

Programs and Partnerships
Niswonger Foundation Board Update
Thursday, November 11, 2021

News Highlights

- The Niswonger Foundation hosted Commissioner Penny Schwinn and the TDOE for a regional Town Hall at the Niswonger Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, November 3. The focus of the discussion was the State's method of funding K-12 public education.
- The Niswonger Foundation successfully hosted *Learning Together Day* on October 22. This was an ambitious nine-district, 10 site, initiative with 2000 educators in attendance. More than 175 presenters led the sessions.
- Nancy Dishner and Scott Niswonger are co-chairing the Regional Collectives and Advocacy Education Funding Review Subcommittee for the Tennessee Department of Education. The goal is to develop a student-based investment strategy for state education funding.

Program Updates

Rural LIFE (2017 EIR – Funded by the US DOE)

- Rural LIFE **sustainability grant** teams gathered for professional learning on October 26 to explore the skills students need to be successful in a personalized learning environment as well as various types of data and how to assess their roles in supporting student learning. Teams also unpacked why it's important for students to have opportunities to discuss their learning data/feedback with teachers and how to facilitate these conversations effectively.
- Rural LIFE **cohort 2 teams** gathered for professional learning on October 27 to explore what personalized literacy instruction looks like and sounds like in the classroom. Teams also examined how data can be used to inform instruction and identified systems and structures that effectively support the implementation of personalized literacy instruction.
- Rural LIFE's **Strong Start Network** members will meet virtually on November 9 to unpack the difference between engagement and student ownership. They will also examine how to effectively support students' productive struggle and will begin a deep dive into writing instruction.
- Rural LIFE's eight coaches have been distributing a **generous donation of books** from Dr. Flora Joy to the schools and districts they serve.
- Rural LIFE's eight coaches delivered a variety of professional learning sessions during the region's inaugural *Learning Together Day* on October 22.

Developing Academic Coaches (2019 EIR – Funded by the US DOE)

- Launched bi-monthly webinar forums in September with new platform, *Playposit*. This platform produced high engagement and provides actionable data for evaluation purposes.
- Attended NPLN alongside partners nationwide to learn best practices in coaching and equity work.
- Supported *Learning Together Day* at multiple sites.

- Strategically scheduled school visits to introduce multiple team members and build district and school buy-in.
- Analyzed Grant Outcomes and Indicators with the grant-lead organization – New Teachers Center; and SIR, the Lead Investigator for this project.
- Granted TASL credit for School Leaders and Coaches Forums to be held on November 9, 2021 and February 22, 2022

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STEM LD (2021 EIR – Funded by the US DOE)

- Cohort 1 – Initial Work Beginning
 - 12 High Schools
 - 14 Middle Schools (Treatment)
 - 14 Middle Schools (Control)
- Of the 26 schools in treatment, 16 have substantially completed initial training sessions. The remaining 10 schools have a plan to complete by mid-November
- Every school has at least one active partnership and each partner has more than one school they are working with (see chart below).
- Partnership Highlights
 - **If I had a Hammer** - We observed Perry Wilson (founder) working with students at Clinch School introducing *If I Had A Hammer*. It was inspiring to see his passion and the students’ engagement. Teachers were also inspired and engaged.
 - We are providing scholarships to **Walters State Community College** out-of-school activities through their TAG program. There has been enthusiastic response to this opportunity.
 - **Purdue** is well into the partnership with teachers and students now building carts.
 - **Streamworks** has completed an opening round of professional development for teachers via a two- day workshop; robotics competition teams are forming across partner schools
 - **BioBuilder** has begun working with their schools to integrate synthetic biology into their classroom lab time
 - **University of Alabama-Huntsville** will be hosting a virtual cybersecurity webinar in November for interested students.
- Cohort 2 - Recruitment Phase
 - Extensive recruitment is underway with presentations both virtual and in person to many principals and superintendents across the region. A final, region-wide webinar will be conducted on November 3.
 - We presented the grant opportunities to CTE teachers at Niswonger Foundation’s Learning Together event on October 22.
 - We have expanded the region for participation a bit, extending to some districts north and west of Knox County. Response has been enthusiastic from Union County, Anderson County, and Oneida Special School District.
 - Currently we have 8 middle schools and 5 high schools that have signed commitment forms for Cohort 2. Recruitment efforts will continue through mid-November.
- Other Updates

- We are currently planning a four-day training for science teachers in grades 6-8 that will be held at Tusculum University and led by trainers from OpenSciEd.
- We are analyzing project management for Cohort 2, exploring improvements to our processes.
- We are currently reviewing survey questions from the project’s external evaluators, AnLar, for spring evaluation of Cohort 1.

