

**Programs and Partnerships
Niswonger Foundation Board Update
Monday, August 30, 2021**

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

- Rural LIFE held its third Summer Institute the week of June 7-11. Over 500 K-12 teachers and leaders across Tennessee attended one or more of the 14 Virtual Summer Institute (VSI) sessions, which covered a range of personalized learning and literacy topics. Presenters included Rural LIFE’s knowledgeable literacy coaches, innovative learning partners Nancy Mangum and Theresa Gibson of Leading EDge Learning, and award-winning educator Kristin Ziemke.
- The Strong Start Network—a learning community composed of teacher leaders, school leaders, and district leaders from Cocke, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, and Jefferson counties—met for a two-day in-person retreat on June 12-13. Jeta Donovan of TNTP and Bethany Fillers of Rural LIFE facilitated the retreat sessions, which focused on knowledge-building while using high-quality ELA materials.
- In June and July, middle schools in the Rural LIFE program participated in three days of professional learning with Leading EDge Learning, our longtime partner for high-quality facilitation. Over 60 teacher leaders and school leaders gathered in person to learn, collaborate, and develop their 2021-2022 Rural LIFE school plans.
- Over the course of the summer, Rural LIFE received and approved seven sustainability grant applications from former Rural LIFE participants. Sustainability grants provide additional funding to sustain pre-established literacy and personalized learning practices and to spread those practices school- or district-wide. Teams attended grant workshops and met with Rural LIFE sustainability grant coach Brooke Drinnon to develop their plans.
- We welcomed two new Rural LIFE literacy coaches--Stephanie Boyd, who will serve schools in Washington County, and Anne Marie Pierce, who will serve schools in Sullivan County.

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

School and District Counts

- Treatment = 28 schools (14 high schools and 14 middle schools)
- Control = 14 middle schools
- Districts (combined treatment and control) = 13
- Goal is 60 middle schools (combined) and 30 high schools

Partners

- If I Had A Hammer - mathematics
- University of Alabama at Huntsville – cyber security

- Purdue University - engineering
- ETSU - epidemiology
- Streamworks – robotics
- Bio Builder (MIT) – synthetic biology
- TNTP – science
- TNTP = mathematics
- Civil Air Patrol – aviation
- WSCC – Virtual Reality and Career Exploration

Progress toward Goals

- 28/28 (100%) schools have completed orientation meetings
- 16/28 (57%) schools have moderate to high completion rates of the initial training modules

Administrator Training

- 6/28 schools have had someone complete all four modules
- 8/28 schools have had someone complete at least three of four modules
- 11/28 schools have had someone complete at least two of four modules
- 12/28 schools have had someone complete at least one of four modules
- 19/28 (68%) schools have confirmed interest and are matched with at least one deep dive partner

Next Steps

- Follow up with treatment schools and districts to ensure completion of initial training and partner matching.
- Offer administrator training in September for those administrators who didn't complete it in July.
- Make contacts and in-person visits to recruit more schools for participation in year two.
- Plan and prepare logistics for out-of-school time activities.
- Research landscape in the region for Algebra I in eighth grade, use data to develop strategic plan to increase opportunities.

NTC Developing Academic Coaches (2019 EIR/USDOE Partnership Grant)

The Niswonger Consortium was one of four districts (two rural – two urban) to be selected to partner with New Teacher Center (NTC) to implement a high-quality, standards-aligned instructional coaching (IC) program made possible by a \$12.8 million grant from the Department of Education's Education, Innovation and Research (EIR) Expansion program received by the New Teacher Center.

Program Goals-The goal of this program is to improve the effectiveness of teachers via job-embedded coaching and advance the learning of K-12 students in high-need rural and urban school districts.

