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**Educator Voices**  
*Success Stories with QuaverEd*

*Educator Voices* is composed of QuaverEd Blog stories written by author and journalist Kristin Clark Taylor.

*Please note the date of each story, as the QuaverEd programs and resources may have recently changed.*

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**Where Learning Comes Alive**

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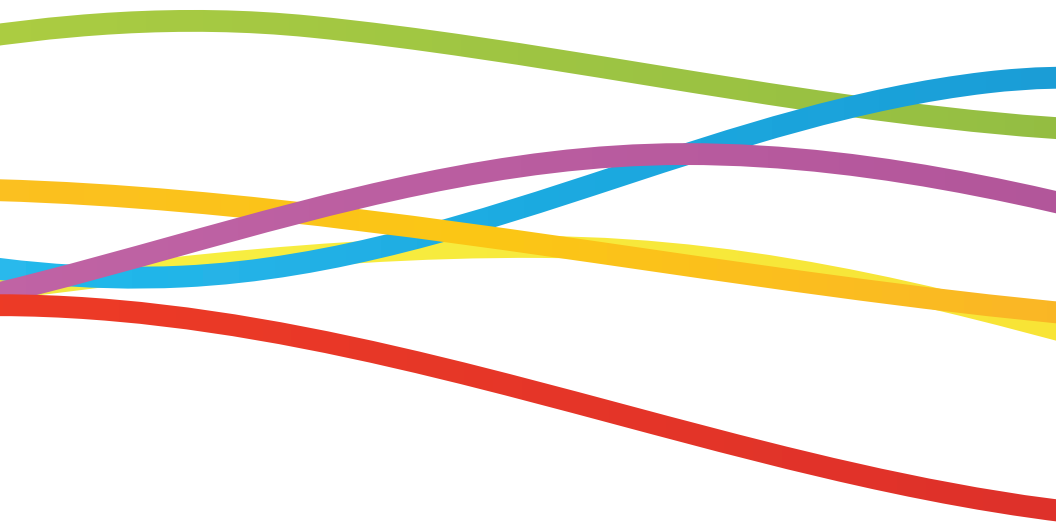
## About QuaverEd

QuaverEd, Inc. is an education technology company advancing the state-of-the-art in interactive resources and software functionality. Founded in 2009, **our prime mission is *Enriching the Lives of Children***. We have created thousands of curriculum resources that equip teachers to reach their students with the knowledge, mindsets, and skills they need to be successful citizens—in and out of the classroom.

Our five-building campus on iconic Music Row in Nashville, Tennessee, houses over 160 full-time Quaver staff, a state-of-the-art recording studio, graphic artists, video editing teams, systems development and integration, sales and marketing, fulfillment center, customer service, and company administration. Our specialty is using the power of music to connect with students.

Our music curriculum resources alone have now been adopted by more than 15,000 schools in all 50 states and 37 countries around the world. Over five million students are currently learning from 28,000 teachers using our curricula.

Globally, Quaver serves teachers across all Department of Defense Education Agency (DoDEA) schools, from Western Europe to Japan and South Korea, and in several Department of State schools throughout the world. Elite schools in India, China, Australia, Africa, Canada, and elsewhere around the world employ our curriculum resources to support effective teaching.





**Quaver**  
**Ready™**







# With QuaverReady, Learning Becomes a Family Affair

*“These are life skills and coping skills  
... and they belong to all of us.”*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | June 7, 2024

## Collaboration is Key

**Heather Eskridge**, a school counselor at **Northfield Elementary** in **Murfreesboro, Tennessee**, certainly understands the importance of collaboration.

Eskridge speaks passionately about the principles of shared responsibility and collective accountability as a way to ensure that our young people feel seen, heard, and valued.

When it’s time to put these powerful principles into practice, Eskridge reaches for the resource she trusts first and foremost: **QuaverReady**.

**“QuaverReady helps make learning a family affair,”** she says with gratitude.

“These resources are as helpful to parents as they are to educators, which is why I send material home often – and the parents are always appreciative.”

Creating a collaborative environment, “sends a message to our young people that they are not alone. It makes them feel less vulnerable,” she says.

## When Crisis Strikes, QuaverReady is Ready!

A child doesn’t have quite as much “brain power” to process intense emotions like sadness or fear, Eskridge explains.

“Quaver’s grief resources are excellent and I rely on them often, because **grief is a family affair, too**,” she says. “Everyone is affected by loss and death; the entire family feels these kinds of situations.”

Eskridge points to “*When Bad Things Happen*” as a highly effective counseling tool that helps her address adversity and challenge with her students.



“The song works so well because the lyrics never try to define what ‘bad’ might be, because it’s different for every person,” she says. “This allows everyone to relate on a deeper personal level.”

But Eskridge is also quick to point out that QuaverReady offers more than great songs and colorful characters:

“The units and lessons are certainly engaging and fun, but **this is much more than just entertainment.**”

“QuaverReady also embeds the practical tools and coping strategies that students need to navigate through difficult life situations.”

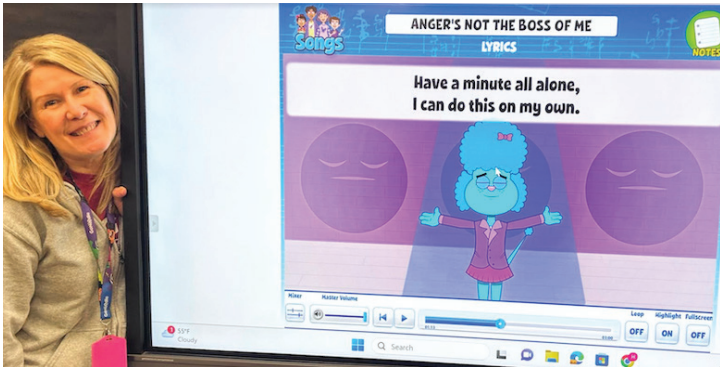
She points to an example.

“One of my students had a bit of a melt-down recently while dealing with some pretty significant anger,” she recalls.

“What was interesting was that he actually *asked* to do some of the breathing exercises we’d just learned, and the breathing helped him deescalate his own anger.”

The meltdown moment became a learning opportunity for the other students as well, because it demonstrated that emotions *can* be managed if we know how to reach for the right tools – “and providing the right tools is where Quaver really excels.”

When working through strong emotions such as anger and frustration, Eskridge has an all-time favorite: “*Anger’s Not the Boss of Me.*”



*“My students just love Francine the Angry Poodle because she offers practical tools for processing anger.”*

“Again, this is not just a song about anger,” she says. “What’s also embedded are skills and strategies for how to deal with and move through that anger. **These are life skills and coping skills ... and they belong to all of us.**”

She offers yet another example of how QuaverReady stood ready to help during crisis: Coping during COVID.

At the height of the pandemic – when anxiety was high, fear was real, and classrooms were closed – Eskridge recalls how QuaverReady helped bring calm to the chaos.

“I couldn’t imagine having lived through the COVID lockdown *without* Quaver,” she says. “But *with* Quaver ... we had everything we needed.”

The benefits of this curriculum, however, endure long after the crisis or challenge has been resolved.

“QuaverReady **provides sustainable tools for living a well-balanced life.**”

Want these sustainable tools in your classroom?  
Go to [www.quavered.com/ready](http://www.quavered.com/ready).



# In Colorado, the Sounds of Social and Emotional Learning

*This SEL Specialist Created a “Whole-School” Model Using QuaverReady*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | April 25, 2024

## **Through the Darkness, Light.**

Shhhhh.

Listen closely.

Stand in any classroom at Second Creek Elementary in Commerce City, Colorado – or even in the hallways! – and you’ll hear it loud and clear: The sound of Social and Emotional Learning being brought to life.

Just ask Sheri Olson, the SEL Specialist at Second Creek who created the innovative “whole-school” model where all of the teachers utilize QuaverReady.

“I’m fortunate to oversee and coordinate the use of QuaverReady throughout the entire school,” says Olson, sounding enthusiastic, appreciative, and, yes – I’m certain I hear it in her voice – even joyous.

But “joyous” is not the word she would have used to describe herself just a few short years ago, when she and her colleagues were hit with a crisis unlike any they’d ever known.

She looks back, a bit more somber now.

“When the pandemic hit, everything changed,” she remembers. “It was a challenging time for everyone. Those were definitely dark days.”

But through the darkness shone a beacon of bright light—and that light was QuaverReady.

“During the pandemic,” Olson says, “we discovered pretty quickly that using QuaverReady for the first 25 minutes of every morning helped create a sense of togetherness and a sense of calm for everyone –not just for the students, but for the teachers, too.”

Even today, Olson says, the entire school uses QuaverReady songs to get everyone geared up and feeling good.

But QuaverReady is far more than just a morning tool: Olson says that her teachers are thrilled to have quick and easy access to the resource at any time of day!

### **An Expansive Perspective**

As I listen to Sheri speak, I realize that everything about this exceptional educator is expansive and far-reaching – whether it’s the way she’s designed this whole-school model at Second Creek Elementary or the trajectory of her multi-faceted career.

In addition to being an SEL Specialist, she’s also a counselor, a social worker, and a highly-regarded leader in her field. (“I’m a social worker in a counselor’s job,” is the way she lovingly describes her role).

