



## NEWS RELEASE

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## Boone County Schools' Jerry Gels Named Administrator of the Year

**Frankfort, KY** -- Jerry Gels, Director of Innovative Programs for Boone County Schools, was selected as the district-level Administrator of the Year by the Kentucky Association of School Administrators. He was presented the award at KASA's Annual Leadership Institute in Louisville, Kentucky on July 26, 2017.

"Jerry Gels is a fine example of what can be accomplished if your heart is really connected to your work," Boone County Superintendent Randy Poe said. "His career ambition is to make a difference in the students others gave up on. He takes great pride in proving to students that they can succeed in the right atmosphere."

Gels is credited with the idea to form the Boone County Early College and Boone County Design School. He was instrumental in forming partnerships with three postsecondary institutions (Northern Kentucky University, Thomas More College and Gateway Community and Technical College) allowing Boone County students to attend college for a half day with the potential of earning 24 college credits hours per year.

Gels led the overhaul of the district's alternative education program. Students work through alternative means to earn credits and focus on project-based learning and service learning initiatives; creating real products that build pride, self-worth and renewed engagement in school.

"These programs have literally saved the lives of students," Boone County Schools Deputy Superintendent Karen Cheser said. "More than 250 students who had dropped out have been able to graduate through the programs Jerry established. His development of the Alternative Center for Education and Virtual School have become national role models and have impacted the education of countless students beyond Boone County Schools."

Gels created the Home Builders program for students to help students enter the construction industry. He authored the innovation application that was used as the foundation to create the Ignite Institute, a new school opening in 2019. His work was instrumental in landing a \$6.7 million Work Ready Skills Initiative grant to renovate a building given to the district by Toyota.

"Jerry is known for enjoying the challenge of tackling student problems that others think are impossibilities," Cheser added.

KASA is the largest school administrator group in Kentucky, representing more than 3,000 education leaders from across the Commonwealth. Formed in 1969, KASA connects education leaders to policymakers, legislators and other interest groups, and provides numerous benefits and services to Kentucky's school administrators.

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