

Programs and Partnerships
Niswonger Foundation Board Update
Thursday, February 27, 2020

Partnership Updates

Literacy Initiative Focused on Effectiveness (LIFE)

- Completing the final year of the Hancock County project.
- Planning a significant final event with support from the Rural School and Community Trust and the Walmart Foundation.
- Planning the 2020 KinderCamp for July. This will be supported by a grant from the Rural School and Community Trust and the Walmart Foundation.
- Met with Ballad Health representatives to discuss a proposed grant to extend the KinderCamps to all Tennessee school districts in the Ballad Health footprint.

Rural LIFE (2018 EIR grant)

After the Spring 2020 administration of the TN Ready achievement tests, the formal experimental stage of the project will be completed. This milestone means we can serve all the schools in the Rural LIFE project (both the treatment schools and control schools). On February 12 or 13, we will meet with principals and lead teachers from the first group of schools to explain this impact on the project schools and to discuss our continuing (but reduced) support for two additional years. Teachers in the first group of schools will continue to be eligible for professional development opportunities; these schools will also have targeted support involving coaching and/or financial resources.

The second group of schools will be introduced to their increased level of support at an initial meeting of principals on March 10. They will meet their assigned RL coach, learn about the literacy & personalized learning goals of the project, and be introduced to the details of our cooperative efforts and role expectations.

Declining enrollment, a common theme in rural schools across the nation, has contributed to the gradual reduction of the number of project schools. Rural LIFE started with 72 schools; next fall that number will be 66 schools. Because of district-level consolidations and closings, the 36 control schools now number just 31. By the end of our five-year project, the number of schools could feasibly drop to just over 60 schools.

Instructional Coaching project (2019 EIR grant)

The planning portion of this five-year project is beginning in earnest. The Foundation will likely hire the first project employee in February; the second (and final) employee will be hired by May. At the NTC Annual Symposium on February 10, we will meet key staff from the lead partner (NTC) and the other three regional partners face-to-face for the first time. Planning will continue through the spring, with the first intensive activities scheduled regionally in the summer of 2020. We anticipate working with 60 area schools.

Niswonger Online

- Spring Term 2020 opened on January 21.
- 781 students are enrolled
- Enrollment closes on January 31.
- There are 43 sections of 34 different courses, with 33 teachers hired
- Top enrollments:
 - Foreign Languages
 - Social Studies (Personal Finance and Economics)
 - Advanced Placement
- New course offering for Spring Term 2020 - Preparing for ACT- ½ credit ACT Prep course
- NiswongerOnline.com is continuously being updated to reflect changes in the schools we work with, our course catalog and program partnerships.

NiswongerCARE Online Affiliates

- Campbell County Schools joined as an affiliate for Spring 2020. We are now accepting students from Campbell County High School and Jellico High School. Campbell County will be our last school system to receive Care Foundation grant funds.
- This school year we have added five Affiliate Members.
- Additional systems with whom we are currently in discussion: Sevier, Union, Meigs, Obion and Cannon.

8th Grade Enrichment

- Gina is actively working with local and affiliate middle schools to discuss 8th-grade enrichment opportunities.
- This year, 57 8th graders earned credit with Niswonger Online.

Niswonger Online Growth for Fiscal Year 2018-19

- Total Enrollment Growth - 1343 (FY 2018) to 1811 (FY 2019) - 34.8%
- Total Enrollment Growth from Affiliates 447 (FY 2018) to 525 (FY 2019) - 17.4%
- Largest growth areas within a subject area:
 - Foreign Languages- 32% growth in enrollment
 - Advanced Placement- 253% growth in enrollment
- Total systems served increased from 22 to 26, 18% growth
- Secondary Schools served increased from 43 schools to 50, 16% growth
- Niswonger Online serves 45 high schools, 3 middle schools, and 2 K-12 schools. We have 10 Affiliates.

ETSU Dual Enrollment Partnership

The very promising dual enrollment program through ETSU has suffered greatly from a change in leadership. Changes in personnel and methods of enrollment have made it difficult/nearly impossible for schools to assist students. Only 7 students enrolled last term. We will likely turn our attention to working with Walters State and Northeast State.

NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising

- Advisors' work has focused primarily on assisting the 6,129 seniors in the service schools to submit the FAFSA application as required for financial aid awards and to maintain TN Promise eligibility. With the February 1 deadline approaching, current data show that **4,583 (75 %)** seniors within the 30 high schools have completed this milestone in the college going process. **This significantly exceeds the state's current rate of 64%.**
- FAFSA Frenzy events were also held multiple times in each of the 30 high schools. These events provided families with the opportunity to receive individualized assistance while working on the FAFSA application.
- In addition to assisting students in applying for federal and state student aid, Advisors assisted **1,364** seniors in applying for scholarships and other financial aid.
- Staffing changes include the resignation of two Advisors effective this past December. Hunter Shipley was accepted into Milligan College's Physician's Assistant program, and Giuiliana Collett was accepted into Carson Newman University's Master of Arts in Teaching program.
- During the interim of hiring and training two new Advisors, the program directors and lead advisors filled in to provide uninterrupted services to students in each of these schools.
- Two new Advisors have been hired and will report to their assigned schools in February after receiving training to prepare them to assist students in the myriad of college going tasks. (Bios attached)
- Representatives from several regional post-secondary institutes including East Tennessee State University, Tusculum University, and Walters State Community College met with Advisors during monthly staff meetings to collaborate on how they can better assist future students in making the transition to postsecondary education.
- In addition to the regularly held monthly staff meetings, the program director, assistant directors, and all advisors received training as Reconnect Ambassadors. This training included information and details about the referral process to assist adults who are interested in taking advantage of the programs designed for them to obtain a postsecondary credential. As Ambassadors, Staff are better equipped to guide the many parents who have requested information about pursuing their own degree.
- Program Director, Denise Arnold, participated in the roundtable meeting sponsored by SCORE on December 17th. The effort focused on "*Advising Students to Opportunity*" and provided the chance to collaborate with other K-12 Educators, Higher Education Professionals, and Advising Organizations that support student success.

CareerConnect

- Employed Gabby Billiot to be Program Coordinator beginning January 1. Gabby previously served as an intern with the Niswonger Foundation and was already experienced with the CareerConnect program. She will be assisting with CareerConnect and the Work Ethic Diploma expansion.
- Planning is underway for the two summer camps – sophomore and junior.
- School meetings are underway for the spring term.
- Recruiting and selection meetings for Class of 2023 are set with each high school during the month of February.
- Orientations for new class is being planned for April.
- **The Graduation Celebration for the Class of 2020 will be held on Thursday, April 16, 6:00 p.m. at the General Morgan Inn. Board Members are strongly encouraged to attend.**

WE Track and Work Ethic Diploma

- In the past six months, we have expanded from 40 to 71 high schools participating in WE Track.
- The number of students with access to WE Track has expanded from 33,380 to 51,335.
- Upgrades to the web-based system are in process.
- Ongoing discussions to support Virginia expansion of WED

Grant Activity

- Scheduled to receive the RFP on the 2020 EIR grants in February. We have begun preliminary discussions.
- In discussion with Ballad Health regarding a literacy partnership. In preliminary design of expansion of KinderCamps to all Tennessee school districts in the Ballad footprint.
- Submitted a \$100,000 grant request to the Office of the Governor for continuation of the WE Track effort.
- Submitted a \$500,000 grant request to the Office of the Governor to support NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising.

Nancy's Boards, Committees and Activities

- November 19-22 visited the Chicago Public School System as a guest of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- The Niswonger Foundation hosted Rep. Mark White, House Education Committee Chair, for a visit to Northeast Tennessee November 25-26.
- Nancy was appointed to the Commissioner Schwinn's Advisory Council and attended sessions on both December 2 and January 6 in Nashville.
- The Niswonger Foundation hosted a retreat for our Superintendents/Directors in Asheville, NC on December 8-9.

- Attended the annual meeting of the Governor's Early Literacy Foundation on January 7 in Nashville. Nancy serves on this Board.
- Attended a meeting of the SCORE Advisory Council on January 16 in Nashville. Nancy was recently appointed to this new Council.
- In Nashville for the THEC quarterly meeting on January 31.
- Attended the Annual meeting and Board of Directors meeting for TICUA on February 17-18 in Nashville.
- Served as team leader for A Day on the Hill in support of TQEE (Tennesseans for Quality Early Education) on February 19 in Nashville.

Publicity and Publications

- News clippings and press releases are available for review.
- Scholar Directory was mailed in December.
- Annual Report has been published and distributed.



Hi, my name is Koda Goodwin. I am a native of Kingsport and graduated from Sullivan Central High School in 2016. I attended Northeast State Community College and graduated with two Associate Degrees in 2018. I transferred to ETSU to study General Psychology with a minor in Sociology. I completed my Bachelor's degree in December of 2019. I am also a Tennessee Promise Mentor for Sullivan County Schools. I will be serving North Greene, South Greene, and Greenville High School.



Hello! My name is Rachael Suggs and I am originally from Parrottsville, TN. I graduated from Coker County High School in 2015 and studied vocal music education at Carson-Newman University as a first-generation college student. I graduated from CNU last May and have been serving as the interim choral director at Cherokee High School since October, and I'm hoping to start working on my Master of Music degree within the next year or two. In my free time I enjoy reading, playing video games, spending time with my husband and friends, and adoring my cat, Zelda. I am thankful for the opportunity to join the NiswongerCARE team and I'm excited to be working with high school students in a new

role! I will be serving at Coker County High School, Cosby High School, and Cherokee High School.