**Programs and Partnerships**

**Niswonger Foundation Board Update**

**Thursday, August 9, 2018**

**Partnership Updates**

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

* The second year of the Walmart Foundation and Annenburg funds have been received in the amount of $150,000 (total of $500,000 over three years).  The Hancock County LIFE and Place Based Learning project is set to begin the second of three years.
* KinderCamp was held July 16 – 27 for Hancock County Elementary School. Enrollment in this program was based on assessments completed during Kindergarten registration.  Funding for this program was provided through the Walmart Foundation. These funds provided the teacher, teaching assistant, academic supplies, parent take-home packets, breakfast and lunch. Bus transportation was provided by Hancock County Schools.  Sara Holt, Niswonger Foundation literacy specialist stated that the best outcomes of the Camp were “students establishing routines, structured schedules, establishing academic baseline for students, and seeing no children crying after the first two days of the program.”
* Hancock County Elementary principal, Dr. Angela Kinsler, has transferred to a central office position. Her replacement will be Brian Green, former principal at Hancock High/Middle School.  We will have some transitions but do not expect a delay in the LIFE program.
* Greene County Schools LIFE program will begin the third of three years. While Ottway and Glenwood Elementary Schools are showing excellent progress in their participation in this program, we have had concerns regarding Chuckey Elementary deviating from the established model. After meeting with district personnel and the principal of Chuckey Elementary, the decision was made to move forward with only two schools for the final year of this program.
* Test results have been sent to the Foundation for review by Greene County Schools, Hancock County Schools, and by the State of Tennessee.  These will be closely reviewed and the analysis will be presented to the Board at a later date.

**Rural LIFE (EIR)**

* Fully staffed with 9 Teacher Coaches who have been assigned the schools for which they will be responsible. (4 schools, in their home district or close geographically)
* Training was completed to prepare the teacher coaches for the first year of the grant.
* Personalized plans, tailored to each of the 36 treatment schools, have been developed and are ready for implementation.  The plans are based on self-identified needs and build on what the schools will do with the grant resources*.*
* Budgets are being considered and approved for the treatment schools, based on each school's proposed plan. The initial Rural LIFE project funding for each school will range from $8000 to $17,000.
* Dr. Kitzmiller, Dr. Bales and Mr. Neas attended the US DOE Project Director's meeting in Washington D.C., June 10-13.

**Niswonger Online**

* Niswonger Online summer semester closed July 27. Schools could access grades on Monday, July 30. There were 355 credits earned from students across the State.
* The most utilized courses this summer were Economics, Personal Finance, Wellness, and Physical Education. These are highly enrolled courses in the summer as students are trying to ‘get ahead’ by completing these online.
* Fall 2018 is open for enrollment, most schools will begin to enroll when students return August 6.
* We will, again, be working with Cocke County as their main source of foreign language instruction.
* We will, again, work with all Jefferson County students who want to take Latin I and Latin II.
* Transition to new LMS, Canvas, has gone smoothly. Courses are now in Canvas and ready for the fall 2018 open date. Tests are still being run to make sure everything syncs correctly to our student information system.
* Online teachers have been training throughout the summer on Canvas. Gina will hold a meeting at the end of August to work with teachers one-on-one and answer any further questions they may have.
* The new certification courses, Microsoft and HTML5, are ready and in Canvas. Gina is now working with the teacher, Dr. David Pauley from Greeneville High School, to decide how and where the certification tests should be administered. Schools have been notified of new option.
* New Gear-Up schools have contacted Gina about NiswongerOnline. Three have been offered CARE money, the remaining will not be offered CARE funds, however, Gear-Up funds will cover all of their costs for NiswongerOnline. Gina will continue to reach out to all Gear-Up schools and help them understand how online courses can benefit their students.
* We are currently in conversation with East Tennessee State University to create partnership that offers online dual-enrollment courses to students throughout the State.
* In September, Gina will begin working with Elizabethton City Schools and the Bartleby Program. She will be training teachers regarding how to create engaging online courses that their students can access. We are hopeful that these courses become new offerings for NiswongerOnline as many will be excellent options for students across the State.

