

Former NFL player tells students to set high goals

## Keep it Positive

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(Staff photo by Renee Bruck/rbruck@madisoncourier.com)



***Former NFL player Steve Grant talks to students at Madison Consolidated Junior High School on Wednesday. Grant encouraged the students to make positive choices in friendships and relationships, as well as in academic pursuits.***

“You’re not born a winner, and you’re not born a loser. You’re born a chooser.”

Students at Madison Junior High School started their Wednesday morning off with a little food for thought from former NFL linebacker Steve Grant.

Grant, who played for the Indianapolis Colts from 1992-97 and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1997, shared his story with sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders as part of a program from Sports World, Inc.

Grant shared his personal story with students, including his time growing up in Florida with dreams of playing professional football. As Grant did, he said, young people need be forward thinking while keeping in mind imagination, obstacles and perseverance.

Goals, he said, give both a starting point and direction for your actions.

“Goals are dreams with a deadline,” he said. “A dream without action is nothing more than a nightmare of wasted potential.”

Grant reminded students to take advantage of their education to build a strong foundation and never be ashamed or embarrassed to raise their hand and ask for help. As a high school student, Grant shared that he'd held a 2.1 GPA. While attending West Virginia University, Grant focused himself and wasn't afraid to find the help he needed, graduating a semester early.

“If you think you can or if you think you can't, you're right,” he said, speaking about potential and choices.

“Whatever you do in this lifetime, don't be a 'coulda-been.'”

Along with education and hard work, Grant reminded students of obstacles they will face growing up, or might already be facing: sex, drugs, alcohol and relationships. To paint a picture for listeners, Grant relayed stories he knew of tragic drunk driving deaths and gang activity.

Grant, also known as “The Preacher Man,” included lessons on dating and relationships to express the importance of respect and strong character. A hypothetical story using volunteers from the audience drew plenty of laughs from their peers, lifting the tone again while delivering insight.

Finally, Grant encouraged young people to turn their positive choices into good works and support for others.

“Real success is reproducing the good in you to help others,” he said.

“A man or woman's call to greatness is usually to make another man or woman great.”