

**Programs and Partnerships
Niswonger Foundation Board Update
Thursday, August 10, 2023**

News Highlights

- *Learning Together Day* is set for Monday, October 16, 2023. Eight districts plus University School are participating this year. We anticipate about 3,000 educators in simultaneous, peer-led professional learning. Over 250 presenters include educators; and higher education and community partners. Registration launches on August 14. Ballard Health joined the Niswonger Foundation as sponsors.
- Nancy has been asked to serve in the *Tennessee Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) review process.

Program Updates

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

- We are awaiting final confirmation of ESSR 4 funds that will begin in October. We are reassured by my TDOE contacts that all is approved, just awaiting signatures.
- There are currently 1334 students enrolled for Fall 2023. That number will continue to rise until courses open on August 14.
- Standing strong with 97% of all public-school systems in TN partnered with APAA. (123 School Districts)
- 31 of these systems are in At-Risk or Distressed Counties, representing 86% of all AR/Dis Counties
- 48 of these systems are rural, representing 91% of all rural areas.
- Each spring, at least two teachers from each subject area are asked to complete a *Course Review* and meet to discuss. These reviews are being used by Lead teachers to complete course updates this summer.
- Lead Teachers have been completing reviews of Year 1 AP exam scores to compile information on areas in the course in which students did not perform to expectations. This information is being used for course edits/updates.
- Staff Updates
 - For years 3+, we have decreased our statewide staffing of Regional Relationship Specialists (RRS). We now have the state divided into four regions/four specialists.
- New courses have been added for 2023-24 - for a total of 21 AP offerings:
 - AP Computer Science Principles
 - AP 2D Art and Design
 - AP 3D Art and Design
 - AP Drawing
- AP Government and US History have been redeveloped to reflect needed updates and move the APAA program away from the FLVS course.
- AP Pre-Calc is in development and on track to be offered Spring 2024.

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

- 28 participating school districts.
- 134,000 students served.
- All membership agreements have been signed for SY2023-24.
- New supplemental materials are currently being added for AP Human Geography, K-5 writing supports, and K-8 computer science. Other curriculum teams are continuing to update their subject areas.
- For next school year, we will offer funding to help defray the costs to districts for substitutes while teachers are working on curriculum teams.
- Expanding the support for the math textbook adoption with collaborative teams and leadership from Dr. Sherry Cockerham with NF Developing Academic Coaches.

- Continuing the work with common formative assessments.
- Continuing the work with principal study council; supporting principals with peer-led professional learning with TASL credit.
- Expanding the work of the Instructional Coach Collaborative with the support of Dr. Seeley and Dr. Cockerham with Developing Academic Coaches.
- After a very successful first Leadership Academy, we will be expanding this program with additional districts participating next year.
- We have added Renaissance Learning as a consortium partner this year; they will provide a 15% discount to members; we have also added School Status. They will provide a 20% discount to members.

CareerConnect (Funded by Governor's Direct Appropriations Grant)

- The expected outcomes for 2022-23 have been achieved:
 - Increase the number of CC students receiving industry certifications.
 - Onboard 6 new high schools to the program with a total number of 11 participating high schools.
 - Strengthen career exploration and credentialing opportunities.
 - Ensure that students develop essential skills needed to be successful in careers (communication, teamwork, time management, problem solving, etc.)
- We have signed on 12 new high schools for CareerConnect: Johnson County, West Ridge, Sullivan East, Dobyns-Bennett, DB Excel, Morristown East, Morristown West, Cherokee, Volunteer, Clinch, Hancock County, and Milan. These will join our existing schools, bringing our total CC schools to 23.
- With that there have been some new additional staff added. We have hired a CC coach in each of our new schools and have also hired a full-time staff member, Kim Gass. She brings over 30 years of experience in public education and CTE. She will assist in overseeing a cluster of CC schools, but her responsibilities will be focused on business development efforts: expanding our employer network, connecting students to employment pathways (apprenticeships, work-based learning, internships, etc.), and identifying credentialing opportunities that can be built into the program.
- Summer programming is running and will conclude on July 26th with CC Coaches training.