**Niswonger*CARE* Online**

* Niswonger*CARE* Expansion
  + Gina is currently working on a spreadsheet/ presentation for the CARE Foundation that she will share this fall. It will detail all the credits earned and how their generosity is helping students across the State.
  + This semester we will welcome a new system, McMinn County schools. Gina reached out to their administration in the spring and has been working with their Chief Technology Officer. They have completed a Memorandum of Understanding. Students will enroll this fall, 2018.
  + Troy Grant from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is helping to share about Niswonger Online to all Gear-Up counties.
  + The final counties that have been offered CARE funds:
    - Fayette Co (New Gear-Up School, has shown great interest)
    - Overton Co (New Gear-Up School, has shown great interest)
    - Lincoln Co (New Gear-Up School, has shown great interest)
    - Sevier Co (showed interest in the past, trying to reconnect)

**Niswonger*CARE* College and Career Advising**

* Three interns from our partnering colleges/universities graduated in May 2018 with their M.A. in Counseling. Two of the three were hired as school counselors at Morristown Hamblen West High School and South Central Elementary School. The other was hired as an Outpatient Therapist by Frontier Health.
* Four Advisors were hired on July 2, 2018 and will serve the following high schools: Elizabethton High School, Tennessee High School, Sullivan North High School, Hancock County High School, Clinch School, Morristown Hamblen West High School, Sullivan Central High School, Sullivan East High School, University School, South Greene High School, Greene Technology Center, and Greeneville High School.
* *Big-Bright-Future*, the summer melt initiative, kicked off in June. Virtual advising is being provided to over 500 recent high school graduates with the goal of mitigating the phenomena of “summer melt.” Advisors are utilizing text messaging and other virtual platforms to assist first generation and low-income students who need extra support to ensure college matriculation in the fall.
* Delivery of Service agreements are scheduled to be completed with each high school beginning in August. Updates to the agreement include more explicit language regarding data sharing and the required hosting of the four *Path to College* events.
* Daily Log protocols and format have been updated to allow for collection of additional data fields and greater accountability for tracking all seniors’ progress toward milestones.
* Returning Advisors began summer training in May focusing on professional development to enhance skills. In addition to several on-site trainings, they joined other efforts of the Niswonger Foundation to focus on poverty, by participating in an online book study of *“Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis.”*
* New Advisors who joined the staff in July have been participating in intensive training in preparation for assisting students and helping to develop the college going culture within their schools. The Advisors heard from many experts in the field, including state department representatives, practicing school counselors, and college admissions professionals. Returning Advisors shared many of the best practices and lessons learned from their time in the field and are serving as mentors and role models for the new Advisors.
* Data for 2017-18 school year is being collected and analyzed as it becomes available from the Tennessee State Department of Education and other sources. Highlights of current available data are as follows:
* FAFSA completion data from the U.S. Department of Education reflects that 86% of the students in our service area submitted the FAFSA application, equating to 5,469 seniors and approximately $2.6 million dollars in federal financial aid.
* Advisors assisted 3,604 seniors in applying for additional scholarship and other financial aid.
* Advisors held individual planning meetings with over 7,800 students.
* Advisors assisted over 2,700 seniors in completing the TN Promise application.
* Advisors helped 4,061 students to submit college applications compared to 2,200 in 2016-17.
* Advisors organized 141 Path to College events including College Application Week, FAFSA Frenzy, College Planning Night, and College Signing Day compared to 105 in 2016-17.

**CareerConnect**

* Summer Experience Camps are successfully completed. Through two, two-week camps, students have had the opportunity to visit nine industries and four post-secondary sites. At the June camp, all rising seniors took the ACT WorkKeys test with 21 passing the test with at least a Bronze Level National Career Readiness Certificate.
* Two students completed internships with industry partners - Jarden Zinc (information technology) and Huf (engineering).
* Fall meetings begin in August for 10th and 11th graders.
* One-on-one planning meetings with seniors begin in August. These meetings will focus on the next steps after high school.
* Information has been sent to school staff across the region with a video and presentation they can use to get their students signed up for ***WE Track*** (The Niswonger Foundation’s work ethic diploma tracking system.)
* Less than one year after the Niswonger Foundation establishment of the ***WE Track*** system, over 1800 students are already enrolled across our service region. All high schools are committed to using this data system.
* A phone conference with Bradley Jackson, President and CEO of the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Tennessee Manufacturers Association, has been scheduled for Monday, August 6. He is interested in learning about CareerConnect, and the possibility of using ***WE Track*** as a statewide effort.