Several years ago, as a board member of the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA), Olson led a group of fellow social workers through a pilot using QuaverReady so that they could experience the curriculum for themselves.

As soon as the pilot was complete, Olson says she knew exactly what she had to do ... so she did it!

“I went right to my principal and told her that QuaverReady is an amazing resource and that everybody – the teachers and the kids – absolutely loved it!

The principal’s immediate reaction, Olson recalls, was resoundingly (and immediately) supportive.

She told me, “Great! If you’re sold on this new curriculum, then it must be wonderful ... let’s do it!”

And so began their journey with QuaverReady.

Olson, who also oversees the Social and Emotional Learning committee for the SSWAA, appreciates the fact that SSWAA standards and competencies are addressed throughout the QuaverReady curriculum.

“There are some very important predictabilities in the curriculum that our teachers have come to count on,” Olson says. “For all of us, standards and competencies play a very important role, and QuaverReady adheres to them all!”

### The Best View of All

“When I do my classroom check-ins,” Olson says, “I’ll see teachers engaging their students with QuaverReady in many different ways.”

The Colorado educator recalls a recent classroom visit: “I looked in, and the students were enjoying the song Walk in Your Shoes,” she says. “All I saw were smiles!”

“There was a line leader, then they formed a circle, and everybody was having fun expressing their different emotions,” she says happily ... “and these were kindergartners!”



When our interview is finished, I realize I forgot to ask Sheri a question: Does her classroom have a view of the mountains, by any chance? It's something I was genuinely curious about.

I smile to myself when I realize that the scene she'd just described – a classroom filled with smiling faces – is every bit as sweeping and majestic as the mountains themselves.

In fact, it's the best view of all.

Want to bring more smiles into your classroom? Get QuaverReady!  
Visit [QuaverEd.com/Ready](http://QuaverEd.com/Ready)





# Missouri Educator is “Beyond Grateful” for Quaver

*“As soon as I saw it, I just fell in love ...”*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | January 8, 2024

Throughout her decades of teaching and counseling elementary students, **Michele Jordan** has used what she describes as an “essential tool” to help engage, instruct, and motivate her students: **Music**.

“Music is a unifying force,” she explains. “It crosses barriers. It transcends boundaries. Music brings people together.”

About three years ago, Michele discovered a resource that allowed her to combine the power of music with her passion for teaching and counseling — and her discovery “changed everything.”

The resource? **QuaverReady**.

Jordan, a **school counselor** at **Spring Valley Elementary** in **Raytown, Missouri**, remember the moment.

“I was searching YouTube for different music lessons that would stimulate my students and catch their attention,” she says, “and as soon as I found Quaver, **I just fell in love.**”

“I could see that the content taught all of the important skills from our own SEL wheel, which was (and is) super important because we didn’t really have a separate SEL curriculum, so QuaverReady just made sense in every way.”

The more she learned about Quaver, the more she wanted to know.

Ever the go-getter, she decided to reach out to Nashville-based company directly, to the human beings who represent the heart and soul of the company itself.

“Everyone I spoke with was very receptive, right from the start,” she says. “They *really* wanted to help get Quaver into my school, and **they really made me feel seen and heard.**”

### **Celebrating Diversity**

Michele knows first-hand the importance of feeling “seen and heard.”

“Spring Valley Elementary is a highly diverse student population, so it was important to find a music resource that could not only reflect and complement but *celebrate* our diversity,” she says with pride.

“The songs and lessons are very culturally affirming and validating,” she says.

“When students can see themselves in the lessons they’re learning – when they can look at the characters, understand the messages, hear the songs, and say to themselves ‘I *get* this!’ – it makes a real difference, she says. “We cannot reach this generation unless they can actually own what we’re teaching them.”

### **Quieting the Mind with QuaverReady**

As a school counselor, **mindfulness matters to Michele Jordan.**

In fact, the mindfulness component of the QuaverReady curriculum helped fill an important gap, she says.

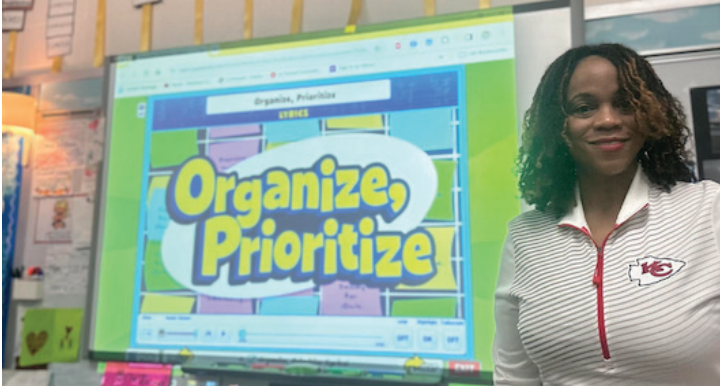
“We’re a trauma-informed school,” she explains, “and while not all trauma has to be major, all trauma must be addressed. Quaver helps us do this.”

Jordan says she’s also grateful that the SEL lessons build in time for reflection and a pause in classroom activity.

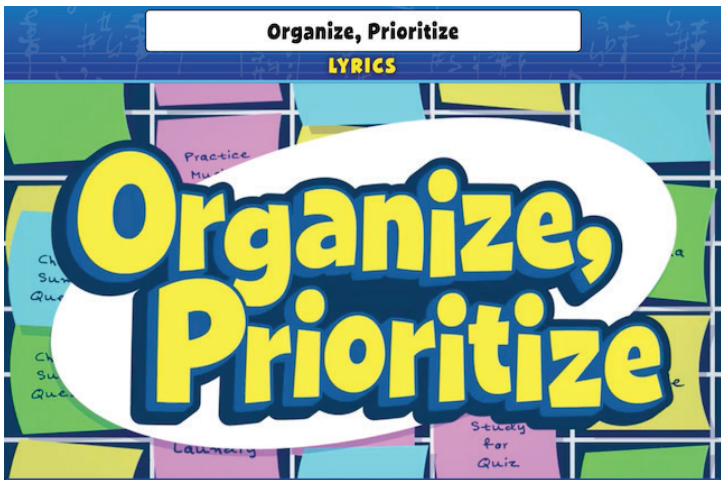
“At the end of the lessons, there’s time built in for **quiet contemplation**, she says. “This is extremely helpful because it allows my students time to process what they’ve just learned and to simply sit in the moment of **here and now** before having to rush to the next class or activity,” she says.

Jordan also likes the fact that the songs and lessons emphasize personal accountability and the importance of making good choices.

“A song like **Organize and Prioritize** reminds my students that they do have control!”



*Choosing to be organized is a form of mindfulness!*



“These are important lessons to learn not just in the classroom ... but in life.”

So if you want to experience what Michele has experienced, the solution is simple:

*Get QuaverReady for your school.*



# QuaverReady helps Counselors Teach Compassion, Kindness, Caring

*"Each Song and Every Lesson has a Purpose!"*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | June 7, 2023



*You can hear it in her voice: The sound of pride.*

Though we are separated by hundreds of miles, many states, and an entire time zone, the sound of pride in her voice is as clear as a bell.

**Laura Cardenas-Alvarez**, a **school counselor** at **Perez Elementary** in **Brownsville, Texas**, clearly feels pride in her students, but she also celebrates the fact that her students feel just as much in *themselves!*

This is pride that can be felt **and** heard.

"When my pre-k and kindergartners sing '**We Are Growing Smarter**' in their loud, happy voices, you can just *feel* their confidence and their pride growing," Laura says with enthusiasm.

“They aren’t just singing empty words ... they are singing what they believe to be true about themselves and each other.”



*“Laura Cardenas-Alvarez says that all of her students point to ‘You-Nique’ as their all-time favorite song!”*

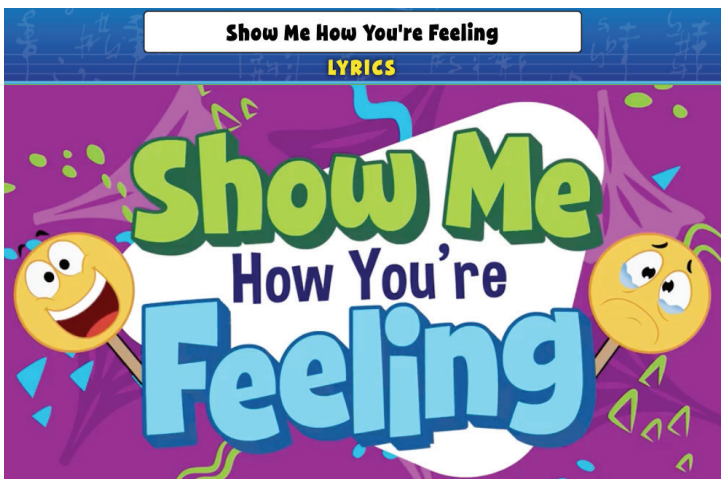
### *QuaverReady is Filled with Favorites!*

Listening to Laura describe everything she loves about QuaverReady, it’s easy to understand why school counselors across the USA rely on this extraordinary resource to promote social and emotional learning in their students. A few of Laura’s favorite features:

**The Songs:** “There are loads of great SEL songs, but my personal favorite is ‘**Change**,’ she says. “This song helps my students understand that change is normal. Everybody loves this song – the students, other teachers, the paraprofessionals who sometimes come in – *all* of us can relate!”

