and had both fired up and was showing us things he'd planned or would like to do. Those dueling banjos made me realize he not only knew the whole field of technology but also knew how to relate that information to others," she explained.

"He's bright and has an intense curiosity, and he's inclined to help teachers dig for information; he's really good at helping others develop their ideas. He'll go that extra step and will actually enter the

classroom as long as the teacher wants that," she said.

Reeves often collaborates with a classroom teacher and assists in the classroom as a co-teacher. "Podcasting was a good example because I was in every class using the podcasting tool because Mr. [Ryan] Ferrera, [history teacher], wanted me there," but, he emphasized, "I tailor my classroom involvement to the comfort level of the teacher."

The teachers who work with Reeves at Battlefield depend on and appreciate his expertise. Dawfi Moulen, gifted education resource teacher, said, "Keith is so much more than a technology resource teacher. He is an outstanding educator who continues to work with teachers in all subject areas with students of varying needs to find ways that all students can learn what we require of them. Keith's lessons require a great deal of critical thinking and often creativity while covering required content. You don't have to come to him with a lesson to tweak; you can come to him with a basic idea or curriculum content, and he can help you find a way to teach it that speaks to 21st-century

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At BHS, students and teachers are learning how to better use technology

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learners. He has worked with both struggling learners and gifted learners with equally fantastic results."

Reeves said he considers himself an "agent for positive change." He explained, "A good administrator will identify areas for improvement. [Battlefield High administrators] feel comfortable coming to me and truly understand" his role.

Battlefield High's administrators seek Reeves when they believe there's a better way. "A good example is the grade-book program. Running the grade-book program was an opportunity for me to interface with teachers and administrators and use really good research and data to go back and suggest ways to improve the practices."

When Reeves first joined the school's staff, he said the grade-

book program was "a big part of the job, but now it's a relatively small part because I've become an expert on how it works and on grading regulations in the county," Reeves said. He used his skills for creating instructions to streamline and improve practices.

Reeves recognizes that teachers who are "used to doing things the same way" they have for years may have trouble updating their practices. He works to be straightforward but kind. He said, "I am tempered and have a really good rapport with the faculty. I learned quickly that I can't have bad days."

He is "big on assessment," to help teachers and students determine what's working, he said. "Standards for my students are really high. I lay down rules and set expectations."

When Reeves was a student,

he didn't expect to be a high school teacher. He earned his bachelor's degree in music education from Ithaca College in New York; he started his teaching career as a band director.

His life-long interest in computers spurred him to pursue his graduate degree in instructional technology. He received his

master's from George Mason University.

When he started at the Haymarket high school, he said, "My former career as a music educator helped because I became comfortable dealing with students of all backgrounds and aptitudes."

He continued post-graduate work; he earned a certificate in

educational policy and leadership from Mary Washington University.

Reeves is happy with his job and works hard. "If I have any natural talent outside music and teaching, it is I'm good at building a rapport with teenagers," he said. "When I walk into the classroom, yes, we'll have fun, but they know today they'll learn something."

