

Luke Cottrell was honored recently by the Harlan County Board of Education and Superintendent Brent Roark for his participation in the Kentucky Governor's School for Entrepreneurs.

The three-week residential entrepreneurial experience was held at Northern Kentucky University. The program provides teens in Kentucky an opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship and to put their ideas into action.

"We learned the business model canvas. That helped us to start a business, run a business, figure out our revenue streams, our value proposition. That is what they gave us to start with," said Cottrell.

The three-week residential immersion program brings high school students from across the state together and equips them with the tools needed to unleash their innate entrepreneurial spirits for the betterment of Kentucky.

During the program, teams of students develop a business model, design a prototype and pitch their startups to a panel of judges. GSE teaches the opportunities, benefits and pitfalls of taking a business concept from the idea phase to pitching it to potential investors.

Cottrell said his competition team chose tiny home shelters for the homeless. He said the idea was to put tiny homes into communities for the homeless instead of homeless shelters.

While all participants gain vital entrepreneurial skills through the program to use as they enter the workplace or continue into higher education, more than 16 new businesses have been launched by GSE alumni since it started.

Others have filed for multiple patents and developed new ideas and relationships that sow the seeds for more business formation.

Cottrell said the competition "Made me really nervous. It was really fun. I enjoyed it."