**The worksheets:** “I print the worksheets so my students can take them home,” Laura says. “They go over the lessons with their parents, and this helps parents understand how SEL is being taught and applied. Plus, parents learn about SEL, too! Everybody benefits.”

**Lessons with a Purpose:** “Each song and every lesson has a **purpose!**” Songs like ‘**How are We Feeling today?**’ and ‘**Show me how You’re Feeling**’ give me the tools I need to discuss and identify important emotions with my students – and we have fun while we’re doing it.



**QuaverReady is the Common Theme:** “The entire district follows the curriculum very closely. In fact, they develop a monthly theme based on the Quaver curriculum – and we develop our monthly themes from there,” she says. “Everybody’s using it consistently, across the board.

“I also offer **after-school counseling**,” Laura adds, “where we talk about and learn how to manage anxiety, set goals, and make good decisions. All of these lessons and skills help my students cope.”

Laura Cardenas-Alvarez helps us understand that SEL is important to many people on many different levels, from students, teachers, counselors, and administrators, to families and the larger community.

She also helps us understand that all these different pieces can be sewn together into a single fabric – almost like a beautiful quilt – and the pieces of this quilt come from a single resource.

The name of this beautiful “quilt” of a resource?

That’s an easy one:

*QuaverReady!*



# An Extraordinary Leader who Leads with Quaver

*"Quaver works. It closes gaps.  
And I expect my teachers to use it."*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | May 16, 2023



**Dr. Anysia Trevino** is a leader in the field of elementary education.

Speak with her for the first time and you'll feel it instantly: The depth of her passion, the clarity of her vision, the uncompromising sense of commitment she feels towards her educators and her students – all of it flows straight from her heart. She is a fountain.

From the very beginning, Dr. Trevino, **Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction & HR** in the **Brownsville (Texas) ISD**, was deliberate in her attempts to bring an effective SEL resource to her community.

"Even before the district-wide SEL requirements were put into place," she says with unbridled enthusiasm, "I'd already put together a team to evaluate the programs that were out there – and there were a lot of them. That's how important Social and Emotional Learning is to me."

After assembling a diverse, district-wide team of teachers, counselors, and administrators, Trevino remembers how one SEL resource quickly distinguished itself from its competitors and rose straight to the top: **QuaverReady**.

“Right from the start,” she says, “we could see that *this* was the resource we needed.”

“Quaver’s SEL program felt so comfortable and user-friendly; so non-threatening,” she remembers. “As the curriculum was being introduced to us, the Quaver rep played this beautiful Baroque music and asked all of us to relax – *breathe in, breathe out!* – which we all did, and it set such a great tone.”

Today, many educators in Trevino’s district utilize that same exercise in their classrooms, particularly in the mornings. “It starts everyone off on a positive note,” she says, “the students *and* the teachers.”

“We all have stresses in our lives,” Trevino readily concedes. “When the kids are having a bad day, it effects the teacher. When the teacher has a bad day, it effects the students. Having Quaver in the classroom helps *everyone* identify and manage their emotions. It’s a win-win.”

Trevino says she makes it a priority to ensure that all of her principals understand the importance of social and emotional learning as well.

“I tell my principals, ‘If we can’t close the emotional gap, then we can’t close the instructional gap. Emotion is so closely tied to instruction and learning.’”

QuaverReady, she says, is what’s helping them close this “gap.”

### **Music: The Universal Language**

“In our leadership academy,” she says, “I always make SEL a topic of conversation.”

“And what I said very early on was, ‘Ladies and Gentlemen, SEL is a top priority, and **we’re going to be using Quaver to teach these skills!**’”

“We’re all in lockstep,” she says with pride, “I’m always popping into the classrooms to make sure these great resources are not just being taught, but being *applied*!”

Most mornings, Dr. Trevino says *You-Nique* can be heard blaring on the school intercoms. “What’s a better way to start the day than that?”



Trevino says she likes to “pop into” her classroom to see how Quaver is being used. “We consider QuaverReady an essential resource. That’s why its being used and applied throughout the entire district.”

“I love that Quaver uses music so beautifully to teach SEL. Music is the connective force. No matter which language you speak, everyone understands music,” she says.

**“Music,” she finishes, “is the universal language.”**

And coming together to celebrate each other – the things we have in common as well as the things that make us so beautifully *You-Nique* – is what QuaverReady is really all about.





# QuaverReady, Set, Go!

*Positive Impact Felt by Students, Educators Alike*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | September 28, 2022

**Racquel Lambert**, a **school counselor** at **Hollywood Elementary**, in **College Park, Maryland**, knows exactly how to reach, teach, comfort, and calm her students.

Lambert is a school counselor, yes. But she's also a mentor. A protector. A tireless advocate. In many ways, she's an architect, too, because she has the blueprints, the skills, and the schematics she needs to build self-confidence, self-awareness, and compassion in her students—the essential elements of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

## **A Beautiful Blueprint**

The blueprint she uses to build a caring, compassionate learning environment where her students feel valued, where they feel heard, and where they feel safe—regardless of the challenges they might be facing outside of the classroom—is **QuaverReady**.

By any measure, it's a beautiful blueprint indeed.

"Here is a resource that gives me everything I need to reach my students and to really help them learn to explore and understand their emotions," says Lambert, lovingly. "I also really respect the fact that there is diversity and sensitivity in the lessons, the songs, and the images. That makes a difference because it invites my students to engage more directly. It helps them relate."

This beautiful blueprint has other benefits, too: For a busy counselor like Lambert, **ease of use** is essential. What she describes as a "game-changer" is the fact that "I can find everything I need—even the printables!—very quickly, based on my needs at that particular moment, and based on what my students happen to be facing when they walk in. It's just

easy to navigate. That counts for so much. I just go to **Resource Manager**, and we're off!"

Lambert ticks off another benefit: The **customizability** of the curriculum. When a student walks in feeling sadness, frustration, or anger, she can meet them right where they are—not just with an open heart, but with a timely, topical lesson or song that allows them to explore and expand upon the emotions they're experiencing ... in real-time, as those feelings are flowing.

"There are so *many* songs that are helpful to me as a counselor," she says. "'**Anger's Not the Boss of Me**' is a real favorite. Everybody loves singing it—including me! It gives me the chance to reinforce in my students the fact that their emotions are real, that their mindset matters, and that there are people surrounding them who are devoted to helping them learn to manage and understand their feelings. We forget that **little people can have very big emotions.**"



### **Impact, Inspiration, and "Interventions"**

QuaverReady, formerly known as QuaverSEL, provides resources that reach **all** learners, in every conceivable educational setting, whether you're interacting with your students in a classroom environment or in a counseling setting.

A quick peek at the **Interventions** resources (below) gives you an idea of how you can create your own "blueprint" to design

and customize these tools in a way that brings the greatest benefit and ensures the most positive impact on your students. QuaverReady offers four types of interventions:

**Individual** Interventions

**Small Group** Interventions

**Behavior Resources**, and

**Peace Corner** Resources



*QuaverReady serves Tiers I, II, and III.*

### **An “Added Bonus”**

Racquel Lambert appreciates the fact that these resources are fully aligned with the CASEL competencies, but she also expresses gratitude that the Quaver resources “go above and beyond” the traditional competencies to deal with sensitive issues like bullying, for instance.

“If one or several of my students are dealing with bullying, I know I have a resource right on hand that can allow us to talk about bullying in a productive way, without fear,” she says. These kinds of open discussions create space to diffuse difficult situations.







# QuaverReady Makes Marvelous Music in Maryland

*“It helps me teach my students  
kindness and confidence.”*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | August 16, 2022

You know how some people seem to exude excellence and enthusiasm with simply the sound of their voice?

**BriJea Colvin**, a counselor at **Rose Valley Elementary in Fort Washington, Maryland**, is one of them. Her energy zings, zaps, and zipwires across the airwaves as we speak on the phone. The power of her presence is palpable.

The reason for Colvin’s enthusiasm is two-fold—and the sound of that double-edged enthusiasm is as rich and resonant as a ringing bell. Colvin is clearly enthusiastic about being an elementary school counselor. She loves her students and she appreciates the counseling tools she has at her disposal that allow her to reach and teach her students in the most effective way possible—which leads us directly to the second source of enthusiasm: **QuaverReady**.

“Our music department already had Quaver, so I already knew what a great resource it was,” she says. “So when we were selected as a pilot school [for the QuaverReady curriculum], I was excited about jumping into it right away!”

And jump she did.

“I love the lessons. I love that it’s so easy to navigate. I love the worksheets that go along with the lessons. I love its interactivity and the way it engages my students. I love that the songs make my students feel so good about themselves and each other.”

That’s a whole bunch of love.

But believe it or not, there's even more.

Colvin says that having QuaverReady has allowed her to change her entire curriculum: The ease of use and the rich resources allow her to focus on developing deeper, more sustained relationships with her students in a way that highlights and nurtures her own counseling skills.

And the fact that the **curriculum adheres to closely to the CASEL competencies** is yet another benefit. As a counselor, Colvin is intimately familiar with the various layers of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and she says QuaverReady explores each one of these layers with thoughtful intention.

