

**Programs and Partnerships
Niswonger Foundation Board Update
Tuesday, November 8, 2022**

News Highlights

- The Niswonger Foundation successfully hosted *Learning Together Day* on October 28. This was an ambitious ten-district, 13 sites, initiative with more than 4500 educators in attendance. Nearly 400 presenters led the sessions. Participating school districts partnered to provide the funding for this professional development. Survey data is available and will be used in planning the event for 2023.
- The Board Calendar for 2023 has been included as Attachment 1.

Program Updates

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

The Fall 2022 Impact Report will be ready by the end of November. Links and copies will be shared as soon as available.

- Quick Statistics:
 - 1680 students are currently enrolled in AP courses – more than double the number this time last year.
 - 25% of the students in the rural Northwest region of TN that took one course last year are taking 2 or more this year.
 - In the Upper Cumberland region, 67% of the students who took a class with us last year signed up for another course this year.
 - In East Tennessee region, 12 new high schools enrolled students this year.
 - In the Mid-Cumberland region, 11 new high schools enrolled students this year.
 - In total, 39 new high schools enrolled this school year.
- Program Highlights
 - 115 school systems are on-board, **91% of all public, k-12 systems.**
 - 29 of these systems are located 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
 - Enrollment for spring 2023 will open Nov 16th.
- AP Cohort
 - Angela Taylor will lead AP Cohorts again this year and has already developed a timely calendar of online PD offerings that will help classroom and online teachers across the state.
- New courses being offered:
 - AP Spanish- 12 enrollments
 - AP Physics 1- 53 enrollments
 - AP Computer Science Principles is in development and should be offered in Fall 2023.
- Free AP Training for Teachers

- Applications for teachers to participate in APSI in the summer of 2023 will be available early November.
- Regional Relationship Specialist (RRS)
 - RRS joined us in Orlando at the College Board Forum.
 - RRS are focusing on the enrollment data for their region to assist the administration team in the creation of the fall Impact Report
- Mini-Grants
 - APAA Mini Grants will be awarded this year.
 - Applications will open mid-November and will remain open until April of 2023.
- Marketing and Media
 - Media outlets across the state have been sharing APAA success after the TDOE news release. Recently the Director of Schools for Wilson Co said this: Jeff Luttrell WCS Director- *“When it comes to this program, the name really says it all. We always want to provide any academic edge we can to help our students in their post-secondary and/or career plans. Having this supplemental program in place broadens the AP scope, and that’s a great thing.”*
 - The APAA website recently received an update. Please check it out at <https://tnapaccessforall.org/>
- Year 3 Budget
 - The first draft of the year 3 budget has been sent to the TDOE. Currently awaiting follow-up.
 - The year 3 budget has been created to reflect the needs of the program for years 3 and beyond. Including staff updates and reflecting the ability to serve 3000 students per year.
- Sustainability
 - After the approval of the year 3 budget, efforts will begin to make the APAA program a continual budget item for the TDOE
- Conferences/Travel
 - The APAA team attended the School Counselors and Administrators Leadership Institute (SCALI) in September and were able to meet many counselors and administrators from across the state.
 - The APAA team also attended the College Board Forum in Orlando - Oct 24-26.

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

- Curriculum Teams will begin meeting in person the week of November 1 to create and review materials.
- All new materials will be posted on the website by Nov 22
- Benchmark 1 is complete. Consortium level data sharing will take place on November 18
- We have started a Leadership Academy for prospective administrators. We have 4 districts and more than 20 participants.

- We have started a social media campaign to highlight the work of our teacher leaders. Find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- We are working with Principal Study Councils to host monthly collaborative meetings for principals. These are led by principals.