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

- The research phase of the EIR Implementation Grant for Niswonger Developing Academic Coaches (DAC) Program in partnership with New Teacher Center (NTC) concluded at the end of the 2022-23 school year. SRI collected data through the summer of 2023 and is finalizing metrics with NTC. SRI will compile a data summary for the 2022-2023 school year to share when complete. SRI will continue to have touch points with DAC during the 2023-2024 school year or the sustainability phase of the grant.
- Received \$200,000 from SCORE and \$150,000 from NTC to continue our work during the 2023-24 school year and build sustainability beyond under the umbrella of Comprehensive Educational Resource (CER).
- Final meetings with superintendents, supervisors, and principals with 1:1 (Carter, Hamblen, Washington, Hancock, Jefferson, Cocke, Unicoi, Jefferson) were held to establish parameters of sustainability that fit their vision of coaching/mentoring. Hamblen and Carter County will train their school-based teacher leaders or learning leaders through DAC.
- A new cohort of mentors/coaches (prioritizing CER coaches and control schools) has been finalized for foundational mentoring/coach training using NTC's tools and best practices for the 2023-2024 school year. Because interest was so overwhelming for the kickoff training session on July 20, 2023, an additional session was created to accommodate the over 80 invitees.

- To build on the July 20, 2023 training, there will be quarterly online forums (continued training) for mentors/coaches in addition to 1:1 ongoing support (either in coordination with CER or separate) for the upcoming school year.
- DAC will collaborate with Dr. Hyde regarding the aspiring school leaders' series, principal study council, and the coaching collaborative for the 2023-2024 school year, meeting two weeks prior to the monthly CER Coaching Collaborative meetings to finalize content.
- Math textbook collaboratives have been organized over the summer and have met multiple times. For the upcoming school year, Sherry will lead six different math textbook collaboratives (meeting monthly) to support districts with implementation of new materials and new standards.
- For the 2023-2024 CER Coaching Collaborative, the DAC directors will partner with regional coaches to support their needs and interests. Moreover, DAC will offer a training/learning segment on best practices of mentoring/coaching at each of the four collaboratives.
- We will attend bi-weekly meetings with NTC for the 2023-2024 school year to gain support and create training sessions. Additionally, we will provide data/updates to SRI and SCORE to show progress on sustainability.

Kindergarten Readiness (Funded by Bright Start/ Ballad Health)

- Year-One goals fully met:
 - Establish a working group with one representative from each of 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.
- Our year-two grant application with a request for \$75,000 funding has been approved.

Niswonger CARE College and Career Advising (Funded by Governor's Direct Appropriations Grant)

- Five new Advisors have been hired including Caya Simerly, Holly Frye, Lauren Garrison, Taylor Shanks, and Lyndsey Sabo. They joined the NiswongerCARE team in July and will be serving during the 2023-2024 school year. The onboarding is currently in process.
- Advisors participated in intensive training and professional development during July. Training topics included fit and match, college selection, financial aid, and preparation for assisting students in completing the myriad of tasks required to be prepared for matriculation to the college campus.
- Advisors also completed online professional learning and book studies on understanding the impact of poverty on educational choice, applying the Appreciative Advising Framework, and working with diverse student populations.
- Guest presenters included Kevin Berg, University of Tennessee, who outlined the criteria and steps for students applying for the Distinguished Tennessean scholarship.
- Summer Melt Initiative: Big*Bright*Future
 - Class of 2023 participation resulted in 864 students enrolled in the program and currently participating. These students were identified as having risk factors such as first-generation college students and/or living in low-income households. These are risk factors for not following through on college enrollment.
 - Advisors began communicating with students at the beginning of June using the Signal Vine platform.
 - Advisors have sent and received over 11,000 messages to date.
 - Advisors will continue to track and monitor student progress through mid-September.
- Data Highlights

- TN Promise goal of 95% of students applying was exceeded with 5,679 (96%) seniors completing a TN Promise application.
- TN Promise eligible seniors completing a FAFSA application was 86.9% of all applicants.
- All seniors who completed a FAFSA application resulted in a rate of 75.8% compared to overall state rate of 65.6%
- Sixteen of the high schools received the FAFSA Champion designation from Tennessee Higher Education Commission.
- Advisors provided direct services in schools for a total of 1,574 days, conducting 7,978 individual student meetings and hosting 571 group meetings/presentations with a reach of 13, 860 students.
- All 28 high schools (100%) hosted all four TN Path to College events including TN College Application and Exploration Month, TN FAFSA Frenzy, TN College and Career Planning Night, TN Signing Day.