"SEL is about developing problem-solving skills, decision-making and listening skills, teamwork, and coming to understand and manage emotions," she says. "I know that [this resource] will focus on every one of these things and more—for whatever grades I want to teach."

Here are some highlights of the QuaverReady resources:



*QuaverReady resources for the whole school.*

When it comes to instilling self-confidence and self-awareness in her students, Colvin claims one song in particular helps get the job done.

**“‘You-Nique’ is everybody’s favorite!”** she exclaims. “It’s a song that makes everybody just feel good about themselves.”

“What I like about the song, especially as a school counselor, is that the lyrics let each student find happiness in themselves—and it reminds them that they are enough!” she says with gratitude.

“Everyone is different. Everyone is beautiful. This song really spoke to me during the pandemic—it spoke to *all* of us, really—when we were all going through such a difficult time.”



## A Culture of Caring

Colvin says that as a school counselor, she wears many hats. Lesson planning is an important part of her job, but it can also be time-consuming.

Having QuaverReady close at hand, BriJea says, “definitely helps with time management,” she says. “It allows me to spend time caring for and interacting with my students, devoting attention to them that they really need and deserve. So, in addition to the great content, there’s this added benefit of letting me manage my time in a way that allows me to be the best counselor I can possibly be.”

Colvin reflects on the growth and maturation she's seen in her students since bringing on QuaverReady:

"They're learning how to interact with and respect each other," she says with gratitude.

"I am able to **see that growth with my own eyes**. When they come to me now with certain problems, I can see that they are developing the skills to work through some of these issues on their own. They have the tools."

With QuaverReady, maturation happens. Hearts, lives, and minds expand. The development of the whole, healthy child unfolds.

Combine all of this with compassionate counselors like BriJea Colvin, and you've created **a culture of caring**, where everyone benefits.

Call it a win-win, all the way around.



# Counselors use Quaver to teach Compassion, Kindness, and Coping Skills

*“The songs and lessons help my students cope.”*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | June 7, 2022

**Syreeta Moody**, a school counselor at **District Heights Elementary** in **Prince George’s County, Maryland**, knows what compassion, kindness, and coping skills look like. She knows what they *sound* like, too, because these things do indeed possess a rhythm and a sound all their own.

Imagine that: A counseling tool that carries within it the **sounds** of kindness, compassion, and caring.

According to Syreeta, these “kindness sounds” and creative lessons can be found in one place: Quaver’s Social and Emotional Learning curriculum, also known as **QuaverSEL**.

Within this powerful platform of online resources, the sound of social and emotional development resonates like a beautiful symphony. Listen closely and you’ll hear another sound, too – the sound of love in her voice:

“Whenever I play a Quaver song for my students or whenever we explore one of the lessons,” she says, “I can just feel my babies—I call them ‘my babies’ – **calming down.**”

“Lots of my students walk into my office feeling anxiety or sometimes even grief—many have lost relatives to COVID or are dealing with other tragedies and setbacks – but Quaver helps us address and manage these very big emotions. My little ones haven’t quite figured how to do this on their own just yet, but now we have a tool. It’s a big deal.”

She lists a wide array of her favorite Quaver resources.

“I use the **Emotions Check-In** regularly, especially with my smaller groups. The Pre-K through 2nd-graders just love it,” she says with enthusiasm. “I use this as a reflective tool.”



“When they use Emotions Check-In, they have the opportunity to actually create the facial expressions they might be feeling inside! Sometimes it gets really interesting—a student might place a mean or angry-looking eyebrow onto a happy, smiling face, which might *look* like a confusing expression, but it’s an indication of how they’re feeling inside,” she says.

When I ask her to name a few more of her favorite Quaver tools, she breaks into spontaneous (and very beautiful) song:

“*Setting goals gives me something to reach for ...*” she croons in near-perfect pitch, her voice filled to the brim with emotion and love.

“I really enjoy singing that song myself,” she happily admits, “and when we all sing it together, it gives us a great opportunity to discuss the importance of goal-setting. **It helps them believe in themselves.** I hear kids singing these songs in the hallway and in other parts of the school, too. We also use the general

Quaver curriculum in our music department. The songs really speak to them. They speak to me, too!”

The image shows a worksheet titled "COPING WITH GRIEF" with two main sections: "LYRICS" and "NOTES". The lyrics section features the text: "I'll get through this sorrow and hope for a brighter tomorrow." The notes section is a grid of colored lines for writing. The illustration depicts a young boy sitting on a bed in a bedroom at night, looking thoughtful. The room includes a window with a view of a night landscape, a desk with a lamp, a clock, and a teddy bear.

## Getting Through Grief

“District Heights Elementary is a Title I school,” she explains with great care and thoughtful intention. “This is a relatively high-crime area, so the kids have to deal with a lot.”

“Not too long ago, our community faced a crisis. There was a shooting not too far from the school, and the incident really hit us hard.”

I can hear the whisper of a song still moving in her voice, more somber this time. But along with the solemnity comes the tone of undaunted determination and protective pride.

“The kids were traumatized ... but the school was and is there to help them every step of the way. It is what we do.”

Ms. Moody says many of her students face grief and anxiety with disturbing regularity, and she’s grateful to have the Quaver resources at her disposal to help lead them gently through.

“In **SELPlus**, there’s a section about grief that’s been extremely helpful to us,” she says with gratitude.

“Many times, the little ones tend to close down during difficult times; they tend to hold their emotions inside. But when we turn

the processing of emotions into a game, into a form of learning and engagement, it allows me to meet them where they are, and **this helps pull them out of their sadness and grief!**"

"It's almost like a classroom form of play therapy—and lots of times, the kids don't even realize it's happening. All they know is that they're having a good time."



She finishes with a flourish, clearly propelled by a deep and intimate understanding of what Social and Emotional Learning is really all about:

"Every emotion matters," she says. "Being able to understand our emotions and work through them, especially in a crisis, makes all the difference in the world. These are my babies. I'm a counselor, yes, but I'm also here to help guide, grow, and protect them."

Ms. Moody loves moods. She loves emotions. She loves her students. She loves QuaverSEL. Her commitment to her students makes me think of the old-school song, "All you need is love."

Love, yes ...

And **QuaverSEL**.





Yes, Racquel Lambert is a **counselor extraordinaire** who loves and cares for her students every single day, in every single way.

But she is also an **architect** extraordinaire because she is designing dreams for her students. Using QuaverReady resources, she is creating a learning environment of compassion, understanding, and self-awareness that, when combined, stand as tall as the tallest skyscraper.

And her students stand just as tall.





# Recovering from the Pandemic

*After Chaos and Closures, QuaverSEL Helps  
Teachers Come back to the Classroom*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | April 6, 2022

**“My kids know what it feels like to be kind.”**

I can almost *feel* the gratitude and, yes, the relief in her voice as she speaks—and this Texas teacher tells her story from a place of shining truth: **QuaverSEL has been, and still is, a real life-safer.**

Long before the lockdowns shuttered every school in the nation, music teacher **Kaundria Gay** had already been using QuaverSEL in her classroom every single day. Her students were already familiar with the colorful on-screen characters, the lively, enduring lessons, and the cutting-edge technology.

So when the world as we know it changed—and every classroom closed—her students already knew how to cope, how to show kindness and compassion, and, equally important, how to keep *learning* ... even though they were now learning from their living rooms.

What prepared and positioned them for continued learning and a heightened capacity for kindness and compassion—even in the face of a global pandemic—was one important tool: That tool, says Kaundria, was **QuaverSEL.**

“Before the shut-down, my kids had already been exposed to the lessons and the **values** that QuaverSEL teaches,” she says. “They already knew the characters and the technology. We’d already discussed **what it looks like and feels like to be kind, to be compassionate, to be respectful.** QuaverSEL gave us the tools we needed.”

## The Learning “Never Stopped”

Kaundria says that even though classrooms closed, the *learning channels* remains opened and accessible.

“When schools shut down,” she says, “my students could just open up their folders and go straight to the lessons, right from home. **The learning never stopped.**”

But there was a period of adjustment when her students *returned* to the classroom. Kaundria says that a fair amount of *re-learning* had to take place once everyone returned.

The good news: QuaverSEL was there to help, yet again!



*The Sound of a Smile: Music teacher Kaundria Gay is all smiles when she talks about QuaverSEL in her classroom.*

## “QuaverSEL is Helping us Hit the ‘Re-Set’ Button”

“After being out for so long, I quickly realized we’d have to learn to work together as a group again. How to get along. How to respect each other’s spaces,” she says.

“We also had to learn how to process all of these new and very intense emotions. So much had happened in the world, and many of my students were directly impacted,” she says.

Kaundria, who teaches at **Hearne Elementary** in **Houston, Texas**, says she relied on songs like, “Anger’s Not the Boss of Me,” and “You-Nique” to motivate, inspire, and remind her students that they could, indeed, get through the difficult transition of returning to the classroom.

“We’re *still* adjusting, really. And I’m super-grateful that QuaverSEL is helping us hit the re-set button.”

What other QuaverSEL tools have helped her students “press re-set?”

“The **counting and breathing exercises** continue to help us work through some of our intense emotions. And because we’d been doing these exercises before the pandemic hit, they already knew the techniques. It was really an added bonus.”



Listen to one of QuaverSEL’s breathing techniques, “Count to 5” by clicking [here](#).

