

**Programs and Partnerships  
Niswonger Foundation Board Update  
Thursday, August 18, 2022**

**New and Expanded Projects**

- *Builders + Backers* is a new regional entrepreneurial development program in partnership with Heartland Forward. Individuals across Northeast Tennessee will have the opportunity to present their “big idea.” The Builders + Backers program will select 10 projects and provide the mentoring and support needed to develop and test the ideas, including at \$5000 pebble grant.
- *Learning Together Day*, in its second year, has dramatically expanded its scope. On Friday, October 28, 2022, over 4000 educators, representing eleven school districts and ETSU’s University School, will be provided professional development in their specific disciplines at eleven sites across the region. Food City has joined as a sponsor of the event. Dr. Mia Hyde, Dr. Debra Bentley and Barbara Bates are leading the planning process for the Niswonger Foundation. All Niswonger team members are providing support for this exceptional undertaking.
- *REL Appalachia/SRI International* – The Rural Education Laboratory of Appalachia (REL) received a five-year contract from SRI International to continue the provision of their services and resources in support of rural education. The Niswonger Consortium of Schools will be the benefactor of these resources through two efforts:
  - *Strengthening Students’ Preparation for College and Careers* – This professional development effort will begin with the first phase of this project, “Data-Informed Decision Making,” which will kick off on Tuesday, October 4th in the NF Learning Center.
  - The second effort will support data analysis and evaluation planning for Project on Track.
- *TN ALL Corps/Project on Track* – The Niswonger Foundation will dramatically expand its high dosage/low ratio tutoring program with a \$9 million contract received from the Tennessee Department of Education in July. This will expand the work from grades 1-3 literacy to K-8 literacy and mathematics across 18 school districts.
- *CareerConnect* – The current program served Greeneville City and Greene County Schools. With a Governor’s Direct Appropriations Grant, this program will expand to Carter and Washington Counties and an additional six high schools.
- *Kindergarten Readiness* is funded through a partnership grant with Ballad Health’s Accountable Care Community. The first year of the project is funded at \$50,000 and will be the evaluative and needs assessment phase of the project. The goals are to inventory current practices in our school districts, engage stakeholders in information gathering and planning, identify national best practices, and develop a strategic plan and vision for region-wide implementation.

### **Rural LIFE (2018 EIR/USDOE Grant – middle grades literacy development)**

- Rural LIFE hosted the *Reflect & Connect: Rural LIFE Summer Institute* on June 22 at Grandview Elementary School. Teams of Rural LIFE teachers, leaders, and coaches - as well as several guest speakers presented sessions rooted in their own first-hand experiences utilizing personalized learning strategies in the classroom, leveraging professional learning to improve instruction, and building organizational capacity to sustain effective practices. Over 100 K-12 teachers, school and district leaders, and instructional coaches were in attendance representing 14 of our East Tennessee school districts!
- In late August, Rural LIFE - in partnership with TNTP - will host a leader-specific learning series focused on building a shared vision for excellent literacy instruction at the secondary level (grades 5-12). This 2-part series will center on practical steps secondary leaders can take to support their teachers who attended two weeks of TDOE secondary literacy training this summer. (Series dates: August 24 & 31)
- The Rural LIFE team has transitioned to the dissemination phase of the grant, which will include work articulating lessons learned, presenting at regional/national conferences, and curating materials for continued school/district use around effective practices in literacy and personalized learning.

### **STEM.LD (2020 EIR/USDOE Grant – middle grades and high school STEM grant)**

- District and School Participation
  - 17 Districts (New districts included to increase number of schools: Anderson County, Union County, Oneida Special School District, Grainger County, and Claiborne County)
  - Cohort 1: 12 high schools, 14 middle schools (treatment), 13 middle schools (control)
  - Cohort 2: 7 high schools, 6 middle schools (treatment), 6 middle schools (control)
  - 39 schools are currently receiving treatment.
  - By the end of the grant 58 schools will have been served.
  - Cohort 1 treatment middle schools will begin receiving services summer 2023.
- Cohort 1 & 2 Update
  - Cohort 1 at 98% completion of orientation; most cohort 2 schools have completed orientation.
  - In-person training was provided by TNTP in June for instructional leaders in cohort 2 schools as well as cohort 1 schools that had new administrators.
- Partners
  - Tiny house builds for two schools were conducted at the Niswonger campus of WSCC; a partnership between If I Had A Hammer and WSCC is making it possible to run these as requested. Through a summer camp partnership with Streamworks, WSCC conducted an underwater robotics competition at the YMCA in Greeneville as a part of their Nuts, Bolts, and Thingamajigs camp.
  - Streamworks held a weeklong STEM camp at ETSU's Valleybrook Campus.
  - WSCC conducted two CTE-focused camps: Basic Electricity & amp; Introduction to PLC and Summer Welding.

