Featured Educator

Gregg Graves
Heritage Middle School, Wake County Schools

A note from Kendall: Each month, I have the privilege of celebrating the talents and passions of the many great educators across our state. Their stories inspire me. I chose this month’s featured educator for his understanding of the importance of social emotional learning, and the hard work he’s put in to incorporate it in his career.

I was honored to spend time recently hearing the inspiring story of this month’s featured educator, Gregg Graves. Graves, a school counselor at Heritage Middle School in Wake County, credits his career successes to his school counselor and several teachers and coaches whose support and encouragement proved valuable in his life.

Faced with serious economic and sociological issues as a child, Graves says he appreciated his family’s ability to endure and overcome their struggles. “Poverty and illness were difficult to experience for us all, but love, care, and respect were a part of our household.”

Early in his career, Graves decided to make children’s social emotional health the most important aspect of his daily service in public schools. This was true when he taught third grade for his first five years and is true today, after eighteen years as a school counselor.

A huge impact on his early counseling career came from his relationship with Dr. Melissa DeRosier and her family practice, 3-C Family Services. The two have worked together on social skill pilot programs that Dr. DeRosier created in the late 1990s, and continue to explore similar interests in childhood social development, including 3C’s online program “Zoo U”. The program offers counselors and educators the chance to use technology to gather data on individual students, small groups, classrooms and even whole grade levels with regard to specific social skills. Graves calls Zoo U “an invaluable tool for educators and counselors.”

The communication of high expectations and words of encouragement had as much to do with Graves’ decision to become a lifelong professional educator as his early childhood experiences. At Heritage Middle School their guiding principles for helping children are summarized in their school motto: “Love, Challenge, Lead”. “We use this as the guiding principle of what we try to offer students and families at our school,” Graves says. “It means a great deal to me that the first word in this motto is love.”