



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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GRISSOM AWARD GOES TO TAYLOR CO. SUPERINTENDENT

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Today, the Kentucky Board of Education presented the sixth annual Dr. Johnnie Grissom Award to Taylor Co. Superintendent Roger Cook.

The award recognizes those who exhibit leadership, commitment and service to promote high student achievement through instructional equity and in closing the achievement gap for all children.

Cook was nominated by Charles Higdon, assistant superintendent for the Taylor Co. Schools.

“Mr. Cook is an excellent nominee for this award because his foremost thought is ‘what is best for kids?’,” Higdon noted in the nomination letter. “He, like Dr. Grissom, has been involved on the state and national level impacting educational legislation to make education work for all students, regardless of disability, color or economic status.”

Cook is in his 38th year in education and has served as a teacher, coach, athletic director, assistant principal, and high school principal and is currently in his sixth year as superintendent in Taylor Co.

Some of the ways he makes education work for students include:

- operating Kentucky’s only Pre-K through 12th grade performance-based education campus which allows students to progress at their own rate
- earning designation as a District of Innovation, which supports individualized education for every student and has resulted in no dropouts and one of only a handful of districts with a 100 percent graduation rate; the district’s virtual school allows students to take credit recovery courses or advanced classes that can earn them college credit at a reduced tuition rate and allows them to graduate high school as mid-term college sophomores
- providing 1:1 technology access for middle and high school students; Cook partnered with local business to establish a scholarship fund for students who could not afford to rent or lease a device

“The advances he has made in education in Kentucky have impacted not only state level policy, but also national policy and have acted to close the achievement gap for all students,” Higdon said.

In 2014, Cook was named one of the 20 Educators to Watch by the National School Boards Association. He also was named a Top 30 Digital Educator by the Center for Digital Education.

(more)

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The Dr. Johnnie Grissom Award was established to honor the work and dedication of the late long-time Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) employee, who served as an associate commissioner.

Dr. Grissom was employed by KDE from 1993 to 2010. She previously served as a director at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and as a teacher of special needs and gifted students in Red Springs, North Carolina.

Past Winners of the Dr. Johnnie Grissom Award

- 2009** Dr. Johnnie Grissom
- 2010** LaRue County School District
- 2011** Kathleen Reutman Bryant, executive director of Student/Community Services for the Boone County school district
- 2012** Dr. Elaine Farris, former Kentucky Department of Education interim commissioner, and then superintendent of the Clark Co. school district
- 2013** no award given
- 2014** Dr. Dewey Hensley, Jefferson Co. Chief Academic Officer; and Franklin-Simpson High School Principal Tim Schlosser and the Student Support Team at Franklin-Simpson High School

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