- TNTP and OpenSciEd held a four-day professional learning opportunity for STEM.LD middle school science teachers. Fifteen teachers representing seven schools were in attendance. Additionally, seven teachers from Greeneville Middle School attended the two-day refresh training.
- Twenty-three teachers will attend the four-day curriculum launch virtually in August offered through the partnership with TNTP.
- Other Updates
  - The STEM.LD team has completed an internal review of the goals and objectives of the grant. As a result of this review, the team is focusing on two major initiatives in addition to those already underway. The first is development of the STEM.LD Hub, a platform that connects teachers and students to STEM opportunities including out-of-school-time activities, advanced coursework, and career connections. The second is development (in collaboration with partners) of new, online STEM coursework.
  - The STEM.LD team visited 28 schools in the spring. A great deal of information was gathered, and relationships between the STEM.LD team and the schools were strengthened. School visits will commence again in the fall of 2022.
  - Communications strategies include our website (STEM.LD), a shared calendar where schools can locate partner and other activities, monthly meetings with school representatives, and a quarterly newsletter showcasing schools and partners and advertising upcoming events.
  - Three regional community work groups consisting of business, community, and higher education leaders are being convened. Two of these groups have had introductory meetings.

#### **NTC Developing Academic Coaches (2019 EIR/USDOE/New Teacher Center Partnership Grant)**

- Dr. Cockerham and Dr. Seeley were trained, in June, to present The New Teacher Center's Model of coaching to continue to build capacity and sustainability in local districts.
- Year 2 coaches completed NTC's Advance Instructional Coaching Institute in July.
- Currently developing topics for monthly webinars and forums for district and school coaches based on feedback from last year. Developing two sessions for School Leaders as Coaches—one in the Fall and one for Spring.
- Dr. Seeley and Dr. Cockerham will attend National Program Leadership Network (NPLN) in New Orleans in October and in Denver the Spring.
- Partnering with Education Resource Strategies who are assessing current resource allocations at South Greene HS, Johnson County, Greeneville Middle, Hancock County, and Washington County using a diagnostic survey completed by schools and districts then utilizing the results for conversations about future budgeting for resources that meet the needs of the schools in their districts.
- We will begin in-field coaching with our coaches in the next few weeks.

- We will be working closely with Carter County to help them build teacher leaders in each of their schools and help them establish effective Professional Learning Communities within each school.

### **Niswonger Online (Funded by our Consortium School Districts)**

- Affiliate member fees have been updated to a staggered schedule to match consortium member fees. This will make participation in Niswonger Online more accessible for small school systems throughout Tennessee. Previously all affiliate members paid \$4,600 per year regardless of school system size. The updated member fees are:
  - \$1,600 (up to 3400 students)
  - \$3,500 (3401- 6999 students)
  - \$4,800 (7000+ students)
- Seat fees will remain the same for the upcoming school year
  - \$125 per seat for consortium members
  - \$175 per seat for affiliate members
- Summer 2022 Semester
  - 220 enrollments representing 19 schools
  - Enrollment for summer has been ~200 students for the last several years.
  - 24 courses offered
- Dr. Catherine Edwards has joined the Niswonger Online team in a part time role as Supervisor of Student Success. She joined our team at the end of the spring semester and has quickly learned to navigate our online platforms. She will conduct teacher evaluations, assist with communication with students and schools, and data analysis.
- Fall 2022 Classes begin Monday, August 15. The majority of enrollments will occur August 1-15 as students & staff return to schools.
- We expect to assist schools dealing with teacher shortages, especially in World Languages.
- Connections with new school systems through AP Access for ALL. Henderson Co Schools signed an MOU to participate in Niswonger Online for the first time. We are providing some seats for them through grant funds during this first year.
- Increased participation from school systems, thanks to connections with STEM.LD. Example: Grainger Co. Schools is an existing partner. Grainger High School has participated in Niswonger Online classes for years. Washburn School has enrolled students in courses for the first time for Fall 2022.
- Major changes were made to the website over the summer to simplify the content and make it easier for students, parents, and school staff to find the information they need. All course syllabi have been updated and posted for public access.