### QuaverSEL Helps ALL Humans.

My conversation with Kaundria takes a courageous and deeply personal turn as she reflects on how QuaverSEL helped her push past the grief and sadness in her own life, too:

“During the pandemic, I went through a very challenging time in my life,” she admits. “My father-in-law passed away *and* my

father passed away," she says, the sounds of sadness and longing filling her voice.

"I'd also just given birth to my second child. Schools were closed. The world was suffering. Emotions were running high for me and my family, to say the least."

This time, she says, she turned to QuaverSEL for a *personal* boost, which helped her and her family tremendously.

"My older daughter, who's in elementary school, listened to the 'Coping with Grief' song quite a bit, and it really helped her during that time. In fact, the song helped me, too. These resources really helped all of us on our journey through grief," she says with gratitude and pride.

"There was a lot of sadness in our home for a while, and QuaverSEL kind of helped us through."



Kaundria ends the conversation just as she began: With a smile, a bright dose of eternal optimism, and a hopeful heart, filled to the brim with gratitude:

"We've all been through so much," she says. "It just feels really good to have everyone back together, making music again, singing songs again, and learning together again."

"Thank you, Quaver!"

# QuaverSEL Celebrates Multi-Culturalism

## *Spanish-Language Songs Meet Students Where They Are*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | October 12, 2021

Teaching **Social and Emotional Learning** is like cooking up a special meal; certain ingredients are required. What goes into this recipe? Intention. Effort. Resources. And definitive action, of course. Lots and lots of action.

**QuaverSEL**, with the introduction of their colorful **new Spanish-language songs**, has set the intention, made the effort, designed the resources, and taken definitive action to help educators teach SEL on a new level, and it's having a tremendously positive impact.

**Stacy Redding**, a music specialist at **Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary** in **Dallas, Texas**, is excited about the new Spanish-language songs.



Stacy says QuaverSEL's Spanish-language songs help her students feel confident, comforted, and connected to their culture. Says Stacy: "You-Nique" in Spanish is their all-time favorite!"

“Every child wants to feel good about themselves and to be able to understand and communicate their emotions,” she says. “That’s what SEL is really all about, isn’t it? When my students sing ‘You-Nique’ in Spanish, they’re singing about how much they love themselves!”



Visit Spanish Resources in your QuaverSEL Teacher Toolbox to listen to Único, the Spanish version of You-Nique.

Stacy, who says her school’s student population is over 90% Hispanic, says “Expressing emotion is challenging, especially with my little ones. Being able to use the Emotion Soundboard in Spanish helps them process and identify their emotions in their native language. I see their little faces light up.”



In this activity, students can create a face to identify how they are feeling. Alternatively, by clicking the bottom tab with the emoji, educators can apply a pre-created face and invite students to explore facial cues in order to identify how the character is feeling.

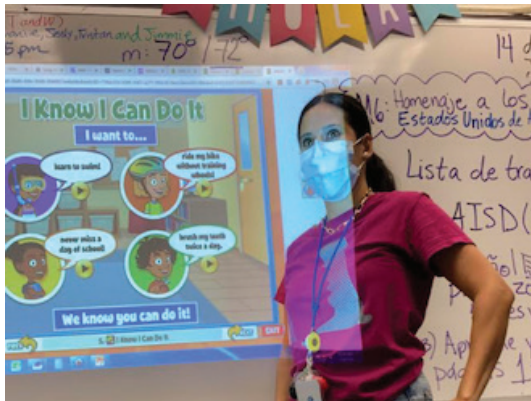


**Jamie Contreras, Assistant Principal** at Bethune Elementary, has observed Stacy's use of QuaverSEL resources and is very happy with what he sees.

"Mrs. Redding has made cross-curricular, real-world application SEL practices a priority in her classroom. When our world was shaken by COVID-19, she personally took her SEL practices to new levels. It is clear that the SEL well-being of her students is a priority," Contreras says.

Indeed, Quaver's SEL curriculum creates a bridge that teachers *and* counselors can traverse in order to arrive at a single destination. It's a bridge that leads to the social and emotional well-being of *all* students.

**Norma Luna, a counselor** at **Smith Elementary** in **Houston, Texas**, has crossed that bridge, too. She uses Quaver's Spanish and English-language resources to reach, teach, counsel, calm, and comfort her students.



School counselor Norma Luna says QuaverSEL Spanish-language resources help her reach her students at a deeply emotional level.

"Being able to check in with my students and gauge where they are emotionally is critical," Luna says. "During my 'Lunch Bunch' sessions, these resources help me focus my students on not just what they're learning but what they're *feeling*."

"Honoring cultural awareness is an appropriate and respectful way to really allow students to explore and express their

emotions,” Norma says. “We’re very lucky to have these resources at our disposal; these are just the SEL tools we need.”

QuaverSEL—and the extraordinary educators who utilize these resources—work together, hand-in-hand, to make sure SEL unfolds in the classroom, the counselor’s office, and even at home. **The ingredients are all there.**

Call it the perfect recipe.

# QuaverEd Leads ... but it also Listens!

*New SEL songs inspired by teacher input*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | September 18, 2021

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*Katelyn Zimmer of Blackshear Magnet Elementary in Odessa, Texas, is a Pre-K-5th grade music teacher.*

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Happiness has a happy way of holding on.

Even during the most challenging times – in fact, *especially* in the most challenging times – happiness has a way of rising to the top, bubbling over, and finding a way to shine. Not even a pandemic can paralyze it.

As elementary music teachers across the USA search for ways to normalize, inspire, uplift, and, of course, teach their students during this unprecedented school year, they are grateful to have Quaver by their side – simply because Quaver’s quest is unrelenting.

And what is Quaver’s quest? To equip music teachers with the best resources and the most innovative tools in the world, and to do it in a way that creates ... well, let’s swing back to the very first word of this article: *Happiness!*

### “Smilin’ Eyes”

One of Quaver’s newest songs, “Smilin’ Eyes,” released just today, is actually inspired by several music teachers who observed that their students were happy to be back in school, even with the requirement to now wear masks.

“The masks might cover their mouths, which prevents me from seeing their smiles, but that’s okay because I can still see that that they’re happy!” says **Katelyn Zimmer**, a music teacher at Blackshear Magnet Elementary in Odessa, Texas.

Zimmer, a Pre K-5th grade music teacher, says the mask-wearing mandate doesn’t damper her student’s enthusiasm for learning and appreciating music.

Hence, the real-life inspiration for “Smilin’ Eyes” – Quaver’s new song that helps students understand that happiness itself can happen anytime and anywhere, even in difficult situations, and that a smile can be seen in your eyes just as easily as it can be seen on your lips.

So the Quaver team is not just leading teachers through these challenging times by providing comforting, compassionate content that helps students cope ... but they are also listening to the sentiments of the teachers they serve as well.

Take a peek at (and a listen to) another super-special SEL song from Quaver:

## QuaverSEL's "Keep Juggling Your Feelings"



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Zimmer says Quaver also plays an important role in helping to normalize what are decidedly not-so-normal classroom conditions, particularly helpful with her younger students.

"Especially for my little ones, being able to come back to certain songs they already know and enjoy makes a big difference," she says. "And 'Stinky Pirates' is one of their favorites! The song just makes them happy!"

Zimmer has also designed a "You-Nique" bulletin board that's bringing smiles to her student's eyes.

"I'd been wanting to create a "You-Nique" bulletin board for quite some time," Zimmer says, "because I know it's just a unique way to inspire my students."

### Turning Bad to Good

Quaver will also release several other songs and lessons specifically designed to help students cope with the stress and strain of today.

"When Bad Things Happen" is another new song that helps students cope with crisis, with unexpected disappointments, and with the sometimes-scary feelings that surface — well, just like the song says — when bad things happen. The song offers yet another meaningful message about the importance of being

kind, compassionate and gentle with each other (and with ourselves) during difficult times – a perfect Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) tool for times like these.

These new SEL songs being created by Quaver – with plenty more on the way – feel like a warm, collective hug on a cold, cold day. They're designed to make students feel good (especially in not-always-so-good conditions), to learn to cope, and to simply *smile inside*.

And we know – now – that a smile doesn't just show up on the lips.

Look real closely and you'll see for yourself:

It shows up in the eyes, too.

# QuaverSEL: Mental Health Safety Net!

*QuaverSEL Helps Counselors Navigate the Tightrope of Today's Topsy-Turvy World*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | May 18, 2021



Young people living in today's tumultuous, topsy-turvy world are in peril.

Happiness, health, and a general sense of well-being—things that every child deserves—are sporadic and in short supply. Our children are being challenged to navigate a tightrope suspended above shaky ground, and the danger of them slipping is ever-present and very real.

They need a safety net.

**Laura Filtness**, a **school counselor** at **Powell Elementary in Knoxville, Tennessee**, is passionate about bringing balance, emotional honesty, and, yes, sometimes even comfort and solace into the lives of her students.

Laura gives them the safety net they need with the help of QuaverSEL, an online curriculum that has resources for counselors and classroom teachers.

“No doubt about it: Our kids are struggling today,” she says. “They’re dealing with sudden adversity, major change, grief, loss, and now the pressure of having to reconnect after having been isolated for so long. These are pressures of tremendous magnitude.”