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

Niswonger Online

- Current and upcoming terms
 - Summer: June 5 - July 28, 2023
 - 208 enrollments from 16 different schools
 - Fall: August 14 - December 15, 2023
 - There are 325 enrollments currently. Most schools will wait to enroll students in early August. We expect 1,000+ enrollments based on Fall 2022.
- New Partnerships / Assisting Schools with Teacher Shortages
 - Oneida High School has partnered with Niswonger Online for the first time. We will be helping with their need for World Language classes for around 50 students.
 - Cosby High School is a longtime partner with Niswonger Online but has not had many enrollments in recent years. We will be providing Chemistry, Geometry, Spanish I, and Spanish II courses for students. Cosby High School anticipates needing ~200 seats in Niswonger Online classes over the course of the fall and spring semesters.
- Course Development & Updates
 - Course development has continued throughout the summer with teachers working to develop Early Childhood Education, Cybersecurity, and Algebra I for 8th graders.
 - Physics has received major updates to include new labs using PIVOT, the same program used in APAA science classes.
 - Personal Finance, one of our most popular courses, also received major updates this summer.
- Canvas Training for Niswonger Online / AP Access for ALL teachers
 - Training was provided by national Instructure/Canvas trainers and specialists during the month of June. Some teachers attended live. Others will be able to make use of our large library of training videos during the upcoming school year.
 - Unused live training hours that expired in June 2023 were traded for 6 self-paced Canvas training courses. These courses have been installed in our Canvas instance so that we may keep them and access them at any time for use by admin or teachers.
 - A Canvas Tip of the Week email was introduced during the summer term to give teachers a quick tip that may increase their productivity and efficiency as they communicate and provide feedback to students.
- Student Success - Dr. Catherine Edwards has completed weekly walkthroughs in classes and provided encouragement to struggling students.
- Newsletter June 2023 Newsletter: <https://www.smores.com/5s6hd>

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

- Please click on the following link for *“Project On-Track Across the Region”* year-in-review report.



“We have seen so much growth in our child. In the past we have participated in other tutoring by private tutors, but our child has grown the most with this.”

“My child loves going to On Track during the week. She looks forward to the days that she gets to go and feels more confident in class!”

As a part of the Tennessee Department of Education's TN ALL Corps grant, the Niswonger Foundation's Project On-Track high-dosage/low-ratio tutoring program partnered with school districts and community agencies to provide literacy and math instruction to students in grades 1-8 across the 2022-2023 school year.

Project On-Track Across the Region

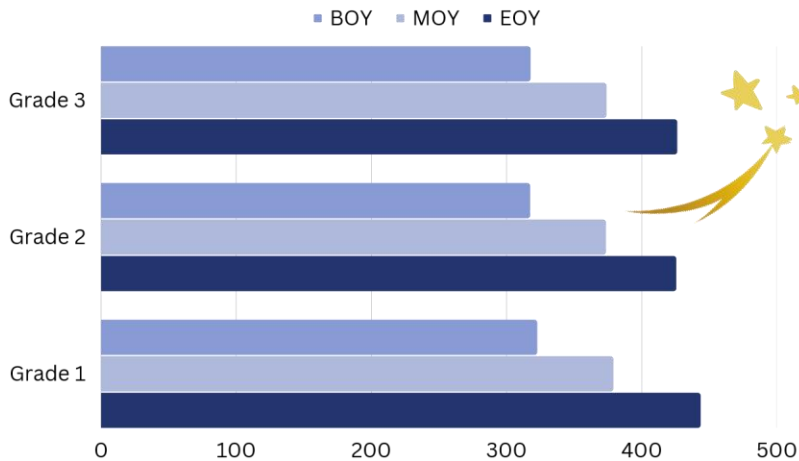
Term	Districts	Agencies	Sites	Students
Fall 2022	17	2	94	2911
Spring 2023	17	5	96	2629
Summer 2023	15	6	47	*1948

*projected numbers



Literacy

Project On-Track students in **grades 1-3** showed improvement across three benchmarks during the school year: beginning of year, mid-year, and end of year. Student's progress was measured using a variety of literacy subtests every 10 lessons, and the results were converted a composite score.



Project On-Track students in **grades 4-8** averaged 7 percentage points higher on their district EOY benchmark assessment scores than their BOY benchmark scores (346 students).



Math

Project On-Track students utilized the Zearn mathematics learning platform in **grades 1-8**. Over 1,000 students were served across 42 sites in Upper East Tennessee.

The students were expected to complete three digital missions (lessons) within the platform each month. On average, students in Project On Track completed five digital missions (lessons) per month.

Serving the Needs of East Tennessee's Students

Family Outreach

- Project On-Track provided each literacy student 3 books per semester to take home, totaling over 10,000 books.
- Each math student was provided math kits to take home each semester, totaling 3,000 math kits.
- Activities and suggested games to use at home were included with the math kits.

