

**Teaching Fellows Junior Conference**

**The Marriage of Leadership and Relationships**

**Ms. Nicole Parks**

**Session Descriptor:** Who's in your ear? Every great leader needs a hype man; a person who believes in you and motivates you to be your best self. Teachers are no different, and perform better when they invest in building relationships that allow them to grow as people, not just as professionals. Self doubt is a leader's greatest enemy, creeping in to make you feel as if you're an imposter, but there are ways to combat Part X according to Phil Stutz, a renowned psychiatrist who wrote The Tools. Humans are relational beings, and need interaction so much that they crave it, neuroscience suggests. To become an effective leader in schools, teachers must first build healthy relationships with themselves, their colleagues, and their students. Social interactions are motivating, which results in growth as individuals and as professionals.

**Presenter Bio:** I am an eighth-year eighth-grade science teacher at Northwood Middle School in Taylors, SC. The first five years of my teaching career, I taught in a Title One school in McColl, SC; a small town where the majority of the population lives beneath the poverty line and in survival mode. I moved to Greenville in 2020 to give my daughter the opportunity to attend school at The Fine Arts Center, and myself the opportunity to expand my own horizons. I followed an unconventional route into teaching, graduating from Francis Marion University in 2008 with a B.S. in Biology. Six years later, I enrolled in the PACE program, entering education after thirteen years as a pharmacy technician. I completed the PACE program in 2017, after three years of rigorous training and some of the hardest days of my life. Teaching surely isn't for the faint of heart. My proudest accomplishments are my two children. My son is a junior at Clemson, and my daughter is a junior at Fine Arts Center and Wade Hampton High School. With pride, I can also say that over the course of eight years, I have positively impacted over 800 children, not only as students, but also as people.