Laura feels a fierce commitment to meeting her students precisely where they are, *wherever* they are. This much-loved school counselor focuses with laser-like intention on giving her charges the safety net they need to feel secure and connected during these decidedly disconnected times.

Fortunately, this “net” provides her students with some special gifts that are pleasingly simple but oh-so-very powerful and profound: Joy. Belonging. Solidity. The practical tools they need to identify, manage, and communicate their emotions in a way that helps diffuse the pressure and untangle the tension. These are gifts that *all* of us cherish... but that children need the most.

Laura quickly describes the important component within her safety net:

### **QuaverSEL.**

“I use QuaverSEL in my classroom lessons, in small groups, and with individual students,” she says. “It serves me in many, many different capacities.”

Laura is grateful for this curriculum, and for these practical tools during such decidedly tense times:

“The curriculum allows me to broach hard-to-tackle concepts in a way that makes sense to young people. Even something as simple as singing a song about their emotions lets them release the pressure, often without them even *realizing* it. It just happens naturally, and QuaverSEL is the catalyst.”

This much is clear: QuaverSEL’s songs and lessons act as both a catalyst *and* a safety net—and Laura’s net stretches far beyond her classroom.



"I share these tools with my parents, too," she says. "I encourage parents to utilize the tools within the curriculum; to sing the songs with their children and use the material as a launch point for discussions at home. They do... and it works."

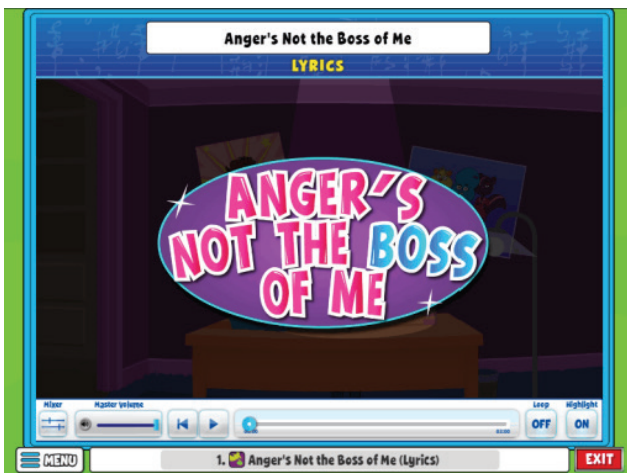
But Laura's net stretches even wider still.

"I also encourage other teachers to use QuaverSEL," she says. "Teachers, parents, counselors, it's helpful to us all. The beauty, here, is that you don't have to be a trained counselor or a mental health professional to help our kids identify, cope with, and work through their emotions. This is what makes QuaverSEL so useful."

At its most fundamental level, music is what sits at the center of this beautiful safety net; the music itself.

Laura agrees.

"I see it with my own eyes," she says. "When tension is high, and I play an SEL song like '**Anger's not the Boss of Me**,' and the music and singing just seem to settle everything down. It's the music that makes the difference."



Another successful stress-buster? "My students really connect with "**The Mindset Battle**." They love that it's kind of a rap song, it's fun, and it's catchy. I even find myself humming it throughout the day! In a world that's not always so fun, this song is important for a lot of reasons."



No doubt about it: Our kids are navigating a tightrope these days—but passionate, heart-centered counselors like Laura Filtness are bringing them balance. Creating comfort. Stepping in and stepping up.

Yes, the world is a topsy-turvy place for our young people.

But QuaverSEL has created just the safety net they need.

# Using Music to Make Lemonade!

*This Texas Teacher Brings Tranquility to Her Classroom Using QuaverSEL*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | April 19, 2021



*Music specialist Kaundria Gay uses QuaverSEL to teach her students they're "You-Nique!"*

What do you do when life gives you lemons? The most optimistic, solution-driven answer is this: You make lemonade.

But when the chips are down and the tides have turned, **Kaundria Gay**, a music specialist at **Hearne Elementary** in **Houston, Texas**, makes much, much more than just lemonade.

*Kaundria also makes music.*

This popular, well-loved teacher uses music to comfort, calm, soothe, and inspire her students. And what does Kaundria keep close at-hand in her classroom to help her achieve this goal?

That answer is easy: She uses **QuaverSEL**, a comprehensive, cutting-edge Social and Emotional Learning curriculum that has taken the nation by storm... and Kaundria knows a thing or two about storms, having faced many herself in these recent months:

Kaundria battled a COVID-19 diagnosis herself before recovering fully. Then she and millions of her fellow Texans suffered through the severe winter storms that threw the entire state into the deep freeze. During that time, she also suffered the loss of her father-in-law. And along with the rest of the teaching community, she's faced the challenges of classroom closings, anxious students, disrupted teaching patterns, and a global pandemic that has shifted the world on its axis.

Amazingly, **QuaverSEL helped her through.**

"It's been a lot to deal with, but we've made it through," she says with spirited determination.

"My students have been through so much... but the fact that I've been able to rely on QuaverSEL has made all the difference."

Kaundria teaches her students in precisely the same way she uses QuaverSEL: With boldness and vision.

"I use QuaverSEL in a bunch of different ways," she says with gratitude: "To warm up my class, to teach them about music, to stimulate discussion, and to bring calm to my classroom whenever I sense anxiety."

"Whenever I play a QuaverSEL song—especially when my students are stressed—it's almost like **you can just feel the tension leave the room**," she says. What does a tension-free classroom *look* like, exactly? Kaundria brings us clarity by providing a picture:



*Even while socially distanced, Kaundria brings calm to her classroom using QuaverSEL's "Relax Your Mind" song.*

"In this picture, we were doing a closure activity," she explains as she describes the photo she took just before her students left on a break. "I told them to listen to the song 'Relax Your Mind' and let go any worries they have about school so they can enjoy their time off," she says.

### **QuaverSEL "Allows me to grow with my students"**

Clearly, Kaundria and QuaverEd are singing the same song: As the company uses this week to celebrate its various music-based curricula (comprised of QuaverMusic, QuaverSEL, Quaver Pre-K, and the exciting new QuaverHealth), the joyous chorus seems to be this: *QuaverEd grows with you.*

Kaundria agrees: "My students come to me when they're very young, and they stay with me until they leave the fourth grade, so I have the unique opportunity to get to know them over the span of many years. QuaverSEL allows me to grow with my students. I can't get this anywhere else."

## **Everybody needs a Safe Space**

“The past year has shown us lots of loss,” she says, “so it’s been helpful to have resources that help lighten the load.”

“The lesson on grief has been very helpful, especially with my older students” she says softly. “After all we’ve been through, we need a safe space to talk it out. And when this happens, we grow *together*.”

Teachers like Kaundria help us realize that sure, life can get hard. Sure, unexpected storms can knock us to our feet. Sure, life hands us lemons every now and then.

But teachers like Kaundria also know precisely what do when this happens:

They use music to make lemonade.

# EVERY Day is “SEL Day” at QuaverEd!

*A school counselor in Miami shares his inspiring SEL success stories*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | March 24, 2021



*School counselor Tyrone Thompkins uses the QuaverSEL curriculum to soothe, calm, and inspire his students.*

Today is the day educators everywhere celebrate CASEL’s “International SEL Day,” and with good reason: Social and Emotional Learning is accelerating the growth and development of students in classrooms in every corner of the USA.

Want proof? Just ask **Tyrone Thompkins**, a school counselor at **Crestview Elementary in Miami Gardens, Florida**. Thompkins is a source of strength and inspiration to his students. His office, a place of peace and positivity. Thompkins celebrates “SEL Day” every, single day. You can hear it when he speaks: His sense of compassion splashes over everything.

Thompkins readily concedes that many of his students face significant challenges on a variety of different levels—not just in the classroom, but at home as well. The good news, he says, is that having QuaverSEL in his toolbox (and at his fingertips) equips him with the resources he needs to help them face and embrace these challenges.

“Lots of my kids struggle intellectually and emotionally,” he says. “Lots of them, especially the younger ones, just don’t know how to process some of the emotions they’re facing. QuaverSEL is the tool I use to help them understand themselves—and each other—better. Everybody benefits from the curriculum... but it seems like my most challenged students benefit the most. QuaverSEL is there for them.”

### **QuaverSEL Helps at Home, Too.**

“We tend to underestimate the challenges and issues many young people face every day of their lives,” Thompkins says with a little sadness in his voice.

“You’d be surprised at what some young people have to face behind the closed doors of their homes. So it’s about more than just *understanding* their difficulties; it’s about helping them *get through* their challenges, too. The stuff they learn from QuaverSEL actually helps them at home, too. So the benefits reach way beyond the classroom and my office. The songs and lessons help at home, too.”

### **Values Matter!**

QuaverSEL does more than just provide tools to help his students navigate through adversity, Thompkins says. The curriculum’s emphasis on embracing values is also vital—values like kindness, empathy, and respect.

“We have a thing in Miami Dade Public Schools called ‘Values Matter,’ where we focus on a different value each month,” he explains. “I like to match the QuaverSEL lesson with whatever value it is that we’re celebrating that month.”

“Take kindness, for example. My kids like to sing the songs about kindness because it makes them happy. But it also teaches them *ways to be kind*. Plus, I talk to them all the time about how to be



kind: If someone in front of you in line has to stop and tie their shoe, do you wait patiently and show kindness to them, or do you act all impatient? You show kindness!" he finishes. "We talk through this stuff all the time."