CareerConnect (Funded by Governor’s Direct Appropriations Grant)

- CareerConnect pilot sites are successfully operational in Carter County and Washington County high schools. Each school has a Coach (a teacher/staff member who is already embedded into the school) to lead activities with students. CareerConnect has expanded by adding these six high schools and 122 students.
- Greene County CareerConnect is moving through regular semester meetings and will be wrapping those up at the end of November/beginning of December.
- The Class of 2023 are preparing for life post-graduation. 93% are planning to pursue post-secondary education with the majority choosing Walters State and ETSU.
- Spring and Summer preparations are underway for both Carter and Greene counties with summer experience dates tentatively scheduled in June and July 2023.

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

- Supporting 7 districts with job-embedded training for district coaches and teacher-leader coaches by providing curriculum expertise, and working to align state, regional, and district initiatives related to coaching.
- Preparing coaches to facilitate productive school and district level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and attending PLCs to “listen and learn” or gather data regarding priorities, culture, and/or other initiatives.
- Meeting with school leaders to refine their vision of coaching and school priorities, then developing next steps that will support their vision.
- Collaborating with New Teacher Center (NTC) to deliver monthly forums where coaches receive more in-depth training and developing School Leadership as Coaches (SLAC) training for December for school leaders.
- Maintaining communication with Dr. Roberts from SCORE.
- Working with NTC’s Leadership Team to schedule and facilitate quarterly meetings with the Niswonger Foundation Leadership.
- Attending NTC’s NPLN Conference in New Orleans to network with leaders across the nation on program development and sustainability.
- Collaborating with NTC Leadership Team to develop strategies to sustain and scale the Developing Academic Coaching training and support.

Kindergarten Readiness (Funded by STRONG ACC – Ballad Health)

- The first meeting was conducted with participation from all 18 districts.
- A survey of kindergarten screening practices was completed.
- The second meeting is set for December.
- A definition of Kindergarten Readiness will be crafted for the region and sample screening data will be collected.

NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising (Funded by Governor’s Direct Appropriations Grant)

- Delivery of Service meetings were held in all 28 high schools to guide the work of the advisors for the 2022-2023 school year. Attending were the NiswongerCARE Advisor and Supervisor, School Counselor, and Principal.
- Advisors reported to their assigned schools during August and year to date have held 1,993 individual planning meetings and 300 group meetings with a total of 7,608 students participating.
- Leadership team provided monthly supervision meetings with each Advisor in both September and October. Written feedback was provided to each Advisor with comments on strengths observed and areas for improvement.
- Signal Vine messaging platform for communicating with students currently has 2,898 students subscribed, and 21,353 outgoing messages sent.
- Advisors are using the Calendly application to allow 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 continues in her role as social media coordinator and has created a year-long timeline for outreach and engagement with students to remind them of important deadlines and updates. She currently manages platforms on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok.
- NiswongerCARE website (www.niswongercare.org) was updated to include information about new Advisors.
- Dr. Ramona Williams is coordinating efforts with the National Student Clearinghouse and has submitted the first attendance file that will provide student level data regarding college enrollment and persistence.
- College Application and Appreciation Month activities were held in each high school during September resulting in over 2,000 college applications submitted. Representatives from regional colleges and TCAT campuses were also on site at many schools to further assist students in applying and providing application fee waivers.
- TN Promise application opened on August 1 for this year’s seniors and will close on November 1. Data through October 24 reflect that over 83% of the 5,931 eligible seniors have applied.
- Niswonger Foundation and ETSU partnered as the site location for the Counselor Convening as part of the Learning Together Professional Development Day on October 28. Sessions that highlighted best practices were held for over 190 Pre-K - High school counselors. Presenters include experienced school

counselors in the region along with external stakeholders representing Walters State Community College, ETSU College of Medicine, Milligan University, and the Hispanic Outreach Leadership Association of the Lakeway Area.

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

Current & Upcoming Semesters

- Stats for the Fall 22 and Yearlong 22-23 terms.
 - 993 enrollments representing 37 schools
 - Students in grades 8-12
 - 47 teachers; 10 new
 - 37 different courses
 - 64 course sections
- Enrollment for the Spring 2023 semester opens on November 16.