Program Specification

- 36 Treatment Schools and 34 Delayed Treatment Schools across 10 districts
- 31 School Based Coaches and 12 District Coaches
- 19 ELA Coaches
- 3 Science Coaches

- 21 Math Coaches

Niswonger Foundation Staff

- Dr. Allison Seeley, Grant Director, completed the doctor of education degree (Ed,D) at Milligan University. She taught English at the middle and high school levels, most recently at Science Hill High School. She has also served as a curriculum coach at the middle and high school levels. She received her coaching certification from Lipscomb University.
- Dr. Sherry Cockerham has served as a district math curriculum coach and high school math teacher for Johnson City Schools, retiring with over 30 years of teaching and coaching experience in both urban and rural settings at the middle school, high school, and collegiate levels in Tennessee and Kentucky. She was named Johnson City Schools' Teacher of the Year in 2007.
- Dr. Mindy Volk has nine years of teaching experience. She has taught at Jefferson County High School in Dandridge, Tennessee, and Cherokee Middle School in Kingston, Tennessee. She served as the 9-12 grade literacy coach for her district. She is currently adjunct faculty at Tusculum University. She obtained her Doctorate in Administration from Carson-Newman University.

Program Quality Survey Feedback

- Year 1: From teachers, when asked about support from the coach, "She is consistently available to me for questions, help, and encouragement. She models as well as explains how to do something new. She has taught me how to use Mastery Connect to better improve my DOK in teaching/questioning my students."; "Working with my coach helped me align more tightly to standards;" " I have learned how to analyze my assessment data and use it to further the knowledge of my students!"
- Summer Year 2 (Virtual) Training Overview: Supporting Equity Through Coaching, Meeting the Needs of Every Learner, Planning and Observing to Support Equitable Instruction, Supporting our Underserved Students.
- Feedback from Summer Institute: "The most valuable aspects of the training were the breakout rooms, self-reflection, Jamboards, and opportunities to role play;" "I felt the breakout rooms during this Institute allowed me to process the new content with like-minded individuals and produced many quality conversations."

Niswonger Online (Funded by our Consortium School Districts)

- Fall 2021 general education courses opened on Aug 16.
- Currently 1100 students are enrolled in courses with us (note these are just Gen Ed courses, this does not include upcoming enrollment for AP courses)
- Teachers are being hired to cover the increased course demand, especially in Spanish, math, and science courses.
- Four additional school systems who learned of our work via AP Access for All have now signed on as Affiliate members to access our Gen Ed courses. Those systems are:

- Overton
- Athens City (K-8 who wants our courses for 8th grade enrichment)
- Cannon
- Collierville City
- NiswongerOnline.com is continuously being updated with semester dates and information, our course catalog and program partnerships.
- We have some remaining funds from the CARE Foundation grant that have been approved to help new schools that become Affiliate members because of AP Access for All.

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

- 102 school systems are fully on-board with AP Access for All ~73% of all public, K-12, systems.
- 21 of these systems are in At-Risk or Distressed Counties (representing 58% of all AR/Dis Counties)
- 35 of these systems are rural representing 66% of all rural areas.
- Schools have started to enroll in AP Access for All courses: 450 students have enrolled as of August 17. Our estimate for this fall is 1,000 enrollments in just AP courses.
- New Teachers
 - 150 AP Teachers submitted an interest form to teach an AP course in association with the AP Access for All initiative.
 - 87 AP teachers submitted their credentials and completed training to teach AP courses through the initiative. These 87 teachers give us the ability to serve at least 1800 students this fall. That is far more than what we expect for enrollment but believe we will serve this many by the spring semester.
 - 50 teachers currently have sections that they are prepping for student enrollment. That will cover the 1,000 students we estimate to enroll this fall. However, if that number increases, we are prepared with more teachers waiting anxiously.
 - We are proud to have teachers from 45 different school systems now ready to teach with us!
 - The following is a summary of the courses, teachers, number of sections and students that can be served in the first year of the AP Access for All program.

Course	Teachers available	Sections Available	Students we can serve
Art History	2	7	140
Biology	6	6	120
Calculus AB	13	13	260
Computer Science A	2	3	60
Environmental Science	6	6	120
Human Geography	9	9	180
Language and Comp.	12	12	240
Literature and Comp	9	9	180
Macroeconomics	4	4	80
Microeconomics	4	4	80
Psychology	5	5	100
Statistics	8	8	160
U.S. Government	3	3	60
U.S. History	4	4	80
	87	93	1860

- Free AP Training for Teachers
 - 248 teachers across 30 different districts submitted an Advanced Placement Training Interest Form.
 - Free Advanced Placement Training was offered to 145 Tennessee teachers across 30 districts.
 - We will be surveying teachers in September to understand their needs for next summer's training and then working with College Board and APSI to prepare as many teachers as possible.
- Marketing and Media
 - Nashville based, CRISP Communications is working hard to develop our following on social media and to share pertinent information with all stakeholders throughout the state
 - Please follow us and share our social media accounts listed below:

- Website- tnapaccessforall.org
- Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/apaccessforall>
- Twitter- <https://twitter.com/apaccessforall>
- Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/apaccessforall/>
- They are doing RRS spotlights to introduce our Specialists
- They are working on interviews in major markets to spread the word of APAA across the state
- APAA Swag has been ordered and is being sent to RRS. Flyers have been developed to share with schools. A banner and table runner are being developed to take to conferences.
- Conferences:
 - Gina, Samatha, and Wendi are scheduled to attend the TN SCALI conference in September at a vendor table. We look forward to meeting some of our AP Liaisons and Admin from across the state.
 - We are also sending in a proposal to speak at the National College Board conference, in Texas, in July.
 - Nancy will represent us at the TOSS Superintendents Study Council in September.
- CRISP and Wendi- 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 1st TN region but have a great lead and are interviewing her next week.
- Our new Regional Relationship Specialists (RRS) can be seen on the following link. <https://tnapaccessforall.org/liaisons/>

NiswongerCARE College and Career Advising (2021-22 Tennessee Direct Appropriations Grant)

Staffing Updates

- Eight new full-time advisors were hired and were oriented during July and August.
- Two new part-time advisors were hired through our higher education partnerships.

Delivery of Service Plans

- High schools have been contacted and Delivery of Service meetings at each school are underway. *Note: Sullivan County's consolidation of three high schools reduces the number of schools now served to 28, although student counts remain the same.*
- Advisors will begin serving students as schools reopen by providing in person services as determined by each districts' calendar.

Summer Training/Professional Learning

- Advisors participated in intensive training and professional development throughout July.
- Advisors completed an online professional learning course developed by the NiswongerCARE Leadership Team that included information, assignments, book studies, and interactive discussion boards. An additional book study on Inclusion was added.
- Advisors visited the campuses of local community colleges and technology centers to prepare for assisting students who plan to attend those schools.

*Summer Melt Initiative: Big*Bright*Future*

- Advisors began communicating with students on June 1st through Signal Vine, which is a two-way text messaging platform.
- Students receive weekly, personalized text messages based on their college choice that will continue until September.
- Advisors are tracking and monitoring progress of students to complete the final steps to post-secondary enrollment.
- Students enrolled this summer total 587 which reflects a 23% increase over summer of 2020.
- Advisors have sent 12,827 messages to students with a high response rate.

Highlights

- Directors Denise Arnold and Anita Kilbourne-Greer have been selected to present at the 2021 National College Attainment Network's international conference to share their leadership model and how they engage stakeholders from multiple districts.
- NiswongerCARE was featured in the 2021 SCORE report: [*Community-Based College Success Programs: A Playbook For Data-Driven Student Support*](#)
- Dr. Nancy Dishner and Denise Arnold were selected to participate in an interview with the Senior Policy Analyst at Education Commission of the States to discuss Tennessee education policy decisions and approaches to implementation of education policy,

Class of 2021 TN Promise/FAFSA Completion

To be eligible for the Tennessee Promise (TNP) scholarship, students must complete several mandatory and deadline-sensitive steps to stay in the pipeline to receive funds. Below is a summary of the progression of NiswongerCARE schools for each milestone. Advisors also work to ensure that

every senior completes a FAFSA including those who have not elected to apply to Tennessee Promise. As reflected in the data below, Niswonger*CARE* schools exceeded both the state and national percentages for FAFSA Completion for the Class of 2021.

Class of 2021	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Niswonger <i>CARE</i> Seniors Served	5563	—
Tennessee Promise Outcomes		
Apply to Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation	5448	89%
Submit a FAFSA	4615	83%
Attend a Mandatory Meeting	4585	82%
Submit Community Service Hours	2743	49%
Overall TNP Completion	2743	49%
FAFSA Outcomes		
Niswonger <i>CARE</i> Overall FAFSA Completion	4243	76.2%
Tennessee Overall FAFSA Completion	70,596	72.4%
US Overall FAFSA Completion	3,392,510	55.4%