**Professional Development Activities**

* Twenty Advanced Placement (AP) Institute scholarships were awarded for Summer 2018. Teachers were approved based on one of these criteria: 1) school beginning a new AP course; 2) attrition of an AP teacher; or 3) AP test changing.
* 2018 Niswonger School Success Symposium and Counselor Convening - Nearly one thousand Northeast Tennessee Educators, representing 17 school systems, attended the 2018 School Success Symposium, on Tuesday, June 19. The focus of this year’s Symposium followed the Foundation’s year-long focus on understanding, and effectively serving, children in poverty*.* The keynote speaker was Liz Murray, bestselling author of “*Breaking Night: Homeless to Harvard*.” The featured speaker was Cicely Woodard, 2018 Tennessee Teacher of the Year.

Following the opening session, the program divided into two areas of interest. The region’s educators had the opportunity to choose from concurrent sessions with a wide range of topics designed specifically for K-12 educators and facilitated by regional teachers, school leaders and educational specialists. The second area of focus was the *Annual Counselor Convening*, bringing together counselors from kindergarten through university to hear from regional and statewide leaders with a focus on improving the likelihood that students will progress to college and careers.

**Summer STEM Camps**

These eleven camps/250 students served were a joint effort of the Niswonger Foundation and the Department of Computer Science at East Tennessee State University.

* Girls in Science and Technology (GIST) 5th grade @ ETSU – 22 girls
* GIST 6th grade @ ETSU – 21 girls

Topics included internet safety, programming, astronomy, digital media, web development

* GIST 6-8th grade @ Northeast - 8 girls

 Topics included raspberry pi, programming, robotics and CAD

* First Year Programming @ Kingsport – 19 High School Students
* First Year Programming @ ETSU – 23 High School Students
* First Year Programming @ ETSU – 34 Middle School Students
* First Year Programming @ Kingsport – 25 Middle School Students

 Topics included Scratch programming, Java programming

* Advanced Game Development @ ETSU – 41 Middle and High School Students

 Topics included JavaScript Multiplayer Game development

* Raspberry Pi Maker’s Camp @ ETSU – 30 Middle and High School Students

 Raspberry pi with Python development

* CAD Camp @ Kingsport – 10 High School Students
* CAD Camp @ ETSU – 17 High School Students

 3d Printing and CAD development

**Grant Activity**

* The Niswonger Foundation submitted an **Education Innovation and Research** grant to the U.S. Department of Education for the second round of EIR grants. The national educational organization, Learning Forward, joined the Niswonger Foundation in this grant submission. The area of focus for this four-million-dollar grant is school leadership development. Results are expected to be reported in September.
* A ***“To and Through Advising Challenge”*** grant was submitted to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support data reporting and analysis for the Niswonger*CARE* College and Career Advising Program. This is a $75,000 grant request. Awards are expected to be announced at any time.
* The Niswonger Foundation submitted a grant request to the Care Foundation of America in support of the Niswonger*CARE* College and Career Advising Program. An award of $350,000 was approved.

**Boards, Committees and Activities**

* Nancy attended the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities (TICUA) Board meeting on May 15, in Nashville.
* Nancy met with Marie Williams, Tennessee Commissioner of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services on May 16, in Nashville. Subsequently, Commissioner Williams attended a session of Summer Training with the Niswonger Scholars.
* Nancy participated as a Commissioner at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) meeting on May 17, in Nashville.
* Nancy attended the Tennesseans for Quality Early Education Board meeting on May 18, in Nashville.
* Richard presented a session on Sustainability at the U.S. DOE Project Director’s meeting on June 13, in Washington D.C.
* Nancy presented a grant proposal to the Care Foundation of America on June 22, in Nashville.
* Scott, Law and Nancy hosted David Mansouri, President of SCORE; and Samantha Gutter, SCORE Director of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness for a visit to the CareerConnect Summer Camp.
* Scott, Nikki and Nancy traveled to Van Wert, Ohio, on July 21, for the ribbon cutting for Franklin Park. Scott spoke and was recognized for his personal contribution to this project.
* Nancy attended the Tennessee Higher Education Commission meeting on July 25-26, in Nashville.
* Richard presented a session at the International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education, August 2. The session was entitled Innovative Approaches for Improving Rural Students’ Achievement.
* Richard has been selected to present two sessions at the National Forum to Advance Rural Education, October 11-13.

**Publicity and Publications**

* News clippings and press releases are available for review.
* The Niswonger Foundation website is currently being updated.