New Staff Member

- Continued to provide training and support for Dr. Catherine Edwards in her new role as Supervisor of Student Success for Niswonger Online. Catherine's work has focused on teacher evaluations and communication with students and teachers.

Canvas Impact (online coursework platform)

- Niswonger Online & APAA administrators attended a series of training sessions on the Canvas Impact tool which allows for better communication with students.
 - Our first Impact campaign for teachers in October centered around all the communication tools available in Canvas.
 - The director created updated help resources to show teachers how to use these tools. These resources were also shared with AP Access for ALL teachers.
 - Increased usage of these communication tools noted over the course of the campaign.
 - A teacher campaign focused on quality feedback for students is planned for November.

Canvas App Guides

- The director completed a thorough guide to the Canvas Applications for both teachers and students. The app is available for both Apple and Android devices. It is a great alternative when teachers or students do not have access to a desktop computer. These guides have been shared with Niswonger Online and APAA teachers and students.

Live Canvas Trainings for Teachers and Administrators

- Live Canvas training sessions have been scheduled for November. A Canvas team member will walk through all available features and give time for focused practice and questions. These training sessions are available as part of our Canvas package. Additional training options will be scheduled for the spring semester and summer.
 - Grading and Feedback; Teachers; November 15
 - Canvas Blueprints; Administrators; November 29

Early Childhood Course Development

- The director has met twice with Heather Logan from Strong ACC / Bright Start NETN. They are interested in partnering with Niswonger Online to develop courses in the Early Childhood Education Careers pathway as part of the Bright Start NETN Workforce Development & Support Strategy.
- We hope to have Early Childhood Education Careers I ready for Fall 2023.

Project On Track (Funded by the Tennessee Department of Education)

- Project On-Track was the recipient of a \$9M TN 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. Seventeen school districts/agencies have joined the partnership. After extensive planning with all districts, the final number of physical sites is listed below. It is important to note that 115 different tutoring clusters are being provided at the 96 physical sites.
- School District/Agency and number of sites
 - Bristol City 2
 - Carter County 11
 - Cocke County 8
 - Coalition for Kids 4
 - Elizabethton City 4
 - Greene County 11
 - Greeneville City 5
 - Hamblen County 7
 - Hancock County 2
 - Hawkins County 14
 - Johnson City 2
 - Johnson County 4
 - Kingsport City 2
 - Newport City 1
 - Rogersville City 1
 - Sullivan County 7
 - Unicoi County 5
 - Washington County 6
 - **Total Sites 96**
- As of October 27, Project On-Track is serving the following number of students:
- Content Area Number of Students in First Semester
 - Grades 1-3 literacy 1555
 - Grades 4-8 literacy 356
 - Grades 1-8 math 635
 - **Total 2546**

- The project’s goal for number of students to serve the first semester was 1500. We have exceeded that goal by 1,046 students. We are on track to exceed our goal of serving 3000 students in two tutoring cycles during the 2022-2023 school year.
- **If our enrollment holds next semester, we will serve over 5000 students this school year.**

Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Appalachia (Funding from SRI International through a contract with REL Appalachia)

- Niswonger Foundation continues to partner with SRI in their recently awarded 5-year contract to operate the Regional Education Laboratory for four Appalachian-area states (REL Appalachia).
- There are currently two active projects in this partnership.
 - Niswonger Foundation and 10 area school districts are in the early stages of the “Strengthening Students' Preparation for Careers and College” project.
 - The second project, “Accelerating Early Literacy Success,” we are focusing on an evaluation of our tutoring efforts, Project On-Track.
- Most recently, Dr. Deborah Jonas and Dr. Victoria Shaffer visited us in late October. Dr. Jonas is Director of REL AP; Victoria is recognized as a national leader in rural education and serves as our primary contact with SRI. They attended the Synthetic Biology symposium at ETSU to learn more about the concept and our regional efforts. On Friday, they observed the Learning Together day. During their visit we discussed possible future collaborations, including ways to provide support for grandparents serving as primary custodians of students and professional development for mathematics teachers.

