

Marisa Albright

Mt. Vernon Elementary School
Rockcastle County Schools



This grant year what "extra" honors/certificates/etc. have you earned?

- Diffit Educator Certification/Badge
- KEDC Leadership Cohort Member

One word you'd use to describe your grant experience so far and why?

Motivating! When you are given the tools to make kids excited to learn, it is exciting for the educator as well!

What is one strategy, tool, or mindset from this grant that has radically changed your teaching practice?

The grant provided training and tools that shifted my approach to teaching, focusing first on my students' reading levels, interests, and barriers. Tools like Diffit enable me to adapt materials for all learners while maintaining learning goals. This change has transformed my classroom, leading to increased engagement, confidence, and a willingness to take risks among students, as the curriculum now adjusts to fit their needs. The grant reshaped my perspective on effective teaching and equitable learning.

In what ways has this grant grown you as a teacher leader?

The grant has transformed me into a teacher leader, extending my influence beyond my classroom. Through professional learning and collaboration, I've gained confidence and credibility to share effective practices. I now support colleagues by modeling strategies and introducing tools like Diffit, enhancing differentiation and student-centered instruction. The grant has empowered me to advocate for inclusive practices, facilitate conversations, and present at district events. Most importantly, it has redefined leadership for me as service—supporting others and fostering a culture of growth and collaboration in our school and district.

How are you bringing grant learning back to your school or district?

I am sharing my grant learning with my school and district by integrating new strategies and tools into everyday practices. I've presented techniques like Diffit and the DBQ Project through various formats, helping teachers differentiate instruction without extra workload. I model these practices in my classroom, inviting observations and discussions to make learning visible. I've initiated conversations on student-centered instruction and lesson design at the district level, fostering a mindset shift. By engaging in district events and supporting colleagues, I ensure the grant's benefits extend to students and the overall learning culture.

How has this KEDC Grants experience re-energized you as an educator?

The KEDC Grants experience revitalized my passion for teaching by providing opportunities to learn deeply and engage with innovative ideas. It inspired me to think creatively and take instructional risks, moving beyond routine constraints. The professional learning and immersion experiences encouraged growth and reflection, reinforcing that meaningful change stems from intentional efforts rather than just hard work. I returned to my classroom excited to implement new strategies, energized by fresh perspectives, and confident in ongoing growth for both my students and myself. Ultimately, the experience highlighted the importance of investing in educators, as inspired teachers positively impact their classrooms.

“Because of Passport to Learning, I now approach my work with renewed confidence, a stronger sense of purpose, and the tools and mindset to design learning that truly meets the needs of every student while supporting and leading others to do the same.”