TNTP Science	TNTP Math	UAH	Hammer	Purdue	ETSU	Bio-Builders	Stream-Works	Civil Air Patrol	WSCC
Johnson County MS	Johnson County MS	Unaka HS	Johnson County HS	Unaka HS	Johnson County HS	Unaka HS	Sullivan East MS	Sullivan Heights MS	West Greene HS
Sullivan Heights MS	Del Rio Elementary	Clinch HS	North Greene HS	Unicoi HS	Johnson County MS	Daniel Boone HS	Sullivan Heights MS	Unaka HS	Volunteer HS
Happy Valley Elementary	Happy Valley Elementary		South Greene HS	Cherokee HS	Chuckey Doak HS	Cherokee HS	Chuckey Doak HS	Sulphur Springs Elementary	HY Livesay Elementary
HY Livesay Elementary	HY Livesay Elementary		West Greene HS	Greeneville HS	North Greene HS	Greeneville MS	South Greene HS		
Greeneville Middle	Greeneville Middle		Hampton Elementary		Daniel Boone HS		Unaka HS		
	Hancock Co. MS		Unaka HS		Greeneville MS				
	White Pine Elementary		Unicoi HS		Unicoi HS				
	Bulls Gap Elementary		Sulphur Springs Elementary						
			Clinch HS						
			Volunteer HS						
			Greeneville HS						

Niswonger Online (Funded by the Niswonger Consortium of School Districts)

- Fall term 2021 general education courses will close on December 10.
- There are currently 1450 enrollments in fall term general education courses.
- We have been supporting students, parents, teachers (including 14 new teachers) and school staff as they learn to use our technology: both the Student Information System and Learning Management System.
- Enrollment for Spring 2022 opens November 17.
- Updated Spanish I curriculum was launched for Fall 2021. A new Spanish II course will be implemented for Spring 2022. Both were created by a Niswonger Online teacher.
- We are recruiting additional teachers for the spring term. The greatest needs are World Languages (ASL, French, Spanish) and math.
- NiswongerOnline.com is continuously being updated with semester dates and information, course catalog, and program partnerships.

AP Access for All (2021 Funded by Tennessee Department of Education Contract)

- There are currently 106 school districts fully on-board with AP Access for All 82% of all public K-12 in Tennessee.

- 79% of at-risk and distressed counties
- 77% of rural counties
- Current fall AP enrollment is 1,058 students, which exceeded our goal. We are currently estimating adding an additional 1,000 students for the spring term.
- On November 4 we will be offering our first AP Cohort Webinar. This webinar will focus on College Board resources that are available to AP teachers and how to make the most of those resources. Teachers are currently registering for this webinar.
- New courses being offered in spring term – AP Calculus B and C
- Plans are to offer AP Physics and AP Chemistry. There is difficulty finding a developer or vendor who has developed these courses with embedded labs. We continue to search.
- Since August, an additional 54 AP teachers have submitted an interest form to teach an AP course in association with the AP Access for All initiative. These teachers are currently enrolled in our Canvas training course and preparing to receive a course section during the Spring enrollment period.
- Free AP Training for Teachers
 - 451 teachers across 79 different districts submitted an Advanced Placement Training Interest Form.
 - We surveyed teachers throughout the months of September and October to assess the needs for next summer’s training.
 - We are currently working with the College Board and UT-Chattanooga in preparation to serve as many teachers as possible.
- Marketing and Media
 - CRISP Communications is developing our “following” on social media platforms and sharing pertinent information with all stakeholders across the state.
 - Please follow us and share:
Website- tnapaccessforall.org
 - <https://www.facebook.com/apaccessforall>
 - <https://twitter.com/apaccessforall>
 - <https://www.instagram.com/apaccessforall/>
 - CHRISP is conducting interviews in major markets to spread the word of APAA across the state
 - New APAA Swag has been ordered and is being sent to RRS for students and liaisons.
 - Specific flyers have been developed to share with schools for AP teacher recruitment and regions who have not come on board.
 - A banner and table runner have been developed to take to conferences and seminars.
- Conferences:
 - We participated in the Learning Together professional development day in the Northeast consortium.
 - APAA Administration and Relationship Specialists virtually attended the College Board Forum the last week of October.
 - We are submitting a proposal to speak at the National College Board conference, in Texas, in July.
- We are conducting continual modifications and updates of the website to make sure all information is pertinent and easily accessible.

