

## *How do 5 semesters in graduate school equal to 2 daughters in Middle School?*

In October 2011 I submitted my goals statement essay for consideration into MSU's MAED program....and then I waited. My oldest daughter had just begun middle school, so I was distracted with her new adventure. In November I received my acceptance letter and was ready and excited to get started in this program. When I originally submitted my goals statement letter I was already working in my current position and knew that further enhancing my knowledge in education would be a top priority. Now, five quick semesters later I will be done with my course work in the MAED program. As I look back I realize that eighteen months have gone by, I am weeks away from attaining my MAED, but I will also have two daughters in Middle School! How exactly is this possible? How can so many things happen at once?

When I first began this journey I was confident that the skills and understanding that I would gain during my time in the program would greatly serve me, I am glad to say that this is the case. When I wrote my Goals Statement for acceptance into the program, my concentration was going to be primarily Literacy and Mathematics. Literacy has always been a passion of mine and I knew that this area of concentration would benefit me both personally and professionally. Mathematics is of equal interest and because of my professional interests I knew that exploring these courses would help me help my current students. As I began to explore the electives, Literacy remained at the forefront and I also attend a few of the courses from the Higher, Adult and Life Long Education Department (HALE) program. The exploration of these courses led to a deeper understanding of my adult students, of myself as a life-long learner and what that implies for me in the future. Having the flexibility to pick and choose the courses I have attended has allowed me to become more well- rounded in my knowledge and will allow for me to better serve my students. This was one of my main goals, and I feel very well prepared to continue in my current position because of all that I have acquired during this short period of time.

As my time in MSU's program progressed, my daughters as well were growing, not only physically but socially and academically as well. When I began they were in the second half of their 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade year as I am finishing up they will be beginning their 8<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade years. Through sleepless nights, mounds of papers to correct, science fair projects to supervise, carpools to run, deadlines to meet, I realize that I have never worked harder in my life than I have in this past year and one-half. While technically I will be done with course work in a few short weeks, what I have been learning and applying will be put to the test. As I reflect on my past goals, I know that I have gained tremendous knowledge as an educator, but my greatest challenge lies ahead, surviving middle school...AGAIN!