Trauma-Informed Care

- Project On-Track provided trauma-informed care training for 299 tutors.
- Training focused on how trauma affects a student's brain, body, and ability to learn and how tutors effectively support student learning.
- Onsite support for tutors and students, along with virtual parent education classes, were provided throughout the school year.

Continuous Improvement

- Project On-Track collected and analyzed over 650 feedback surveys from parents, site coordinators, and tutors during the 2022-2023 school year.
- 90% of tutors shared that their training prepared them to tutor effectively, with 95% of tutors sharing that their tutoring sessions went *very or quite well*.

Technology

- Close to 2,400 parents signed up to receive text message communication from Project On-Track via Signal Vine.
- There were 1,459 parent views across 3 Project On-Track newsletters.
- Project On-Track provided over 70 devices to support tutoring.

"Project On-Track has been an enjoyable experience that has helped my kid's confidence dramatically."

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

- Niswonger Foundation continues to partner with SRI International in their 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 with Project On-Track.
- REL assists with data analysis and support for Project On-Track, CareerConnect and NiswongerCARE.
- SRI International supported the development of our 2023 EIR grant proposal.

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

- 30 Middle Schools
- 18 High Schools
- Educator Professional Development Summer 2023
 - Streamworks Advanced Underwater ROV Course
 - BioBuilder Workshop
 - ETSU Statistics with Technology
 - ETSU Epidemiology II
 - OpenSciEd Curriculum Launch
 - OpenSciEd Curriculum Year 2
 - TNTP Math Workshop
 - STEM.LD Summer Institute, 91 educators from 16 districts
 - Streamworks 3D Printer Workshop
 - Streamworks Introductory Underwater ROV Course
 - Streamworks 2-Day Robotics Course
 - Anderson County Externships
- Out-of-School Activities
 - UAH Day of Cyber (three schools)
 - Hammer Dream Home Challenge
 - Hammer Builds, WSCC Niswonger Campus
 - Streamworks Summer STEM Camps
 - NESCC Explore Camp
 - WSCC Underwater Robotics Camp, Level 2, Morristown
 - WSCC Middle School Welding Camp
 - NESCC Girls Rule Technology Camp
 - WSCC Kids College
 - WSCC High School Welding Camp
 - WSCC Underwater Robotics, Sevierville
 - WSCC Underwater Robotics, Newport
 - WSCC Underwater Robotics, Level 2, Greeneville
 - WSCC Underwater Robotics, Level 1, Greeneville
 - WSCC Mini-Medic Interactive Health Camp
- Advanced Coursework
 - 32 students in 5 schools enrolled in Algebra I in 2022. First time for all schools.
 - Intro to Data Science and Statistics with Computer Modeling have been developed by East Tennessee State University, launch fall 2023.
 - Workforce 101 (Walters State Community College) 15 sections at 10 high schools impacting 225

students. 117 students earned OSHA-10 certification.

- Courses Currently in Development
 - Cybersecurity I and II
 - Algebra I for Eighth Graders (with partner Niswonger Online)
 - BioSTEM Pathway (I - IV) (with partner BioBuilder), launch fall 2023 (50 students enrolled for the biology course at Volunteer High School)
- Platform Project: STEM.LD Connector was awarded to FableVision.

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

- We have recently added schools from two new counties - Williamson and Wayne. There are currently 161 schools participating.
- There are technical upgrades currently being conducted - management tools for students and staff users and access to additional data points for administrators' use.

Grant and Partnership Update

- Approval has been received from Bright Start/Ballad for a 2023-24 Community Health Improvement Site grant. The project is "Defining Kindergarten Readiness in Northeast Tennessee. The grant amount is \$75,500.
- United States Department of Education 2023 Education-Innovation-Research grant proposal has been successfully submitted. The project is entitled "RISE (Rural Initiative for STEM and Educator) Pathways." This is an \$8.8 million proposal.

Contributions (May 2023 – July 2023)

Scott M. Niswonger	\$100,000.00
Chris Marsh (Marsh Energy)	31,000.00
The Brotherton Foundation	2,500.00
Robin Shepherd	300.00
Total	\$133,800.00

Niswonger Foundation Current Board Representation

- Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities
- Tennesseans for Quality Early Education
- Governor's Early Literacy Foundation – Board Chair
- State Collaborative on Reforming Education – Advisory Council and Board Member
- Tennessee Arts Commission
- Tennessee Department of Education
 - Philanthropy Engagement Council
 - LAUNCH – National Pathways Academy
 - TISA Steering Committee
 - ESSA Review Committee