- We are still missing a Regional Relationship Specialist (RRS) for the Southeast region. Interviews are being conducted.

NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising (Funded by the Tennessee Department of Education)

- “Delivery of Service” meetings were held in all 28 high schools to guide the work of the advisors for the 2021-2022 school year. Attending were the NiswongerCARE Advisor and Supervisor, School Counselor, and Principal.
- Advisors reported to their assigned schools during August/September and began assisting students in completing the TN Promise application and applying to colleges.
- Leadership team provided monthly supervision meetings with each Advisor in both September and October. Written feedback was given to each Advisor with comments on strengths observed and areas for improvement.
- *Signal Vine* messaging platform for communicating with students currently has 1,229 seniors subscribed compared to 1,095 students this time last year. Advisors continue to prioritize student enrollment using multiple platforms for outreach.
- Advisors have access to the *Calendly* scheduling application that allows students and parents to schedule appointments to discuss college options and to complete a FAFSA with the Advisor on a date and time that is convenient for them.
- Advisor Emily Emerick was chosen as the Social Media Coordinator and created 173 posts and 122 stories with a reach of over 14,238 views.
- NiswongerCARE website was updated to include information about the new Advisors and provide links for contacting each of them.
- College Application and Appreciation Month activities were held during September with 100% of schools participating. Representatives from regional colleges and TCAT campuses were on site to assist students in applying, with many providing waivers for application fees.
- TN Promise application opened on August 1st for this year’s seniors and will close on November 1st. Data through October 29th reflects that over 87% of the 6,144 eligible seniors have applied.
- Niswonger Foundation and ETSU partnered as the site location for the Learning Together Professional Development Day on October 22nd. Sessions were provided for 350 teachers in Art, Music, PE, Coaching, and School Counseling.

CareerConnect

- Monthly Explorer meetings have returned to in-person this fall. Spring 2022 meeting dates are confirmed.
- Through a partnership with Walters State Community College, plans are being developed to pair CareerConnect with select dual enrollment courses at WSCC. Sophomore Explorers will be eligible to take Workforce 101, a non-credit course that offers OSHA, and Safe Serve certifications. Juniors will be eligible to take Education (EDUC) 1030, a for-credit college success and career exploration course. Lastly, seniors will be eligible for any dual-enrollment course. Aligning courses in this way would coincide with the Explorers’ curriculum of after school lessons/activities. We are working on the logistics to make this accessible for students who might not have transportation.

- Summer Experience dates have been tentatively set for June 7-17, 2022 for rising seniors and July 11-22, 2022 for rising juniors.

WE Track (Work Ethic Diploma Tracking System)

- Niswonger Foundation (led by Law Loving) has proposed legislation for recognition of a statewide student work ethic distinction. House and Senate sponsorship has been identified. If approved, students completing the Work Ethic Distinction would be recognized as Tennessee Tri-Star Scholars upon graduation from high school.
- There are currently 132 high schools in Tennessee participating in WE Track.
- Virginia WE Track site is being folded into Tennessee site for ease of management. Virginia systems are actively recruiting other systems to join.
- Some final upgrades and refinements are being made to the online WE Track site.

Comprehensive Educational Resources (CER) (Funded by the Niswonger Consortium of School Districts)

- Dayton City Schools and Giles County Schools have joined CER. This brings the total to 27 districts and about 125,000 students benefitting from these educational resources.
- We are in the process of conducting in person reviews of all subject areas. This is for the second set of complete materials for this year.
- The CER website is currently revised with these curriculum updates.
- Districts just finished the first benchmark using CASE assessments. We have 25 districts using CASE this year.
- Twenty-one districts are their benchmark data with CER participating districts.

