



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 Cell: (502) 330-5063 E-mail: nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

TWO RECEIVE ROBINSON AWARD

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) -- At its meeting in Frankfort today, the Kentucky Board of Education presented the annual Dr. Samuel Robinson Award to co-winners -- the Fayette Co. Equity Council and Dr. Ronnie Nolan, director of the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC).

Since 2004, the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award has been conferred on an individual or groups in Kentucky for outstanding leadership, commitment and service in promoting equity and opportunity to learn at high levels for all Kentucky students.

In the Equity Council's nomination letter, Fayette Co. Superintendent Tom Shelton wrote, "Their culturally courageous leadership, selfless service and unwavering commitment to children regardless of background or circumstance has played a central role in bringing attention to inequities and catalyzing substantive change."

Kentucky Board of Education Chair Roger Marcum, in presenting the award, cited some of the Council's outstanding accomplishments:

- eliminating color-coded lunch passes that identify students who received reduced-price or free meals; modifying student attendance policies to accommodate students who miss school for Jewish and other non-Christian holidays; and ending the custom of female students serving as "little sisters" to male athletes and running errands for them
- facilitating an improvement in the learning environments for students with special needs and low-income students
- helping to decrease the disproportionate number of suspensions and disciplinary actions involving African-American students and students with disabilities
- publishing an annual Equity Scorecard "illuminating the path to a world-class education for every student"

(more)

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In a letter nominating Dr. Nolan for the Robinson award, KECSAC Associate Director Kay Parker said, “Dr. Nolan works tirelessly to ensure that state agency children, one of the most vulnerable student populations in our state, receive the educational services and opportunities they need and that these services and opportunities are equitable to those received by all students in Kentucky.”

Dr. Nolan is internationally recognized for his work on truancy and dropout prevention and under his leadership KECSAC staff organized the largest conference in Kentucky specifically designed to provide professional development for teachers of at-risk students.

In giving the award, Marcum said that Dr. Nolan devotes not only his professional skills but also his personal time and efforts to volunteer and advocate for the nearly 13,000 at-risk children in the care and/or custody of the state each year.

Dr. Samuel Robinson, for whom the award is named, is a former educator, served on the Kentucky Board of Education from 1991 until 2004, is known for being a racial and social justice advocate and for promoting the difference education can make in the lives of all students.

Past Recipients of the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award

- 2004** (joint recipients) Sen. Gerald A. Neal of Louisville and the One Community, One Voice Achievement and Closing the Gap Community Committee of Fayette County
- 2005** Robert Smotherman, superintendent of the Bardstown Independent school district
- 2006** (joint recipients) Marlene Helm, Ed.D., former interim dean of the Eastern Kentucky University College of Education and Rep. Frank Rasche of Paducah
- 2007** Kathy Reed, member of the Bardstown Independent School Board
- 2008** Laura McGrail, lead school psychologist for the Henderson County school district
- 2009** (joint recipients) Arriba Niños (Upward Children) program in Shelbyville and the First Baptist Church Bracktown in Fayette County
- 2010** Helen Mountjoy, former secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
- 2011** Robert Sexton, former executive director of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence (posthumous)
- 2012** (joint recipients) Gregory Ross, Ed.D., former principal of McNabb Elementary, Paducah Independent school district and Kern Alexander, Ed.D., former president of Murray State University and Western Kentucky University

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