

# Why I Teach:


## *Drew McCorkell*

Whenever you walk by Drew McCorkell's classroom, smiles and laughter are to be found. With his high-spirited persona shining through, it's apparent that Drew not only cares for his students, but also loves teaching. "I have always wanted to be a teacher," Drew said. "I enjoy the challenge and joy in helping children to learn and grow."

Drew first came to Benchmark as a teaching assistant at Benchmark Camp when he was a college student. Following three summers teaching language arts at Benchmark Camp, he was offered a Head Teacher position for the regular school year. "I always felt like Benchmark was where I was meant to be, so when I was offered a full-time teaching position here, I couldn't pass it up," he said.

Fifteen years later, Drew's passion for teaching has not wavered; in fact, he thrives on continuing to "develop as a teacher so that I can be more effective in helping the students I teach." But his passion lies not just in teaching, but in teaching at Benchmark. The "small class sizes, supportive environment, research-based practices, and high-quality teaching practices" are some of the reasons why Drew loves teaching at Benchmark. The fact that his teaching style aligns with Benchmark's philosophy is perhaps his top reason. "It's so refreshing to know that Benchmark is concerned more about the learning process and the development of students as learners and problem solvers than they are about test scores," Drew said.

As a teacher of 7th grade language arts and social studies (his favorite subjects when he was in school!), he most enjoys the lessons that help his students grow as learners. "I really enjoy teaching both the memoir unit in language arts and Writing Literary Analysis because they help the students find their voice as writers, develop effective writing techniques and critical thinking, and help them organize their thinking in their writing," he said. Though his students can struggle through this writing process, Drew said it is that much sweeter when they are finished since they feel a real sense of accomplishment.

These "a-ha" teaching moments—as well as other relationship-building moments with students—remain some of Drew's favorite Benchmark memories over the years. From interactions with students in the classroom, to those on stage with the set crew for the annual musical, to sharing his personal hobby of photography with students in Photography Club, Drew truly enjoys the opportunity to see his students grow and flourish. 



### *Tell us about yourself, Drew!*

**Where did you go to school?** I graduated from West Chester University with a degree in elementary education and a minor in reading. I am also certified in K-12 English and middle school social studies and did graduate work at Arcadia University.

**What is your favorite memory from your school years?** In middle school, we did a '20s unit where we had a mock stock market project. I made a lot of fake money.

**What was your favorite subject when you were in school and why?** It's a tie between Language Arts and Social Studies. Both are favorites because they use the art of story telling to teach about the human experience.

**What teacher most influenced you during your school years?** Mr. Novelli in 8th grade Language Arts made hard work and learning fun. He also taught us about personal responsibility for our learning.

**What is your favorite book?** *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

**Favorite inspirational quote?** "It's not the years in your life that counts. It's the life in your years." —Abraham Lincoln

**What are your hobbies outside of Benchmark?** Biking, camping, hiking, gardening/landscaping, and photography.

**Interesting fact about you?** I delivered my daughter Hope at home—it was unplanned!

**Tell us about your family.** My family includes my wife Kim (married 10 years), my son Athan (6), my daughters Hope (4) and Violet (1), and my pet turtle Sub, who is 30 years old.