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

- End of Grant Activities: The Rural LIFE grant will conclude in March 2023, so this fall's focus has been on creating and disseminating lessons learned about the grant.
- Members of our grant staff and grant partners will be presenting at several conferences this fall, including NREA, AMLE, and Learning Forward.
 - October 20-21: During a collaborative virtual presentation with other EIR grantees at the National Rural Education Association (NREA), we presented our lessons learned about building relationships with grant participants (e.g., students, teachers, school and district leaders, community members) in rural areas.
 - November 3-5: Two teachers, a principal, and an instructional coach from one of our Rural LIFE schools will be presenting a speed session about their RL school plan at the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE), and grant partners Leading Edge Learning (LEL) will present a session showcasing RL's shared services network model and how it promotes equity and access.

- December 4-6: We will be presenting two 2-hour learning sessions during **Learning Forward's** annual conference. LEL and a RL coach will lead a session focused on high quality instructional materials (HQIM) while members of our staff and participants from RL's Strong Start Network (SSN) will share learnings from the collaborative rural network.
- We have held several working sessions to brainstorm and draft grant **learning statements**. This process involves reviewing survey data, school team learning reflections, focus groups, feedback from professional learning events, coaching logs, grant impact story interviews, and other material to determine what we have learned over the past five years. We will use these to produce our final dissemination materials, including the final grant impact story videos, a coaching series focused on lessons learned and toolkits for teachers, leaders, and other grantees.
- Since the formal grant's study and treatment came to an end this summer, we have focused on planning and providing focused deep dives in partnership with TNTP and LEL.
 - In partnership with TNTP, we have offered a 2-part learning series for local school and district leaders and instructional coaches called **Leader Learning Collaborative**. An extension of the Strong Start Network, the series is open to any leader or coach in grades 5-12 who wants to learn more about supporting teachers with secondary literacy training. Twenty-four people (6 district leaders, 9 school leaders, and 9 instructional coaches) attended the first virtual session while 14 (1 district leader, 7 school leaders, and 6 instructional coaches) attended the second session, which was a day-long learning event in Greeneville.
 - We are working with LEL to produce a **2-part instructional coach learning series** focused on lessons learned about our grant. This series will take place in February and will be split into a virtual overview session and a full-day deep dive into practical strategies for instructional coaches.
- We continue to meet with our videography partner to deliver our **grant impact stories**. So far, we have one final product: [Rural LIFE-Creating Opportunities for Collaboration](#) (Click the link to watch.). By the end of this month or early next month, we will be able to share another video showcasing the SSN, our networked learning community and a longer video encompassing the entire grant's work.
- The Rural LIFE partnership with TNTP has concluded following a final meeting earlier this month. TNTP shared valuable data and feedback about the SSN with us, including major gains in access to grade-level assignments and some eye-opening observations about the efficacy of school leaders actively learning alongside their teachers.
- We were honored to be featured in the inaugural [EIR Innovation Insights newsletter](#), which showcased our annual summer institute, Reflect & Connect. Additionally, members of our staff continue to participate in several of the EIR Communities of Practice (CoPs), such as the ones focused on Project Management, Sustainability, and Rural Education, and have found them especially helpful. Our staff also attended the **2022 Education Innovation and**

Research Project Directors and Evaluators Technical Assistance Meeting and found the sessions engaging and responsive to our needs.

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

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)
- Due to leadership changes two schools have dropped from participation (Unaka High School and Cosby Elementary) This brings totals to:
 - Cohort 1: 11 high schools, 14 middle schools (treatment), 13 middle schools (control)
 - Cohort 2: 7 high schools, 5 middle schools (treatment), 6 middle schools (control)
 - Total Treatment: 37
 - Total Control: 19
- By the end of the grant 56 schools will have been served
- Cohort 1 treatment middle schools will begin receiving services summer 2023; we are beginning to contact these school districts to prepare for the onboarding process for these schools.

