

## Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation

September 26, 2023

**Decision Item D** Tennessee Promise Scholarship Special Advisory Committee

**Staff Recommendation:** That the Board approve the recommended member organizations for the Tennessee Promise Scholarship Special Advisory Committee.

**Background:** T.C.A. 49-4-708(g) requires the TSAC board of directors to “appoint a special advisory committee comprised of representatives from existing college access programs in the state. The committee shall take steps necessary to eliminate barriers to access to scholarships and hold mentoring organizations to the highest standard in serving the students receiving the scholarship. Members of the committee shall serve without compensation.”

The TSAC board of directors has previously appointed a special advisory committee. Today’s action is to update the membership of this committee.

The following list of regional and statewide organizations are recommended for approval.

**Ayers Foundation Trust** – Troy Grant, Chief Scholars Officer

The Ayers Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life for the people of Tennessee. The Ayers Foundation believes this is best accomplished by positively affecting the fields of Education, Conservation and Social Welfare. The Ayers Foundation provides grant and scholarship money to further its goals and to ensure they are carried out in perpetuity.

**Niswonger Foundation** -- Nancy Dishner, President & CEO

The Niswonger Foundation was established in 2001 to make a positive and sustainable difference in education in Northeast Tennessee. Fundamental to the success of the Niswonger Foundation has been a clear focus on removing constraints to educational innovation and problem solving, thus allowing local school systems to better provide for student needs.

**Oasis College Connection** -- Lee Gray, Senior Director of School-Based Programs

Oasis College Connection is Nashville's largest college access program dedicated to making college a reality for low-income, New American, and first-generation college students. Our mission is to provide comprehensive admissions and financial aid expertise to support and increase students' college acceptance rates, retention, and successful degree completion.

**Peer Power Foundation** -- Courtney Richardson, CEO

Peer Power is a non-profit organization that recruits and trains high-performing college students, called Success Coaches, to tutor in public school classrooms and mentor high school students to encourage active learning, valuing education, and being personally accountable for their futures. Peer Power's mission is to inspire and empower youth to take control of their academic success.

**Public Education Foundation** -- Michelle Caldwell, Director of Student Success

PEF supports the transformation of public education so that every student is prepared for success. PEF's goals are successful students, great teachers, great school leaders, innovative teachers, and an effective and sustainable organization.

**TN Association of State Financial Aid Administrators (TASF AA)** – Jennifer Byrd, TASF AA President and FA Director at Nashville State Community College

The mission of TASF AA is to develop and maintain an organizational structure that promotes professional preparation and growth, collaboration, effectiveness and mutual support of its diverse body of members as they strive to serve the needs of students, families, institutions and other constituencies in providing financial assistance to help meet postsecondary educational expenses.

**tnAchieves** – Krissy DeAlejandro, President & CEO

tnAchieves serves as the partnering organization to students in 83 of the 95 counties in Tennessee. tnAchieves' mission is to increase higher education opportunities for

Tennessee students by providing last-dollar scholarships with mentor guidance. In addition to mentor guidance, tnAchieves provides extensive statewide student success advising and support that is leading to transformational increases in retention and completion.

**TN TRIO** – Elaine Tilley, President/Director, Monroe County Education Talent Search  
TN TRIO is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to help disadvantaged students persevere and matriculate. TN TRIO's students typically come from lower-income households and are first generation college goers.