

**Programs and Partnerships
Niswonger Foundation Board Update
Thursday, May 9, 2019**

Literacy Initiative Focused on Effectiveness (LIFE)

Greene County Schools (Year 3 of 3)

- The three-year project report is being finalized.
- Hancock and Greene County literacy specialists will present a session at the Niswonger Symposium in June.
- Ottway and Glenwood hosted visitors from Kingsport City Schools who wanted to learn more about the LIFE initiative
- Over the last three years all principals, teachers, and instructional assistants have been given the opportunity to attend twelve different workshops/conferences.
- This quote came from the Year 3 LIFE survey about Learning Outcomes:

“Focused planning between all instructional leaders leads to student success. A program's success must be maintained over an extended period to be considered a success.”

Hancock County Schools (Year 2 of 3 of Walmart and Annenberg Grants)

Place-Based Learning (PBL) Update

- *Fourth and Fifth grade* students focused on interviewing family members about the “foodways” of their home county. Children learned and shared family history and regional culture while publishing a cookbook. They have currently sold over 100 copies. Students are also learning about entrepreneurship by marketing and selling the cookbooks.
- *Third grade* project is the last to be completed. Their work has been focused on the history of the region. Their final experience is a trip to the Vardy Museum on May 15th.
- *Second grade students* have completed their project learning about, and developing advertisement for, local businesses. The culminating project was having local business owners debrief with the students about the success of their efforts.
- *First grade students* focused their place-based learning experience on the ecology of the region. Their culminating experience was to spend a day with staff from the Soil Conservation District. During this project, they read stories, enjoyed learning games, planted seeds to take home, and planted a small garden at school, for observation.

Early Learning Groups (ELG)

- Data are currently being collected and analyzed for end of year reporting.

KinderCamp 2019

- Students will be selected after Kindergarten registration which will take place on May 3rd & 10th.
- KinderCamp will be held July 8th-26th.

- Additionally, the Niswonger Foundation will be supporting/expanding our KinderCamps to Carter County.

Rural LIFE (EIR Grant)

- Revisions of the initial school plans are underway—based on a better knowledge, new learnings, and the availability of another round of financial support (\$200K).
- The nine Rural LIFE instructional coaches are supporting the implementation and refining of the plans. We will select two new coaches soon to join our seven “returning veterans” for 2019/20. It will be advantageous that we have this degree of continuity.
- We have a meeting of the lead teachers on May 16 and an important principal (and district-level staff) meeting scheduled for July 10. We expect some degree of turnover in the leadership positions; the July meetings will help with orientation/awareness and support those entering their second year.
- The amount of networking between the project schools is increasing; we are facilitating faculty visits to other schools and online discussions between schools.
- We have planned professional development events for Summer 2019, with special-interest topics for teachers (and other staff) representing the treatment schools. These events are designed to help schools/teachers learn from each other. We have 7 different Summer Institute sessions planned for June; each will be repeated in July. Additionally, we will present sessions at the School Success Symposium on RL principles.
- Yianni Alepohoritis, our program analyst from the U.S. Dept. of Education, has accepted a new position. We have been “virtually” introduced to his replacement but have not yet met Shevine Holeman.
- Our independent evaluators (from AnLar) will provide an interim report in May and are visiting schools on May 15.

Online Program

Niswonger *Online*

- We were proud to announce to our Superintendents that, due to an increase in students/school systems, the per-seat fee for our consortium and affiliate schools will be reduced as follows:
 - Consortium Seat fee- \$125 (drop from \$145)
 - Affiliate Seat fee- \$175 for schools not using CARE Funds (drop from \$225)
- Niswonger Online spring semester closes May 10th. Summer 2019 opens on June 3rd. Fall 2019 opens Aug 14th.
- Current enrollment is 641. Our highest enrolled courses this semester are World Languages, Social Studies, and AP
- Cocke County, McMinn County, and Haywood County school systems are now using our World Languages for most of their instruction.
- Jefferson County is still using Latin I and II for all Latin students.
- Our new Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas, is running smoothly. Teachers and students both are enjoying the update and its ease of use.

- Niswongeronline.com is continuously being updated to reflect changes in the schools we work with, our course catalog, and program partnerships.
- New electives to be offered by fall 2019- Visual Arts 3- Photography, General Music 1
- Course updates for 2019/ 2020- Cosmetology 1, Computer Applications, Accounting I & II, Spanish I & II.
- Enrollments for summer and fall semesters have just started. A little over 100 students are enrolled; however, enrollments will not peak until mid-May.

NiswongerCARE Online

- New systems joining as Affiliate members for fall 2019 are Dyersburg City Schools and Dyer County.
- Currently reaching out to 2 other rural counties and offering a modified schedule of CARE funds-
 - YR 1- \$0 seats fees, system pays full \$4600 affiliate fee
 - Yr 2- Schools pays \$75/seat and full \$4600 affiliate fee
 - YR 3- School takes on full costs, \$175/seat, \$4600 affiliate fee

8th Grade Enrichment

- By encouraging high achieving 8th graders during their final year in middle school, we can better prepare them for high school and more rigorous courses (both in-class and online).
- Gina is working with Rural LIFE coaches to increase the number of middle-grades students participating in Niswonger Online.
- This year there are approximately 120 8th graders earning high school credit in a wide range of courses online. That is more than double the previous year.

ETSU Dual Enrollment Partnership

- Spring enrollment for online ETSU dual enrollment courses exceeded expectations, with more growth to come.
- Gina will continue to reach out to schools throughout the state to share this opportunity.
- www.niswongeronline.com has been updated to share information about this partnership. An informational PowerPoint has been uploaded as well as a list of current online dual enrollment courses. Counselors are directing students and parents to the website for information.

