

Crystal Star Awards of Excellence Individual Award Winner

As Director of Alternative Education for the Arkansas Department of Education, Lori Lamb is described by peers as a visionary with a diverse range of leadership skills. Mrs. Lamb served as past regional director, vice president, and president of the National Alternative Education Association as she became the voice for alternative education legislatively, both in Arkansas and nationally. Her passion for strengthening alternative education is evident in her work to develop research-based guidelines and indicators to assist programs in designing, implementing, and evaluating alternative education programs.

An educator for 34 years, Mrs. Lamb currently serves 22 school districts as an educational partner to all Arkansas school superintendents, developing and presenting organizational structures that allow schools to cultivate learning environments that provide authentic teaching and learning. Her philosophy that professional development must directly impact professional practices and improve student achievement is reflected in all she does. As a former foster child and, in partnership with her husband, as a foster parent for 25 young people throughout her career, her passion for developing positive role models for all at-risk children permeates her professional and her personal life.

Because she constantly challenges her colleagues to exceed expectations and to keep students at the heart of education through her example and by her actions, Lori Lamb is a recipient of the National Dropout Prevention Network's 2017 Crystal Star Awards of Excellence in Dropout Recovery, Intervention, and Prevention Individual Award.

Tuesday, February 20, 2018 12:00 noon

Governor and Mrs. Richard W. Riley Award for Excellence in Dropout Prevention

Kerry Leslie Abel, Coordinator of Dropout Prevention and Community Partnerships for Richland County (SC) School District One, is the 2018 recipient of the National Dropout Prevention Center's Governor and Mrs. Richard W. Riley Award for Excellence in Dropout Prevention which identifies and brings recognition to an outstanding individual who has made significant contributions to the advancement of dropout prevention initiatives in the state of South Carolina. He is responsible for coordinating district efforts related to dropout prevention, intervention, and special programs. He is also the cofounder and Coordinator of the Richland One Evening High School, a high school designed to serve students aged 16-20 interested in obtaining a high school diploma but, due to life circumstances, are unable to attend school during the day.

Mr. Abel is the founding director of the Office of Afterschool Programs for Richland County School District One and served as director for six years. Under his leadership the district received the 2004 Afterschool Champion Award from the National Afterschool Alliance. His past experience includes Project Director for Richland One's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant and Director of the Columbia Urban League's "Drugs Destroy Dreams" Youth Drug Prevention Program.

Mr. Abel is active in his alumni, church, and professional communities, including board membership for the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance and the Community Health Assistance Team. He is a member of the National Dropout Prevention Network and the South Carolina Alliance of Black School Educators, receiving that organization's 2014 President's Award.

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