CareerConnect

- CareerConnect students across 10th and 11th grades participated in the annual summer experience at Greene Technology Center. During summer experiences, students had the opportunity to visit local employers across a variety of industries, visit local post-secondary institutions, and participate in hands-on career demonstrations lead by GTC instructors.
- Monthly meetings are beginning to happen in-person this fall. We will be abiding by Covid policies Greeneville City and Greene County schools have in place at the time of meetings. If school systems switch to either hybrid or online learning, CareerConnect will switch to online.
- While the majority of CareerConnect students have returned to schools in-person, there are several students who switched to online learning full-time (via TOPS or another online learning program). Since there are some students who have made the full-time online switch and to allow an opportunity for students who may be placed in quarantine to still participate in CareerConnect activities, there will be an online option available to those students along with in-person meetings.
- Additional recruitment efforts for the Class of 2024 cohort are happening to allow students who were virtual an opportunity to apply and participate in CareerConnect.

- Conversations with Walter's State's RHiTA program are happening for a potential program collaboration. CareerConnect students could have access to a student success dual enrollment course that is only available to them in the Spring of 2022.

Project On Track (2020 Care Foundation of America and 2021 Ballard Health Grant)

- Niswonger Foundation's "Project On-Track" is a literacy tutoring program for students in grades K-3 whose learning has been significantly impacted by the loss of instructional time over the past 12 months. The tutoring program will begin this summer and continue into the 2021-2022 school year.
- Sixteen districts/agencies have submitted signed Memorandums of Understanding to implement Project On-Track beginning this summer and/or during the 2021-2022 school year: Coalition for Kids, Cocke County, Carter County, Greene County, Hancock County, Hawkins County, Jefferson County, Johnson City, Johnson County, Sullivan County, Unicoi County, Washington County, Rogersville City, Elizabethton City, Hamblen County, and Greeneville City.
- Newport City is reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding to implement Project On-Track beginning the 2021-2022 school year. Kingsport City is in discussion with implementation to begin the 2021-2022 school year.
- Dr. Bentley, program director, initiated in-person meetings with district officials in the following systems, in August, to discuss Fall 2021 implementation: Coalition for Kids, Cocke County, Greene County, Hancock County, Hawkins County, Jefferson County, Johnson City, Johnson County, Sullivan County, Unicoi County, Washington County, Elizabethton City, Hamblen County, Rogersville City, Newport City, Kingsport City, and Greeneville City.
- The Amplify training for new site coordinators was Friday, August 20.
- Focus groups' report and tutor survey results were reviewed with the project's advisory team and SRI International on Thursday, August 12. The key findings from the two documents are:
 1. Relationships – Tutors recognize that relationships with students are essential for student achievement. Students who know that a tutor is genuinely invested in his or her success will be more motivated to work harder.
 2. Experience matters – Tutors who worked in other educational settings were quicker to act/react to students' instructional needs. These tutors were more comfortable with the project's instructional materials (Amplify Reading and mCLASS Intervention).
 3. Adequate training (initial and ongoing) – Whether tutors are highly experienced or not, quality training with ongoing support is critical for success. Ample time should be provided between initial training and implementation to trouble-shoot issues with materials.
 4. High-quality tutoring materials – Using evidence-based instructional materials that align to other district programs will enhance and add value to the overall experiences for students. Materials must be made available to tutors with adequate preparation time.
 5. Group size matters – The recommended size is one tutor to 3-4 students. This

allows the tutor to pinpoint students' instructional needs and to provide timely feedback.

- Project On-Track has partnered with Ballad Health and the TN Department of Education to develop training content for tutors regarding ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and TIC (Trauma-Informed Care). Jenny McCloud, Trauma Informed Administrator with Ballad Health is facilitating the content development. Project On-Track tutors will be another pair of ears and eyes for students who may be enduring negative effects due to social, emotional, and/or physical experiences in their lives. Training will take place this fall.