Walters State and Northeast State Community Colleges Partnership

- Planning with Walters State and Northeast State has begun. Both schools are excited to work together to offer online dual enrollment courses – specifically with a career-technical focus.
- Both schools are working on prioritizing their online course lists and seeing how they can work together to meet students' needs.
- New online CTE courses will be available in the fall.

NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising

- Monthly staff meetings were held in February and March to provide information, professional and personal development, with collaborative work sessions designed to share best practices. In lieu of April staff meeting, Advisors attended informational sessions at each of the regional higher education institutions to lay the groundwork for the summer 2019 summer melt initiative.
- Summer Melt programming kicked off on March 1, with a goal of serving 900+ students during the transition from high school graduation to college matriculation. Advisors have currently enrolled over 600 students.
- Junior Planning Nights are well underway and are scheduled to be 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.
- 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 Mr. Loving in CareerConnect summer camps. Advisors will undergo in depth training to incorporate the *Appreciative Advising* framework
- The annual Counselor Convening will be held on June 20, 2019. The guest speaker will be Amanda Cuevas, Executive Director of the *Appreciative Advising Institute*.
- YTD data show that 90% of TN Promise applicants submitted a FAFSA to remain eligible for funding, with 86% of all seniors having submitted an application.

CareerConnect

- Planning is ongoing for both Summer Camps.
- All school meetings for 10th-12th graders has been completed.
- **Class of 2022(!)** has been selected and all student/parent orientations are complete.
- Internship applications are being submitted for rising 12th grader summer internships.
- Senior night for graduating CareerConnect students will be held on May 7th; 32 graduates are pursuing everything from entering workforce to four-year degree paths.
- Expansion talks for Kingsport/Bristol are ongoing.

WE Track

- Over 1700 students are enrolled as of April.
- Expanded to Dyersburg City in West TN; further expansions expected.
- Governor's budget allocation includes \$100,000 for program expansion.

Professional Development Activities

- ***School Success Symposium - June 20***
 - Governor Lee as keynote speaker (tentative)
 - Commissioner Penny Schwinn
 - Perry Wilson, Founder If I Had a Hammer, Inc.

- Dr. Amanda Propst Cuevas, Director, Office of Appreciative Education, Florida Atlantic University (Counselor Convening)
- Focus on career awareness/preparation
- **Trauma Informed Care - Regional Summit** – July 11
 - Celebration Church, 429 Shipley Ferry Rd, Blountville, TN 37617
 - TIC training opportunities & national speakers
- **Rural LIFE** – Numerous meetings and conferences for treatment schools.
- **English Language Instruction** - We are in the early stages of planning curriculum support for the next five years of English/Language Arts instruction (PreK-12). School districts are making important decisions *soon...* about their ELA programs in the textbook adoption process. At the most recent Superintendents Study Council meeting, the Directors of Schools expressed a desire to work together, in a regional effort supported by the NF, to support schools/teachers in quality literacy programs (curriculum & instruction).
- The Niswonger Foundation hosted **Leadership NEXT**, a program for emerging leaders as part of Leadership Tennessee.

National Conference Presentation

- Program Directors Law Loving, Denise Arnold, Shawn Stewart, Anita Kilbourne-Greer and Gina Pavlovich were presenters at the 2019 *Rural College Access and Success Summit*, Lexington, Kentucky.

Grant Activity

- We submitted our STEM.LD proposal in the 2019 EIR grant competition. The competition placed an emphasis on Computer Science. The LD (in the project name) represents Learning Design; we plan to design STEM-related learning activities, with both in- and out-of-school opportunities and group & individual possibilities.
- Also, in the EIR competition, the NF (and local schools) is named as an implementation partner in a \$16M proposal. The proposal, submitted by the New Teacher Center (NTC), emphasizes coaching to improve instructional planning. We have worked with NTC previously and they have had successful i3/EIR projects in the past.
- We are awaiting a decision on a National Science Foundation (NSF) S-STEM proposal. In partnership with ETSU, NSCC, and WSCC, we are a supporting partner for the RIDGES proposal. “RIDGES” stands for Recruit, Involve, and Deploy Graduates for Employment in STEM; the project will provide last-dollar scholarships for rural students with STEM majors.
- We are also in the planning stages of another NSF proposal to develop a calculus-readiness program that could be designed to fit the needs of many students in all schools served by Niswonger Online.

Recent Donations (February 1 – April 30)

Thomas L. Woods	\$	1,600.00
Camelot Care Centers, Inc.	\$	1,500.00
TN Commission on Children and Youth	\$	1,500.00
Anthony Pentz	\$	1,000.00
Jane Pilloni	\$	100.00
Nick Darnell	\$	100.00
YourCause/Corp. Giving	\$	88.20
United Way of Wash. County	\$	50.00
Scott Niswonger	\$	1,085,000.00

Boards, Committees and Activities

- February 18-20, Nancy attended the annual meeting of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA).
- March 15, Scott and Nancy met with Governor Bill Lee, in Nashville.
- March 27, Nancy met with new education Commissioner Penny Schwinn.
- April 5, Nancy met with James Pond, new director of the Governor’s Books from Birth program.
- April 12, Nancy met with Daniel Lewis, regional director for Scholastic Books. Scholastic is contributing 150 books to the Niswonger Foundation’s new *Joyful Library*.
- April 16, Scott, Nikki, Richard and Nancy participated in *Mongolia Day* at Niswonger VILLAGE at Valleybrook.
- April 23, Nancy participated in the Tennessee Learning Circle sponsored by the Gates Foundation, in Nashville.
- May 1, Nancy attended the Non-profit Summit, in Nashville.
- Nancy is serving on Kingsport City Schools “Portrait of a Graduate” project over the next several months.
- Nancy is serving on the search committee for the new Dean of the Niswonger Walters State Campus.