*The five values for QuaverSEL listed above.*

Thompkins says the youngest students often reap the greatest benefits.

"My younger students might still be learning to read, which is why being able to sing the songs and play the games makes such a big difference," he says with love. "Everybody loves to sing a good song. And everybody is touched by music, no matter if you're young or old."

Thompkins definitely has his hands full: "I have three hundred students to reach," he says, "and I want to do it in way that lets them know I understand."


So the bright flame of QuaverSEL is spreading like wildfire throughout classrooms and counseling offices across the USA, igniting healthy discussion and extinguishing the fears, the pressures, and the anxieties that many young people live with every, single day. Flames like this ignite growth, inspire deeper understanding, and encourage honest, respectful communication.

Indeed, Thompkins is practicing what he preaches and teaches. His main lessons:

- *Let's be kind to one another.*
- *Let's communicate openly and honestly.*
- *Let's be patient with one another.*
- *Let's care for one another.*

Creating a **culture of caring**—which happens to be QuaverSEL's appropriately-named tagline—is what it's all about.

Not just on SEL Day, but every day.



# New Study: QuaverSEL significantly improves student SEL skills

*Findings show conclusive evidence.*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | March 22, 2021

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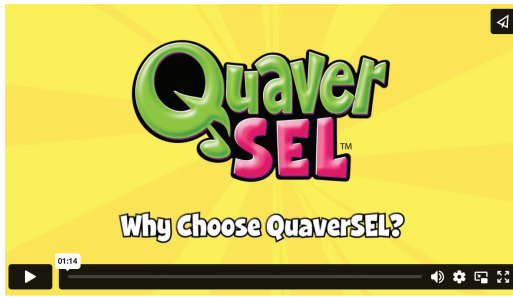
The results of the independent study by SEG Measurement are in. The evidence is clear and compelling:

Students who are taught using **QuaverSEL** resources achieve “significantly greater growth” in social and emotional skills than students who are not.

The popular curriculum, has both a mission and a mandate: To create a “culture of caring” in elementary classrooms throughout the nation and around the world.

A few highlights of the independently-conducted study:

- The study compared social and emotional development between a treatment group of students who used QuaverSEL and a matched group of students who did not. Those who did use QuaverSEL demonstrated significantly greater social and emotional development.
- The study revealed that QuaverSEL has a broad, positive, across-the-board impact; i.e., the benefits are equally effective with boys and girls, and with students of varied ethnic backgrounds.
- Ninety percent of the teachers who participated in the qualitative evaluation reported they would definitely or probably use – and recommend – QuaverSEL in the future.



When asked to respond to the results of the report, one educator was not at all surprised.

**Tyrone Thompkins**, a school counselor at **Crestview Elementary** in **Miami Gardens, Florida** says, “I see the benefits QuaverSEL brings to my own students every single day, so I can’t say I’m all that surprised to hear about these results.”

Thompkins, who was not a part of the study, says he uses QuaverSEL, “as a tool that really helps me reach my students.”

“I’m going to just lay it out,” Thompkins continues. “Many of the students I see come from challenged backgrounds – single-family homes, foster homes, many live with their grandparents, many face economic challenges – so they’re walk into my office *already* trying to process and deal with strong emotions.”

“When we play some of the SEL songs and they have a chance to play some of the interactive games, it gives them comfort – especially my younger ones who might not be able to read the lessons all that well. In these days and times, having a safe space and the right tools to express your emotions is just really important.”

To be sure, the results of this new study arrive at a critical juncture in our history, as teachers and counselors throughout the nation and the world struggle with the pandemic-related challenges of reaching and teaching their students in a way that ensures their social and emotional well-being and growth.

“These are kind of dark times,” Thompkins says. “And I’m going to do everything I can to make sure I give my students everything they need to make it through.”

Thompkins is certainly not alone, as this new study suggests.

# Music and Mental Health— An Answer in Miami

*QuaverSEL Brings Compassion, Comfort,  
and Academic Growth to the Classroom*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | February 16, 2021



*Latricia Wooten uses Quaver's "Emotion Soundboard"  
to help her students navigate—and communicate—  
their feelings during these challenging times.*

Every classroom is different. Every teacher must face and embrace different circumstances that are as unique as each one of their students.

But whether you're teaching math or music, science or civics, fine arts or phys. ed., this much is common in all classrooms: Students are struggling with emotional issues.

**Latricia Wooten**, an extraordinary 1st-grade Language Arts and Reading teacher in Miami's **Brentwood Elementary**, has found a way to help her students identify, communicate, and process their emotions. How? Through music! Wooten uses a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum created by Nashville-based QuaverEd—and she says the resulting benefits are clear.

"My students face challenges every day. But every, single time I play a QuaverSEL song—every time, I want to say that again—their faces light up," she says. "Their day gets better. I am not a music teacher, but I use this beautiful music to motivate and comfort my students. What Quaver gives us is exactly what we need, exactly when we need it."

When Wooten's own husband passed away in 2019, her daughter was a kindergartner. Wooten says she turned to Quaver to help her daughter process the loss of her dad and get through her grief.

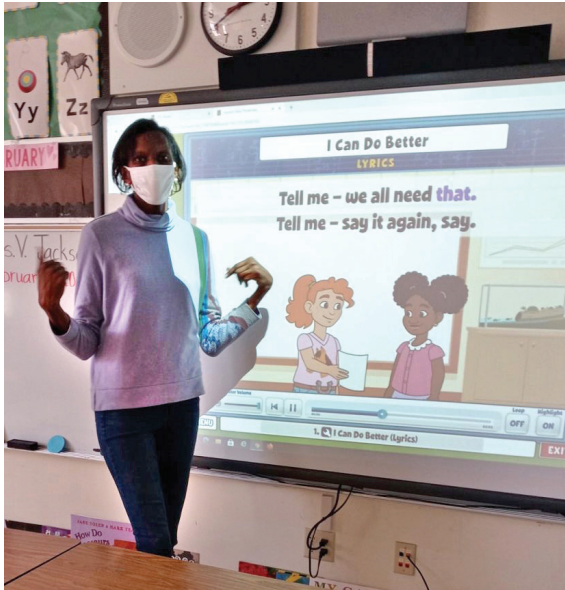
"Even during the worst days of the pandemic, when I was teaching from home," Wooten remembers, "my daughter would wait for me to finish teaching, then ask to hear the songs herself. She already knew which songs she wanted to hear. They literally spoke to her. They helped her through."

Indeed, there is quantifiable, evidence-based research that shows QuaverSEL promotes significant social and emotional growth in students. In a recent study measuring the effectiveness of QuaverSEL, results were conclusive: "Students in the treatment group receiving instruction using QuaverSEL achieved significantly greater growth in social emotional skills, than their peers in the control group not receiving QuaverSEL instruction," the findings conclude.

But there are other benefits as well. Wooten says that using QuaverSEL also helps her "step outside the role of teacher."

Because many of her students come from single-family homes or are raised by other relatives in extremely difficult situations, she often has to informally assume additional roles like psychologist and social worker.

“**The Emotion Board** always helps my students communicate how they’re feeling, without even having to use words,” she says with gratitude. “And right before we take a test or while we’re working on a big project, I’ll play “**I Can Do Better**,” and it really motivates them! It motivates all of us!”



According to Wooten, it’s more than Quaver’s snappy songwriting and lovely lyrics that create magic in her classroom. It’s the **message in the music** that makes the difference.

Wooten’s classroom is living proof that music can improve mental health, accelerate academic achievement, and promote social and emotional development—and QuaverSEL is the single thread that pulls all of these different pieces together into a single, beautiful tapestry.

The link between music and mental health is real. It is evidence-based and emotion-powered. Best of all, it is a *living* link.

And it is Quaver’s extraordinary SEL curriculum and dedicated teachers like Latricia Wooten that help keep that link alive. Quaver:





# These Lessons Live in the Heart

*Quaver Teaches Kids That It's Cool to Be Kind.*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | October 2, 2020

## From Words to Action

When Quaver developed the tagline for their SEL curriculum, “Creating a Culture of Caring,” they created far more than just a creative catch-phrase.

For teachers like **Kevin Strang**, the tagline transforms into powerful, positive *action*. In fact, the K-5 music teacher at **Dove Elementary in Grapevine, Texas**, says Quaver’s *culture of caring* is what has helped bring kindness, empathy, and compassion back into his classroom.



*Kevin Strang in his Quaverized classroom!*

QuaverSEL, for instance, has helped him deal with tough topics like bullying.

“Last year, we had huge issues with bullying,” Strang says. “We had lots of new kids, we had kids who just weren’t getting along, and we had high turn-over,” he readily admits. “And *this* year,” he adds, “with all the stress that comes along with the pandemic, the challenges are even greater.”

But Strang didn’t struggle for long. This fiercely devoted educator had already been using Quaver resources in his classroom for an entire decade—“I’ve been using Quaver since its infancy, and I’ve loved every single minute of it,” he says—but when he dove into the SEL curriculum, the lessons on bullying took his teaching to a whole new level.

The SEL lessons, he says, have helped him transform his classroom into a place of peace, where caring and creativity reign and where stress and anxiety have now taken a back seat. Today, healthy role-playing, open discussion, and friendly, inclusive songs are making the difference.