- New Spanish I and II courses for Niswonger Online have been developed. A small group of Spanish teachers joined us at the Learning Center in July to recap our first year with the new curriculum and make suggestions for improvement for the upcoming year. There were 864 Spanish enrollments last year—a large portion of our Gen Ed enrollments.

### **AP Access for All (2021 Tennessee Department of Education Grant)**

- 114 school systems are participating in this program, 90% of all public, k-12 systems.
- 29 of these systems are in At-Risk or Distressed Counties (representing 81% of all AR/Dis Counties)
- 45 of these systems are rural, representing 85% of all rural areas
- Current enrollment for the Fall 2022 stands at 1170 and rising.
- Angela Taylor will lead our AP Teacher Cohorts again this year and has already developed a calendar of online professional development offerings to support AP teachers.
- New courses being offered:
  - AP Spanish and AP Physics 1 will be offered this fall for the first time
  - AP Computer Science Principles is being developed for Spring of 2023
- AP Review Boards and Course updates:
  - Each course has been reviewed by three teachers. Their feedback has been shared and reviewed.
  - This feedback guided lead teachers and the administrative team as we completed course updates and edits this summer.
  - These review boards will be held again this school year on all AP course offerings.
- Free AP Training for Teachers:
  - We served 599 teachers in the first two summers of the APAA program.
  - We can serve 300 more in the summer of 2023.
  - Teachers have given great feedback on their APSI training.
- Regional Relationship Specialist (RRS):
  - RRS have spent the summer developing handbooks for APAA stakeholders.
    - The school district/ High School Onboarding Handbook outlines processes and next steps for any districts that want to partner or for new districts that have recently partnered. It also outlines information and next steps to get all high schools onboard within the system.

- The AP Liaison Handbook outlines processes that liaisons should follow, is full of help, information, and videos. It also discusses the roles and responsibilities of liaisons and their pay scale.
  - The Student/Guardian Handbook is full of helpful how-to videos and a PDF that guide both students and parents through Genius and Canvas. Focuses on best practices in online learning and who to go to when help is needed.
- Forms will be sent by RRS to all Principals to designate liaisons for the next school year.
- RRS will visit all schools, especially focusing on one-on-one meetings with schools who are onboard but have not enrolled students or school systems that are not onboard.
- Mini-Grants
  - APAA mini grants were awarded to 43 AP teachers.
  - In year 2, we will extend the APAA mini grant opportunity to up to 150 more teachers with \$500 mini grants.
- Marketing and Media
  - CRISP is still working to develop our following on social media platforms and share pertinent information with all stakeholders throughout the state.
    - **Please follow us and share:**  
Website- [tnapaccessforall.org](http://tnapaccessforall.org)
    - <https://www.facebook.com/apaccessforall>
    - <https://twitter.com/apaccessforall>
    - <https://www.instagram.com/apaccessforall/>
  - CRISP and Wendi – will continue modifications and updates of the website to make sure all information is pertinent and easily accessible.
- Year 2 Budget/Employee Update/ MOU's:
  - The year 2 budget has been set with the carryover from the first year. It has been sent to the TDOE for approval.
  - Due to high enrollment, we will now have a Primary Lead and Lead Teacher in some subject areas. These teachers are paid an additional stipend as they help to oversee and assist the other teachers in their subject areas.
- Sustainability:
  - Detailed talks of year 3 and beyond started in April.

- We will begin to work closely with our TDOE partners to ensure everything is done to make sure this opportunity stays available to students after Sept of 2023.
- Conferences/Travel:
  - Gina recently presented at the CTE Conference in Chattanooga.
  - Our second face-to-face meeting with all Regional Relationship Specialists took place at the Foundation on Aug 2.

