

**Programs and Partnerships**  
**Niswonger Foundation Board Update**  
**Wednesday, May 9, 2018**

**Literacy Initiative Focused on Effectiveness (LIFE)**

*Greene County Schools (Year 2 of 3)*

- Eleven LIFE teachers and/or assistants will be attending the ETSU Early Childhood Conference in July.
- Early Learning Groups (ELG) have proven positive gains in Fall to Winter scores during the 2017-2018 school year. Schools are completing the final test for this school year. Once these tests are completed progress can be reported as to the actual gains from the beginning to the end of the year.
- In December, the seven LIFE school assistants attended the Title I Conference in Gatlinburg. They had positive feedback about the sessions and appreciated the opportunity to attend.
- A session will be held during the Niswonger School Success Symposium, in June, which will include the Literacy Specialist and Interventionists from each pilot school. They will share implementations, challenges, successes, and overall information about the LIFE program.

*Hancock County Schools (Year 1 of 3)*

- Early Learning Groups (ELG) have proven to be an extremely successful initiative for small group instruction.
- Based on a universal screener, gains are reflected from beginning to mid-year. End of year benchmarks will be reviewed in the near future.
- Comments from a teacher: “The amount of resources that HCES has, compared to last year, is remarkable. The technology and resources provided by the grant have been instrumental in aiding in the delivery of my literacy instruction this year, providing engaging materials for my students to use on a daily basis. These range from hands-on manipulatives used for word building, to the use of technology in the form of listening centers to enhance students listening ability and fluency. The computers fully engage students in a variety of literacy focused activities. These resources have been invaluable to my students and me.”
- Kindergarten, first and second grades have authored a book “Hancock County A-Z.” Students researched, discussed, wrote and illustrated a cultural history of Hancock County as part of their Place Based Learning efforts.
- The Niswonger Foundation will host a **KinderCamp** in Hancock County this summer. This will be a special program to focus on basic skills needed for students entering kindergarten. Students will be selected based on specific criteria. This is a “jump start” program for kindergarten.

## **Rural LIFE (EIR Grant)**

- Recruitment and selection of comparison and treatment schools is complete. Seventy-two schools are in the project, with four wait listed.
- The random selection process was shown live, in a webinar format.
- Treatment schools will submit individual school plans within the next few weeks. These plans will guide the work of the coaches and the resources provided to the schools.
- The other 36 schools will serve as comparison schools for two years. Following, they will receive full project support for the final two years of the project.
- Potential new personnel are being interviewed. Nine instructional coaches will be hired in the near future, with training being held June 5-7. There were nearly 30 applicants for these nine positions.

## **Niswonger Online and NiswongerCARE Online**

- Niswonger Online spring semester will end on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Schools can access final grades on May 14.
- The most utilized courses this semester were Foreign Languages, Geometry, Personal Finance, and Advanced Placement courses.
- Summer 2018 registration is open. There are approximately 100 students enrolled. Summer semester is scheduled from June 1- July 27.
- This summer, we will be working with Canvas, Florida Virtual, and a team of online teachers to migrate courses into a new Learning Management System (LMS) called “Canvas.” By mid-July teachers can access their course(s) and begin training on the new system. Beginning Aug 2018, Niswonger Online students will be working from the Canvas platform.
- Gina is working on the branding for the new LMS.
- We are creating two online certification courses created for our program. Dr. Pauley from Greeneville High School will be developing a Microsoft Certification course and HTML5 App Certification course. These two new certification courses, along with our online AP offerings, will help our schools as they work to offer more Early Post-Secondary Opportunities (EPSO) opportunities to their students.
- NiswongerCARE Expansion
  - This semester we welcomed a new school system to NiswongerCARE Affiliation- Grainger County Schools. Their students utilized our Physics and Latin courses.
  - McMinn County Schools is scheduled to become an Affiliate beginning Fall 2018.
  - We are planning a partnership with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to provide Niswonger Online to some of Tennessee’s 19 most disadvantaged counties.

- Sevier County School officials have expressed initial interest in Niswonger Online. That discussion is continuing.

### **NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising**

*Advisor Activity Highlights:*

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Students served (Feb.-April)</b>	<b>2017-2018 YTD</b>
Higher Education Financial Aid Verification	429	N/A
Individual Student Meetings	1801	7,491
Private and Institutional Scholarship Applications	289	511
Group Meetings/ Presentations	70 events, 2,258 students	245 events, 7,625 students

- Monthly staff meetings were held in February, March, and April to provide information, professional and personal development, and collaborative work sessions designed to share best practices.
- “*Summer Melt*” programming kicked off on March 16, with a goal of serving 600+ students during the transition from high school graduation to college matriculation.
- *Junior Planning Nights* have been held in each high school for rising seniors and their parents to help them prepare for the college-going tasks to be completed in their final year of high school.
- *College Signing Day* events are being planned in each high school to celebrate seniors who have committed to a postsecondary institution or to the military.
- Leadership team and Advisors assisted with planning, organizing, and hosting of “*Summit on Children.*”
- Summer training plans are in progress for current and new Advisors to receive additional professional learning and to share best practices, as well as assisting Law Loving in CareerConnect summer camps.
- The Leadership Team is assisting with *School Success Symposium* and *Counselor Convening* preparations.