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
- A make-up training for administrators who could not attend training summer 2022 will be held in November on the campus of Tusculum University

Partners

- TNTP math training was held for 27 teachers across the region at the Learning Center
- Robotics teams are preparing for their first competition
- New classes/opportunities include the following:
 - A new STEM class is in place at Bulls Gap and is being offered as a related arts class
 - Volunteer High School had their first robotics team last year as an after-school program; this year they have included this as a class during the school day which permits more students to participate.
 - Sulphur Springs has initiated a CTE related arts class for grades 6-8; stations in the class are aligned with STEM CTE offerings at Daniel Boone High School. This program has received much recognition, and many schools have visited Sulphur Springs to learn how to implement a similar program.
 - Several schools are taking advantage of Niswonger Online Algebra I for eighth graders through the grant, including Del Rio, Hancock Middle School, and Sulphur Springs.

- University of Alabama Huntsville conducted two days of cybersecurity training for students on Walters State Niswonger Campus.
- TNTP is holding monthly PLC meetings virtually for participating middle school science and math teachers across the region.
- Several schools are participating in WSCC's Workforce 101 course, additionally, several schools in STEM.LD now have students participating in Niswonger Online courses; for some of these schools it is their first time participating in Niswonger Online.

Other Updates

- The STEM.LD team is working collaboratively to create an RFP for a platform that will connect students and teachers with STEM opportunities.
- The STEM.LD team has conducted school visits during September and October (and will continue into November and December). During these visits focus groups of students and teachers were held. Good information was gathered overall, but, information that supports development of requirements for the aforementioned platform.
- Three community work groups have been formed for each area in the STEM.LD region: west, mid, and east. These work groups will convene periodically to inform the work of the grant.

WE Track (Funded by Governor's Direct Appropriations Grant)

- Statewide working group has held three meetings, thus far, to consider changes to standards. The focus of the discussion is on improving participation and access.
- This group is also considering ways to partner with state and other groups to help pay for voluntary drug screens.
- There's been an uptick in employers added to the site as new systems come on board; we are now over 250 employers strong.
- Upgrades and feature improvements will be added to WE Track over winter break to allow for better user experience.
- Nine systems in Virginia remain active; will be meeting with the group this semester to gather feedback and discuss renewing MOUs.

Grant and Partnership Update

- We have been informed by the Tennessee Department of Education that the AP Access for ALL partnership has been funded for Year Three (FY 2023-24). A budget, in excess of \$3 million, has been submitted to TDOE.
- Preliminary discussion/work is beginning on a possible Appalachian Regional Commission ARISE grant. First step is a possible \$500,000 planning grant that may lead to a \$10 million first-year implementation grant. The focus would be workforce readiness.
- We are awaiting word on the submission of a 2022 Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant with the U.S. Department of Education (\$8 million/5 year). Grant announcements are expected in December.

Publications and Webpage

- Work is beginning on the 2022 Annual Report. Distribution will be in January.

Contributions (August 2022 to October 2022)

| | | |
|---------------------------|----|------------|
| Scott Niswonger | \$ | 191,000.00 |
| Paul and Tammy Carmichael | \$ | 35,000.00 |
| Harold and Nancy Dishner | \$ | 10,000.00 |
| State Farm Matching Gift | \$ | 1,500.00 |
| James Durham | \$ | 2,500.00 |
| Total | \$ | 240,000.00 |

Niswonger Foundation Current Board Representation at the State Level

- Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities
- Tennesseans for Quality Early Education
- Governor's Early Literacy Foundation
- State Collaborative on Reforming Education
- Tennessee Arts Commission
- Tennessee Department of Education Partners Council