

**Programs and Partnerships
Niswonger Foundation Board Update
Thursday, November 15, 2018**

Partnership Updates

Literacy Initiative Focused on Effectiveness (LIFE)

Joint Efforts with Greene and Hancock Counties:

- Teachers and Teaching Assistants from Glenwood, Ottway, and Hancock County Elementary attended the Walters State Community College Literacy Conference, in Morristown.
- Selected teachers and teaching assistants will attend the, three-day, Annual Title I Conference, in December. The conference is held in Gatlinburg.
- Our Literacy Specialists, Sara and Amanda, are designing a research project to compile program data. Results are expected by the end of the year.

Hancock County:

- Orienting a new Principal, Brian Greene.
- Planning has begun for the Christmas Gala. More information to follow.
- Place-Based Learning focus for this year will be in grades 3-5. The project is to publish a community/school/student cookout. This document will be like the A-Z book published last year.

Greene County:

- We have begun the final (year three) of the LIFE grant.
- A Day in the LIFE for Glenwood Elementary was completed on September 21. Instead of the event only being a K-2 event, it became a school-wide event with an overwhelming attendance. K-2 students and families were given take-home literacy activities. These materials were furnished by the Niswonger LIFE initiative.

Rural LIFE (EIR)

- Year 1 (of 5-year project) completed. All planning activities are complete; year-end reports in progress.
- Implementation in 36 treatment schools has begun. Baseline data & initial survey results are compiled.
- Scheduled meetings with principals and 3 advisory boards are in progress.
- Next major function scheduled is a Dec. 14 meeting with all lead teachers and coaches. Both project partners (Anlar and the Friday Institute) will be in attendance; our US Department of Education Project Analyst is considering his attendance as well.
- Revisions to Year 2 budget (in DC for approval) will further support implementation of school plans.
- Closed the Year 1 budget and activities. The year ended with a 12% match, including office space.
- Currently working on the first annual report, due November 30.

Niswonger Online

- Niswonger Online fall semester will close on Dec 14th. Schools can access grades on Monday, Dec 17th. This is our record-setting fall enrollment, 624 students.
- The most utilized courses this semester are World Languages, Social Studies, and several AP classes.
- Spring 2019 just opened for enrollment. Spring 2019 courses will begin on Jan 16th.
- We continue to provide all Cocke County foreign language courses; and courses for all Jefferson County students taking Latin I or II.
- Our new Learning Management System, *Canvas*, is running smoothly. Teachers and students are enjoying this updated system with its ease of use.
- The new certification course, Web Design I, was offered this semester. We are working to set Greeneville High School as a regional testing site.
- www.niswongeronline.com is continuously being updated to reflect changes in the schools being served, our course catalog, and program partnerships.
- In the spring, we will begin working with Elizabethton City Schools and the Bartleby Program. Gina will be training teachers on how to create engaging online courses that their students within the program can access. We are hopeful that these courses become new offerings for Niswonger Online as many will be excellent options for students throughout the state.
- Two new electives are currently being created for Niswonger Online: Photography I and General Music. AP Computer Science Principles is also being created and will be ready to be offered in Fall 2019.
- Dyersburg City Schools is considering Affiliate Membership.

NiswongerCARE Online

- McMinn County schools is our newest NiswongerCARE affiliate member. This fall, 82 students are taking world language courses.
- Most likely, McMinn County will be our last NiswongerCARE affiliate school (Supported by Care Foundation funds). Remaining CARE funds may allow for one additional system. That is being analyzed.
- Lauderdale, Hardeman, Haywood, and Claiborne Counties still have strong enrollments, even though they are now paying \$75/seat. Collectively they have around 180 students enrolled.

Niswonger Online 8th Grade Enrichment

- We are currently working with various middle schools to discuss the possibilities of their 8th graders earning high school credit through Niswonger Online
- This fall, there were 66 8th graders taking a wide range of courses. This is triple the usual numbers for middle school enrollment.
- This can serve high achieving 8th graders during their final year in middle school, preparing them for high school and more rigorous courses (both in-class and online) that they will encounter.

Niswonger Online and ETSU Dual Enrollment Partnership

- We have signed an MOU with East Tennessee State University to provide dual enrollment through Niswonger Online.
- Information Sessions have been held with school systems across the region to discuss the benefits of Online Dual Enrollment.
- Dawn Bridwell (Admissions Office), Ryan Seale (ETSU Technical Systems), and Gina have been working closely to create a smooth process and integration of information.
- A course has been created within the Niswonger Online Canvas LMS that walks students through the steps of applying and enrolling in courses at ETSU.
- In November, we met at ETSU Valleybrook with counselors and administrators from across the region, including Grainger and Claiborne Counties.
- We will continue to reach out to schools throughout the state to share this opportunity.
- www.niswongeronline.com has been updated to provide 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.

Niswonger Online Blended Environment

- We are seeing an increase in the number of high school teachers using Niswonger Online courses to supplement teaching in their classroom.
- Gina recently provided training for administrators and teachers.
- Systems pay \$15/student to cover Genius and Canvas Fees.
- The most utilized courses are Algebra I, AP Human Geography, and AP Statistics.

NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising

- College Application week events were held in August and September, in all 30 high schools, to encourage students to submit a college application(s). Advisors organized many events by inviting representatives from the regional post-secondary institutes to tell students about the programs and majors offered and to assist them in submitting applications. During these events over **2,544** seniors applied to post-secondary institutions of their choice. An additional **514** seniors applied during one on one meetings with Advisors. These promising results reflect that **47%** of all seniors have already applied to college during the first three months of their senior year.
- TN Promise events were held in each school to ensure that all seniors applied by the November 1, 2018 deadline to remain eligible for last-dollar-scholarships at a community college or technical school. Our advisors assisted **4,850** seniors in completing the application.
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opened for students on October 1, 2018 with a deadline of completing by February 1, 2019 to remain eligible for Tennessee Promise. During October, November and December, our advisors host multiple events in each high school to assist students and families in completing this critical step in the college going process. Over 40 FAFSA Frenzy events have already been held, with **2,076** seniors (32%) having already submitted the application within the first month of opening.

- NiswongerCARE College and Career Advisors participated in several professional learning opportunities this fall:
 - ✓ University of Tennessee Conference for Counselors;
 - ✓ Northeast State Community College Counselor Workshop;
 - ✓ ACT College & Career Readiness Workshop;
 - ✓ East Tennessee State University Dual Enrollment/Buc Start Informational Session; and
 - ✓ Understanding FAFSA and how to assist families.
- This summer, **523** 2017-18 high school graduates were served with our Summer Melt program. Of these students, **53%** were first generation college students and **65%** identified as going to community college, two of the strongest indicators of the potential for “summer melt.” Advisors sent text reminders offering help and information to students in completing the remaining tasks. Outcome results show that **66%** of these students successfully matriculated to a post-secondary institute in fall 2018, exceeding the state rate of **61%**.
- Advisor Activities (August-Nov. 5) reflect the following services to students:
 - ✓ **2,570** individual meetings;
 - ✓ **336** group presentations on topics such as college and career planning and financial aid;
 - ✓ **461** students assisted with scholarship searches and applications;
 - ✓ **1,908** students aided in registering for the ACT test and accessing test prep resources; and
 - ✓ **537** parents served through informational meetings and individual meetings.

CareerConnect

- Fall monthly student meetings are being finalized in November for 10th and 11th graders.
- Schedule for Spring meetings is set, and curriculum is ready for implementation.
- Schedule for Summer Experiences is set, and plans are being developed.
- Program expansion talks with Kingsport, Bristol (TN and VA), and Sullivan County are underway.
- Over 1900 students are currently registered on *WE Track*, with representation from all our high schools.

Grant Activity

- The Niswonger Foundation submitted an ***Education Innovation and Research*** grant to the U.S. Department of Education for the second round 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 was school leadership development. We were not selected for funding.
- A ***“To and Through Advising Challenge”*** grant was submitted to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support data reporting and analysis for the NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising Program. This is a \$75,000 grant request. We were not selected for funding.

- We submitted a *Network for School Improvement* grant to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant represents potential funding of \$2-5 million per year for five years.
- We are currently considering applying for a *Family Math Community* grant from Education First. This would provide \$750,000 to support community-focused initiatives that ensure all children – but particularly those from low-income communities and communities of color – see themselves as math learners.

Boards, Committees and Activities

- Law Loving presented at the SCORE Summit, on October 16, with Lottie Ryans of the First Tennessee Development District. The Foundation has received several contacts, from across the State, based on this presentation. As an example, Dyersburg City Schools is considering becoming an affiliate member to access the CareerConnect, WE Track, and curriculum and Niswonger Online.
- Richard presented two sessions at the 2018 National Forum to Advance Rural Education and 110th NREA Convention and Research Symposium, Denver, CO
 - Personalized Learning: A Key to Student Success
 - Exploring Evidence in Promising Rural Programs
- Richard Bales and Richard Kitzmiller presented a session at the 2018 Tennessee School Boards Association Annual Convention, Nashville, TN
 - The Rural LIFE Literacy Grant (also shared about the NF online program and BucStart)
- Nancy attended the SCORE Steering Committee meeting on August 22, in Nashville.
- Scott and Nancy attended the Tusculum University Trustees Workshop August 24-25.
- Law, Richard and Nancy attended the E2E Regional Workforce Summit on August 29. Law was a panelist.
- Scott and Nancy attended the Tusculum Board of Trustees Meeting September 11-13.
- Nancy attended the Tennessee Higher Education Commission called meeting on September 15, in Nashville.
- Niswonger Foundation hosted Complete Tennessee for a visit to the region on October 17.
- Scott and Nancy attended the Heartland Summit, hosted by the Walton Family Foundation in Bentonville, Arkansas, October 18-20.
- Nancy attended the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association Board meeting on October 22, in Nashville.
- Nancy attended the Tennessee Higher Education Commission Quarterly meeting on November 7, in Nashville.

Publicity and Publications

- News clippings and press releases are available for review.
- The Niswonger Foundation website has been updated.
- New initiative in place to increase Niswonger Foundation presence in the press.