### **NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising (2022-23 Tennessee Direct Appropriations Grant)**

- Staffing Updates:
  - One new full-time advisor, Shannon Sands, and one part-time Advisor, Katlyn Jones was hired as of July 1, 2022.
  - A College Partnership Coordinator, Dr. Ramona Williams was hired on July 1, 2022 to work as a liaison with regional institutes of higher education and to coordinate the new partnership with the National Student Clearinghouse- Student Tracker data collection.
- Delivery of Service Plans:
  - All 28 high schools have been contacted to schedule Delivery of Service meetings to plan Advisor initiatives and set goals for the school year.
  - Advisors will begin serving students during August as determined by district calendars.
- Summer Training/Professional Learning:
  - Advisors participated in intensive training and professional development during July to prepare for assisting students with college and career selection, college applications, financial aid, and other matriculation tasks.
  - Advisors completed online professional learning and book studies developed by the NiswongerCARE Leadership Team that included a study on understanding the impact of poverty on educational choice, the Appreciative Advising Framework, and supporting students' achievement and mental health.
  - Advisors visited the campuses of the Kingsport Higher Education Center and King University to learn more about the campuses and the programs and majors offered at their institutions.
- Summer Melt Initiative: Big\*Bright\*Future:
  - Advisors began communicating with students on June 1st through Signal Vine to provide assistance, support and encouragement to the recent Class of 2022 graduates who were identified as at risk of not following through with college entrance based on a number of factors such as being identified as first-generation college students and living in low income households.
  - Students being served this summer total 880 which increased from 587 students

- served in summer of 2021.
- Advisors have sent over 15,000 messages this summer including weekly, personalized text messages based on their college choice and encouragement in navigating the remaining matriculation tasks.
- Advisors are tracking and monitoring progress of students to complete the final steps to post-secondary enrollment.

NiswongerCARE Class of 2022 Outcome Data		
Total Number of Seniors	5,960	
Student Services Summary	Students	Percentage
One-on-one College and Career Planning Meetings	7,545	126%
College Applications Submitted	7,170	120%
Scholarships/Financial Aid Applications Submitted	11,026	185%
Tennessee Promise Outcomes	Students	Percentage
Completed TN Promise Applications	5,690	94%
Submitted a FAFSA	5,049	84%
Attended a Mandatory Meeting	4,645	78%
Submitted Community Service Hours	2,876	48%
FAFSA Outcomes	Students	Percentage
NiswongerCARE Overall FAFSA Completion	4,299	72.1%
Tennessee Overall FAFSA Completion	51,426	66.7%
US Overall FAFSA Completion	2,137,167	55.4%

**Project On Track (2022 Tennessee Department of Education Contract; 2020 Care Foundation of America and 2021 Ballard Health Grant)**

- Project On-Track concluded the summer tutoring program serving 1,522 students at 42 sites. In 14 months, Project On-Track has served approximately 5,500 students in 18 school districts.
- Project On-Track was the recipient of a \$9 million Tennessee Department of Education TN ALL Corps Community Partner Grant. The funding period extends through September 2024.



- Project On-Track will serve students in grades 1-8 in literacy and/or mathematics during the 2022-2023 school year. Nineteen school districts/agencies have joined the partnership.

School District/Agency # of sites

- Bristol City 4
  - Carter County 11
  - Cocke County 8
  - Coalition for Kids 5
  - Elizabethton City 4
  - Greene County 10
  - Greeneville City 5
  - Hamblen County 7
  - Hancock County 2
  - Hawkins County 14
  - Jefferson County 5
  - Johnson City 2
  - Johnson County 4
  - Kingsport City 1
  - Newport City 1
  - Rogersville City 1
  - Sullivan County 6
  - Unicoi County 5
  - Washington County 8
  - **Total 103 Tutoring Sites**
- Dr. Bentley met with all districts and agencies to review their needs assessment plan and to, collaboratively, develop the Memorandum of Understanding regarding program implementation.
  - To serve all Project On-Track sites, the following positions have been added efficiently and effectively to the program: literacy curriculum specialist, mathematics curriculum specialist, communications and data analyst, trauma-informed care specialist, family outreach and engagement specialist, literacy and mathematics tutoring support providers, technology solutions specialist, and finance director.
  - The following colleges/universities have joined the partnership to support tutoring sites: Carson-Newman University, E.T.S.U., King University, Milligan University, Tusculum University, and Walters State Community College. Project staff will provide literacy and mathematics trainings through some university courses and stand-alone professional learning sessions to prepare university students to serve as tutors.
  - During August, project staff will hold numerous informational sessions and trainings for district representatives, site coordinators, academic tutors, teachers, and parents/families. The communication team is developing a directory for school districts to use should there be a need for tutor applicants.