## CareerConnect

- All school meetings for the 2017-18 academic year are complete.
- The newest cohort, the Class of 2021, has been selected.
- Orientation events have been held at each school for parents and students
- Summer Experience planning is in full swing.
  - 11th grade camp - June 4-8 & 11-15.
  - 10th grade camp - July 9-13 & 16-20
- Meeting dates for 2018-19 10th and 11th graders are set.
- Feedback meeting with School Liaisons set for May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## WE Track

- Upgrades to the software have been successfully implemented.
- Schools are actively tracking points and awarding Work Ethic Diplomas (WED).
- We have nearly 2000 students actively pursuing the WED. Currently, 167 students have earned this distinction. That number is anticipated to rise sharply in the coming weeks.

## Professional Development Activities

- *Summit on Children: The Story and Science of Poverty*, was hosted by the Niswonger Foundation, Eastman, Governor's Books from Birth and Leadership Tennessee. The event was held on Wednesday, April 11. 8:45 a.m. - noon, at the Niswonger Performing Arts Center. The speakers included Jeanette Walls, author of *Glass Castles*; and Dr. Tammy Pawloski, Director of the Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty, Francis Marion University. Sincere thanks to Board members David Golden and Scott Niswonger for their extraordinary job as speakers at the event. Special thanks to Board member Nikki Niswonger for being in attendance and hosting Tennessee's First Lady, Crissy Haslam. Positive comments about the impact of this Summit continue to be received. There were approximately 700 in attendance.
- *2018 Niswonger School Success Symposium* is set for Tuesday, June 19. A "save the date" and a "call for presenters" have been sent to all educators in the region. Registration opened on April 1. Nearly 600 individuals are already registered to attend. The two keynote speakers are Liz Murray, author of *Breaking Dawn: Homeless to Harvard*; and Cicely Woodard, Tennessee Teacher of the Year for 2018. The Symposium will focus on personalizing learning to meet the needs of all children, particularly the economically disadvantaged. An introduction to the Niswonger Foundation's new EIR grant will be a major emphasis of the day. East Tennessee State University will co-sponsor this year's event.
- *Niswonger School Leader Program (NSLP)* completed the 2017-18 class on April 6. Eighteen new principals participated in this program focused on building their skills for effective school leadership. Topics addressed were school culture,

decision-making, time management, delegation, conducting meetings, formative assessment, summative evaluation, using data, recruiting staff, mentoring, and vision and leadership. TASL credit will be provided.

- *Leadership in Blended and Digital Learning Principal Training (LBDL)*  
The second cohort of LBDL had 34 participants- Principals, Assistant Principals, and 2 teacher leaders. The final face-to-face meeting and celebration for this cohort was on April 5<sup>th</sup> at Greeneville PDC. TASL credit will be provided.

### **Grant Activity**

- A grant proposal to John Deere Corporation has resulted in a \$5000 grant in support of the CareerConnect program.
- A grant proposal, with a request for \$350,000, has been submitted to the Care Foundation of America in support of the Niswonger CARE College and Career Advising Program. Nancy will present the proposal to their Board in June.
- We are currently reviewing the RFP for a U.S. Department of Education SEED grant. This would be in partnership with Learning Forward, and would support our school leadership development efforts.
- We are currently reviewing an RFP from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for a grant to support College and Career Advising.

### **Upcoming National and International Presentations**

- U.S. Department of Education, Annual Project Directors Meeting, Washington, DC, June 11-12. Richard will present in a session focusing on sustaining project work and successes.
- International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education (ISFIRE); The Niswonger Foundation’s work will be featured as an example of successes (i3 grant) which led to new promising work (Rural LIFE).

### **Recent Donations (February 1 – April 30)**

John Tweed	\$ 30,000.00
Eastman	\$ 10,000.00
Plus Mark	\$ 5,000.00
Amsee Ltd.	\$ 1,000.00
James F. Durham	\$ 2,000.00
Landair Transport	\$ 15,000.00
Fred “Pal” Barger	\$100,000.00
John Deere	\$ 5,000.00
Bill Purmort, Central Mutual Insurance	\$ 15,000.00
Delta Dental	\$ 50,000.00
Harold and Nancy Dishner	\$ 10,000.00

## **Boards, Committees and Activities**

- Nancy attended the Annual Meeting of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA) on February 19-21, in Nashville.
- Nancy attended a meeting of the Board of the Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE) on February 27, in Nashville.
- The Niswonger Foundation hosted a meeting of Complete Tennessee at the General Morgan Inn, on March 1.
- Scott and Nancy attended a meeting of the Rural Health and Department of Agriculture, in Nashville, on March 12. They were accompanied with Louis Trivette and Mary Short from the area USDA, and Dr. Rob Pack from the ETSU College of Public Health.
- Nancy gave a presentation to the current Leadership Tennessee class on March 19, in Kingsport.
- Nancy attended a meeting of the Gates Foundation's Tennessee Learning Circle on April 24, in Nashville.
- Nancy attended a SCORE Steering Committee meeting, in Nashville, on April 25.
- Nancy attended a Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Workshop on May 2, in Nashville.