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

Benchmark Assessment/Data

- First Benchmark window is September 27-October 8
- Steering Committee members completed a survey in mid-July to inform benchmark assessment/data decisions for the 21-22 school year
 - 23 out of 25 districts will use CASE benchmarks
 - 17 out of 23 will use the CER testing windows (some are undecided)
 - 13 out of 23 will use the CER pacing guides (some are undecided)
 - 20 out of 23 will share their data (some are undecided)
 - 20 out of 23 will have Mia prepare their district data

Curriculum Teams/Chairs

- We agreed to increase the stipend team members receive. Team members will receive \$400 and chairs will receive \$450 for the 21-22 school year. We also agreed to budget 30% to cover benefits with the stipends.
- Orientation zooms took place in late July and early August; 96.3% of participants found the orientation zoom helpful
- We have 5 districts who haven't contributed teachers to teams. It is a goal to have more districts contribute teachers to teams next year.
- We currently have vacancies on: 1st math, 3rd science, 4th math, 4th science, 5th math, 8th science, algebra 2, and US History. We need to fill 9 positions total.

Materials

- Materials work has begun. Team members have been assigned standards for the first benchmark.
- We are asking each participant to contribute at least 6 materials this year. They are compensated for about 60 hours' worth of work.
- We were scheduled for in person reviews the week of Aug 23. The Steering Committee decided to make the reviews virtual for this first session and revisit the decision prior to the November session.

Website- <https://www.comprehensiveeducationalresources.org/>

- In July, all the standards/materials were reorganized. The website is ready for our second year and to have additional materials added. In June, the website was reorganized using the pacing guides. Pacing guides were added to the website.
- Teams have been added to the website and the vision was updated.

Vision and Goals

- We created a small vision/goals team to update and revise the current goals. These were presented to the Steering Committee at our July meeting, and they were passed.

Communication

- Monthly meetings with Directors and monthly meetings with the Steering Committee continue. Additional email updates are sent as needed.
- Directors receive a progress report monthly.
- Steering Committee meets next on September 20 from 1-3 Eastern.
- Many districts have scheduled CER presentations for the leadership and/or teachers. These include Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Newport, Chester, Henderson, Sullivan, Washington, Elizabethton, University School, and Cocke.

Recruitment

- Fayetteville City Schools joined CER. They have 1,402 students.
- We now have 25 districts in CER and we are serving approximately 120,000 students.

WE Track (Work Ethic Distinction)

- The Niswonger Foundation is initiating a strategy to make WED a state recognized distinction. This will require action from the legislature.
- New counties have signed on, including our first schools in Maury and Sequatchie Counties. We are continuing to work with Shelby County on instituting WED there; likewise with re-starting the distinction in some Southeast Tennessee schools
- WE Track is undergoing upgrades to allow for better integration with Virginia and any other possible non-Tennessee versions of the program
- New standards are also being implemented as part of WE Track upgrades (see attachment).

Professional Development Activities

Learning Together Day is scheduled for October 22, 2021. This is the inaugural year of what is planned to become a Northeast Tennessee annual professional development day.

- The Niswonger Foundation created a Leadership Team with members from all participating districts and is taking lead responsibility for the work.
- 8 districts will participate in 2021: Sullivan, Johnson, Kingsport, Carter, Newport, Greene, Elizabethton, Cocke. Greeneville City (instructional coaches participating), and University School.

Seven Topics and Locations

- CTE/Stem (hosted by Sullivan and Johnson Counties at West Ridge HS)
- Virtual Learning/AP (hosted by Kingsport at Dobyons-Bennett HS)
- Literacy (hosted by Greene and Cocke Counties at Chuckey-Doak HS)
- Benchmark/Standards (hosted by Elizabethton and Newport at Elizabethton HS)
- Leadership (hosted by Carter County and TOSS at TCAT Elizabethton)
- Fine Arts/Physical Education (hosted by ETSU)
- Counselor Convening (hosted by Niswonger Foundation at ETSU)

Recent Contributions (June – August 2021)

Scott Niswonger	\$	44,000.00
Andy and Mary Czajkowski	\$	15,000.00
Charles Koch	\$	15,000.00
Tom Turnwald	\$	15,000.00
Bronson Winters	\$	2,500.00
Jim Durham	\$	2,000.00
Corporate Giving	\$	<u>74.00</u>
Total	\$	93,574.00

Niswonger Foundation Webpage and Media

- Niswonger Foundation’s webpage is receiving a complete update. The website is in the process of being moved to a new platform – WordPress. This should go live in early September.
- Latest edition of Niswonger Foundation eNews was emailed on August 16.
- There is a concerted effort to improve our social media presence. Attached is a complete listing of Niswonger Foundation programs on social media. “Likes” and “Follows” are greatly appreciated.