Project On Track (2021 - funded by Care Foundation of America and Ballad Health)

- As of October 18, there are 1520 students in grades K-3 participating in high-dosage tutoring sessions at one of 52 operational sites.
- A meeting was scheduled October 19 with Jefferson County Schools to discuss the timeline of when Project On-Track will be implemented in four elementary schools. Initial rollout is projected for January 2022.
- 1520 students have completed the Beginning of Year Assessment through the Amplify platform. The assessment provides tutors with the necessary data and information to develop deliberate lesson plans that align to foundational literacy standards and skills with which students are struggling.
- Jenny McCloud, Trauma Informed Administrator with Ballad Health, met with site coordinators on October 18 and 19 to review the timeline for ACEs and Trauma-Informed Care tutor training. All tutors will complete the five asynchronous modules in addition to assigned tasks by December 17, 2021. Ms. McCloud will monitor assignment completion and will schedule either in person or virtual visits with tutoring sites.
- SRI International, a nonprofit research institute, has submitted early elementary item types that will allow age-appropriate surveys to be developed and administered to students taking part in Project On-Track. Student surveys will be administered in spring 2022.

- The Niswonger Foundation has submitted a request to the Tennessee Department of Education that Project On-Track be considered for grant funds through the TN ALL Corps and be included in a tutor partner guide for districts that may choose to work with a third-party provider to deliver tutoring services in grades K-3. Scott Meltzer with the TDOE spoke to the project director on September 23 to discuss the application. An official announcement will come in a few weeks.
- Project On-Track’s Steering Committee met on September 30 with SRI International. Committee members are: Dr. Angie Baker, Assistant Professor of Education, King University; Dr. Angela Kinsler, Site Coordinator and Retired Principal, Hancock County Schools; DeAnna Martin, Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Greeneville City Schools; Cathy Nester, Supervisor, Elementary Curriculum and Instruction, Sullivan County Schools; Dr. Melissa Seavers, Site Coordinator and Associate Principal, Jackson Elementary, Kingsport City Schools.

Grant and Partnership Update

- A request for a revision of the Project On Track grant has been submitted to the Care Foundation of America. The request is for the ability to offer both literacy and math high dosage tutoring support for our school districts. This decision is based on TN Ready statistics, which reflect that mathematics scores dropped by double the rate of ELA scores during the pandemic.

Publications and Webpage

- We are designing a 20th Anniversary Annual Report, for 2021, with combined school program historical perspective and tribute to our Niswonger Scholars.
- A complete revision of the Niswonger Foundation webpage has been completed. This included movement to a new delivery platform.

Contributions (August 2021 to October 2021)

Scott M. Niswonger	\$ 140,000.00
Covenant Transportation Group	\$ 117,000.00
Transport Enterprise Leasing	\$ 74,000.00
Paul and Tammy Carmichael	\$ 30,000.00
Tom Turnwald	\$ 15,000.00
Michelle Freeman	\$ 1,000.00
JoAnn Brouillette	\$ 1,000.00
Law Loving	\$ 50.00
In-Kind Contributions	
Sky Night LLC	\$ 34,000.00
Newsela, Inc	\$ 60,630.00
Henry and Dr. Flora Joy	\$ 72,390.00
Total	\$ 545,070.00

Niswonger Foundation Current Board Representation at the State Level

- Tennessee Higher Education Commission
- Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities

- Communities in Schools
- Tennesseans for Quality Early Education
- Governor's Early Literacy Foundation
- State Collaborative on Reforming Education
- Tennessee Arts Commission
- Tennessee Department of Education Partners Council

Attachment 1

**Niswonger Foundation
Tentative
2022 Board Planning Calendar**

Board Meeting Dates

Thursday, February 24

Thursday, May 12

Thursday, August 18

Thursday, November 17

Monday, May 30 – Friday, June 3

Scholars' Leadership Institute

(Special events will be planned during this week)

Niswonger Foundation Learning Center and General Morgan Inn

Tuesday, May 31

Senior Scholars' Graduation Dinner

7:00 p.m.

General Morgan Inn Ballroom

Monday and Tuesday, December 19 - 20

Scholars' Winter Training

Niswonger Foundation Learning Center

Saturday, December 17

Alumni Scholars' Dinner