### **Comprehensive Educational Resources – CER (Funded by Our Consortium of School Districts)**

- We now have 28 districts in CER and we serve approximately 118,000 students. We were very happy to add Germantown to our districts this year.
- We will continue our curriculum teamwork with approximately 200 teachers creating supplemental materials for the website. We are adding materials for K-2 science and social studies this year, along with Biology 2 and Physical Science.
- We have created new teacher teams to make common formative assessments. About 90 teachers serve on these teams. These assessments will be housed in our assessment platform (Mastery Connect) and available to all teachers in CER. We will have common formative assessments for approximately 30 different subjects.
- Our data analysis and sharing will continue this year with the 28 out of 29 districts using the common benchmark.

### **CareerConnect (2022-23 Governor's Direct Appropriations Grant)**

- Efforts are underway for the Carter County and Washington County Career Connect expansion. Daniel Boone, David Crockett, Happy Valley, Unaka, Hampton, and Cloudland High Schools will be participating in this pilot project. An estimated 200 students are anticipated to join the CareerConnect program, which will increase our student numbers by 84%.
- Each high school will have a designated Coach. These coaches are educators that are embedded into the high school and will be leading bi-monthly meetings through the year-long project. Washington County Coaches have completed fall training and will begin recruiting on August 5 and will conduct new student orientations in late August/early September. Carter Co. Coaches will begin fall training on August 3 with recruitment and new student orientations to be held later in August. Both projects will have spring training in December.
- Greene County CC students completed their annual Summer Experience, even though Covid interrupted some activities, students were still able to participate in hands-on learning experiences with Greene Technology Instructors and take visits to different area employers and post-secondary institutions.
- Greene County CC will resume with regular monthly meetings beginning on August 8.

### **WE Track (Work Ethic Distinction)**

- Final 2021-22 data show a Work Ethic Distinction earning rate of a little over 10%. This is a big drop from the historical rate of 40%. This drop was anticipated given a recalibration of the program's requirements.
- Law Loving will reconvene the statewide working group to consider suggested revisions to the WED program. This will not need to be as in depth as the last time but will focus on how to bump up participation and completion without sacrificing quality.
- Updates to WE Track users will go out next week, highlighting new status as a statewide graduation distinction (*Tri-Star Scholar*) and soliciting further feedback for the working group to consider.

- Virginia counties remain active; MOU process to re-up for 3 more years will begin this fall.

### **Kindergarten Readiness Project (2022 Funded by Ballad Community Health Improvement Council)**

- The Niswonger Foundation has entered into a grant agreement with the Ballad Community Health Improvement Council.
- We will create a working group of one representative from each of the 18 school districts in the region. This team will have an initial meeting in September.
- This project will:
  - Establish a working group with one representative from each of the 18 school districts that will meet 4 times from September-May.
  - Inventory current practices around kindergarten readiness/screening.
  - Engage stakeholders in information gathering and planning.
  - Identify national best practices in screening for kindergarten readiness.
  - Develop a strategic plan with a vision for region-wide implementation and consensus building around the best and most successful practices in assessing Kindergarten readiness.
- Dr. Tony Dalton from Hamblen County Schools and Dr. Mia Hyde, Director of CER, will facilitate the working group.

### **Professional Development (Funded by Our Consortium of School Districts)**

- 11 School districts plus the University School at ETSU are participating this year with an estimated 4100 educators to attend.
- Simultaneous professional learning will take place at 11 sites across the region.
- Professional learning will be offered for every certified staff in each district from PreK through administrators.
- The keynote will be provided by Jamie Winship of the Identity Method, and it will stream to all sites from the Martin Center at ETSU.
- Approximately 2/3 of the professional learning is peer-lead, but this day could not take place without the partnership of Ballad Health and our higher education partners (King, Milligan, Tusculum, ETSU, and Walters State CC).
- Food City has generously donated all the lunches for the event.

### **Contributions April-July 2022**

<b>Richard Roberts</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,000.00</b>
<b>Scott Niswonger</b>	<b>100,000.00</b>
<b>Ballad Health</b>	<b>50,000.00</b>
<b>Bill Purmort</b>	<b>25,000.00</b>
<b>Ken and Debbie Oldenberg</b>	<b>500.00</b>

**Total \$ 1,175,500.00**