

### ***Jenkins Students Inducted Into ARI Student Senate***

Thirty-four students from across Eastern Kentucky, including two from the Jenkins Independent School District, were inducted on September 19, 2014 into the first-ever Appalachian Renaissance Initiative Student Senate.

The Student Senate is part of the \$29 million Race to the Top Grant received by the Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) and is comprised of students from seventeen school districts in the region. Each district selected one junior class and one student from the senior class to send to the Senate. Ted Allen was elected as the junior representative and Michaela Hardin was elected as the senior representative. Jenkins Independent High School Social Studies teacher, John Oliva, has been named Student Senate Majority Leader.

The job of the Student Senate Members will be to develop means within their districts of obtaining the students' opinions and ideas for improving education and then formulate a "Plan" for changing their districts for the better.

The students were formally sworn into office in the courtroom of Family Judge, Larry Thompson, by ARI Student Agency Lead, Kelli Thompson. Dr. Jeff Hawkins, director of KVEC, was also in attendance.

Former Governor Paul Patton was the featured speaker at the event. Patton urged the students to think radically about such things as year-round school, longer school days, daily physical activity built into the curriculum, and moving students along by progress rather than grade. "I don't think anything is off the shelf," Patton said. He charged the students not to fear failure, to always challenge themselves, and to always be willing to compromise and adapt. He also stressed that they "have a pretty awesome responsibility," and that they could "fundamentally change education and be a model for the nation".

The former governor said, "I charge you on behalf of your school district and on behalf of the United States of America".

Kelli Thompson, Jenkins Independent School District Liaison for the ARI grant, said the students would have a face-to-face meeting on October 24 at the East Kentucky Exposition Center to discuss their "Plan" for their district. In the future, however, most meetings will be held via Lync or other networking to avoid interference with classes and other student activities.