“Quaver’s SEL songs and lessons on bullying and dealing with stress have been a gift and a God-send,” Strang says with gratitude, “and they couldn’t have come at a better time. They’re a real game-changer.”

“Bullying happens everywhere, at every level, at every age,” he says. “It is not unique to my classroom.”

But what *is* unique is being able to see how the benefits of positive role-playing and honest discussion about caring and kindness can leap far, far beyond the classroom.

Strang himself saw it happen on the playground:

One afternoon, Strang says he witnessed the students exhibiting some unkind behavior on the playground, “And rather than step in to rectify the problem, I was able to stand back and see them actually implementing some of the lessons on kindness and caring that they’d learned in the classroom.”

“What started out as a catchy tune with great lyrics and wonderful music turns into positive behavior that’s displayed well beyond the classroom. I’ve seen it happen with my own eyes.”



*The QuaverSEL song “Bully, Bully Go Away” helps students to identify bullying behavior and ways that they can stop the behavior.*

## Music Makes the Difference

Strang also says the curriculum’s suggested role-playing activities and the recommendations for continued dialogue and discussion have made an extraordinary difference as well.

“Songs like ‘Manage My Stress,’ and ‘I Can Be Your Friend,’ have been life-changing,” he says. “The kids really enjoy singing them, and this helps open up new opportunities for discussion.”

He describes a difficult day last year when an autistic student was facing challenges and exhibiting disruptive behavior.

“When things weren’t going his way, there were usually problems, and on this day, he wasn’t getting his way.”

But Strang says Quaver’s SEL song, “Get My Way” came to the rescue.

“I put on that song, and something really interesting happened,” he recalls. “The students started singing it to him, and you could just see him beginning to calm down. After not too long he was singing along, smiling, and even laughing.”

**Manage My Stress**  
LYRICS

to help me feel my best,  
be my best.

Eat Healthy  
Talk It Out  
Breath Out  
Breathe In  
Exercise  
Get Rest

MENU 1. Manage My Stress (Lyrics) EXIT

The QuaverSEL song "Manage My Stress" offers students simple strategies for stress management.

**I CAN BE YOUR FRIEND**  
LYRICS

If you want someone to be your friend, I can.  
If you need someone to lend a hand, I can.

Song Hub NOTES

MENU 1. I Can Be Your Friend (Lyrics) EXIT

The QuaverSEL song "I Can Be Your Friend" describes what it means to be a good friend.



The QuaverSEL song “Get My Way” is an encouraging song about staying positive when we’re disappointed and what we can do to make the best of a situation that didn’t go our way.

### “Kindness is contagious!”

Quaver’s songs on kindness and caring, “are helping me teaching my students that it’s cool to be kind,” Strang says. “When one kid is kind, it transfers to the next, and then to the next, and this is how is actually *spreads!* Kind of like a happy contagion!”

So, yes, bullying is a tough topic. And yes, stress, anxiety, and frustration are tough, tangible emotions.

But with the right tools and resources, these are challenges that can be faced and even embraced.

Another lesson in all of this? Taglines can actually be *transformative* when they turn words into action:

“Creating a Culture of Caring” is the perfect example.



# Yay for “You-Nique!”

*Quaver helps launch Back-to-School with a Bang*

By Kristin Clark Taylor | August 31, 2020

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*K-5 music teacher Betsy Jones has everything she needs to begin the school year ... including Quaver himself!*

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## **In the Palm of her Hand.**

**Betsy Jones** holds music in the depth of her heart. She also holds Quaver in the palm of her hand. *Literally.*

Okay, figuratively, then.

Take another peek at the pic at the top of this story and you'll see it for yourself: Quaver himself is comfortably perched — and perfectly poised — on Betsy's outstretched palm.

Together, this dynamic duo will reach, teach, and yes, even comfort the students at **Annie Belle Clark Elementary** in Tifton, GA, as they begin this challenging new school year. (Tift County was the very first school district in the nation to adopt QuaverMusic.) And though her classroom feels much different this year, Betsy is equipped with exactly what she needs to make sure music is still meaningful, still accessible, and yes, still *fun* for her students. This will obviously require flexibility and adaptability on her part, but no worries there: **Teaching music is what Betsy does best.**

Prior to the pandemic, the devoted K-5 music teacher had been teaching double-capacity classes — but new social distancing rules now require her to teach smaller single classes. The lemonade-out-of-lemons educator sees single classes as a “privilege” — and she is thankful to have Quaver in her classroom (and in her hand) to help get the job done!

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## The Masked Musicians



*Jones describes how her incredible, mask-wearing musicians are using Quaver to help them on this new quest: “They’re keeping the ‘Steady Beat’ while singing and playing ‘You-Nique!’”*

Jones says the smaller class size has been a blessing in so many ways: Now that she must space the drums further apart to achieve proper social distancing, “each student has now been given the opportunity to play a drum solo, which we had not been able to do previously.”



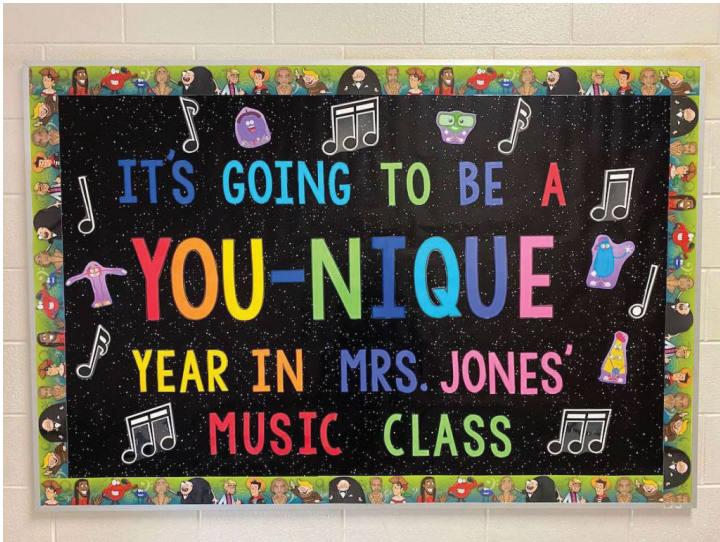
The solos and the smaller circles have allowed Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to soar in her classroom. Says Jones: “You can just see their creativity and confidence blossoming!”

Jones is joyful to have Quaver in the classroom: “My students love Quaver and they love to drum, so I am trying to give them as many drumming opportunities these first few weeks of school as possible!”

And when it comes to keeping the entire process healthy and germ-free, this can-do teacher already has it figured out: “I am able to sanitize the drum sticks easily in between each use!”

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### **A ‘You-Nique’ Year, Indeed!**



*Jones' “You-Nique” bulletin board creates a powerful platform for group discussion.*

Just about every music teacher in America knows – and loves! – the super-popular Quaver song “You-Nique.” It’s taken the world by storm.

Betsy’s back-to-school bulletin board proves that it’s her favorite song, too.

"I see my student's eyes light up every time they see the bulletin board," she says. And the theme of the board – 'It's going to be a 'You-Nique' Year in Mrs. Jones' Music Class!' – hits the nail right on the head, because this will *definitely* be our most 'You-Nique' year yet!"

Jones says she's also been using the board as a way to initiate important group discussion – which puts SEL at the forefront yet again.

"We look at the board and I ask each of my students, 'What 'You-Nique' thing happened to you while you were learning from home?'"

"Everyone has an experience to share, of course. And being able to share it with the group is a great way for them to express their emotions," she says.

Her voice holds a smile when she remembers how one of her younger students answered the question.

"She raised her hand and said, 'My cousin came over to visit and my grandma made her take a bath and then sprayed her with Lysol!'"

When Jones asked if the grandmother sprayed her, too, the student answered, "Oh yes, she sprays me all the time!"

"We all laughed. It brought us joy," Jones said. "Without that discussion – and without my 'You-Nique' bulletin board – it wouldn't have happened. Having Quaver in my classroom just makes teaching during these difficult times so much *easier*," she says, emotion filling her voice.

So for Jones, the joy of having Quaver shows up in different places and in different forms: It is moving in her classroom.

It is stirring in her heart.

And yes, it is sitting in the palm of her hand.





## Meet Kristin Clark Taylor



**Kristin Clark Taylor** is an author, editor, journalist, and communications consultant.

A founding member of *USA Today's* original creation and launch team, Taylor is currently a member of *USA Today's* Board of Contributors and a frequent essayist for the paper. Her work has also appeared in *The Washington Post*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Detroit Free Press*, *The Washington Times*, *The Denver Post*, and many other major publications.

Also a prolific author, Taylor's first four books were published by Random House/Doubleday and Penguin/Berkeley. She has edited and/or ghostwritten books for CEOs, thought leaders, visionaries, and best-selling authors across a wide range of genres.

A former White House communications strategist, Taylor served as White House Director of Media Relations under President George H.W. Bush, the first black woman in history to have held the post.

Taylor's connection to QuaverEd is strong and enduring. "My work with and for Quaver is deeply meaningful because what Quaver brings to teachers and students around the world is deeply meaningful—there is a direct correlation," she says. "Being able to give voice to these extraordinary teachers who speak with such passion about their Quaver experiences, being able to act as their humble vessel, is a profound blessing."

