

The Case for Federal Programs Title II—A Funding



BY DAN SCHLAFFER

**NIAAA Certification Program Financial Support -
Making the Case for Federal Programs Title II-A Funding
In Tennessee and Beyond**

Presented in partial fulfillment

For the

National Interscholastic Administrators Association

Certified Master Athletic Administrator Status

By Dan Schlafer, CAA
126 Baltusrol Road
Crossville, TN 38558-7737
dansplans.com
danschlafer@comcast.net

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Introduction

During my forty-two-year career in education-based athletics as a teacher, department chair, coach, athletic director, high school principal, central office supervisor/Federal Programs Director, and school board member, funding for athletics-related professional development has always been a challenge, if not almost nonexistent. As I've traveled across Tennessee from Memphis to Mountain City during my career, a common thread across our state has been the desire for relevance and respect for the need for a consistent funding stream for job-embedded, continuing education training for athletic administrators. Until recently, the Tennessee Department of Education refused approval.

The sobering fact remains that many school systems in Tennessee will not fund athletics-related training, either. Sadly, many school system leaders don't know what they don't know about the funding option which will be explored in this project, and deny approval for athletic administration continuing education because this "isn't related to core academic subjects." It should be noted that when athletic directors in my county requested Title II funding to attend the TIAAA conference held during April 2024 in Knoxville, their request was immediately denied by a system-wide leader. When I was asked to intervene and shared that the training was both Cognia and TASL approved, that person quickly reversed the decision, much to his credit. It was that situation which sparked my early interest in completing this project. Another prime example is the plight of Patrick Miller, CMAA, an athletic administrator in a large, metropolitan school system, member of the Tennessee Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (TIAAA) and Board of Directors, one of many who has paid every cent of the NIAAA certification journey out of his own pocket.

Project Data

- Tennessee is divided into 95 counties, with a population of 6,910,840 people.
- There are 1,001,916 students attending Tennessee's public and private schools.
- A total of 426 high schools and 522 middle schools serve Tennessee's families.
- Athletic programs serve 110,000 student athletes and nearly 5,500 teams.
- Coaches include 6,000 faculty and nonfaculty mentors in place to lead our students.
- Officiating our contests requires 5,000 dedicated professionals.
- Of the 948 athletic directors in our state, of which only 400 are TIAAA members, 120 attended the Tennessee Interscholastic Athletic Administrators (TIAAA) Conference held in Knoxville, Tennessee, April 11-14, 2025.
- The data shows only 7.9% of Tennessee's school athletic administrators participated in the conference, which means 92.1% did not attend.

A growing trend in our state is to couple athletic director duties with an assistant principal position. Additionally, school systems across our country are now requiring NIAAA certification as a prerequisite for employment as an athletic director.

The National Interscholastic Administrators Association (NIAAA) certification process challenges, mentors, teaches, and prepares athletic directors with Leadership Training Courses which not only share highly informed, transformational servant leadership, but internationally recognized certification levels as well. This process, however, is not without a monetary cost, plus a substantial time investment.

To earn Registered Athletic Administrator (**RAA**) certification requires completing three four-hour Leadership Training Classes, a certification application fee and a successfully completed Personal Data Form at a total cost of \$450.00 for NIAAA members, \$790.00 for nonmembers.

To become a Registered Middle School Athletic Administrator (**RMSAA**), six four-hour classes, a certification application fee and a personal data form are expected at a total expense of \$850.00 for NIAAA members, or \$1,445.00 for non-members.

To earn Certified Athletic Administrator (**CAA**) credentials, the applicant must successfully complete five four-hour Leadership Training Courses, a professional

assessment matrix calculation of points earned for service provided, a personal data form, served for a minimum of two years as an athletic director, and pass a 100-question exam for a total cost of \$800.00 for NIAAA members, \$1,310.00 for non-members.

To complete the internationally prestigious Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) status, an applicant must have previously attained CAA certification, taken seven additional LTC classes, completed, presented, and received approval for a relevant project designed to improve their work, completed the personal data form, documented additional service, plus the application fee for a total expense of \$1,875.00 for NIAAA members, or \$3,065.00 for non-members.

Project Stakeholders

For young professionals just beginning their education-based athletics career, many are saddled with college and/or graduate school debt, plus a mortgage, and are parents of small children. For them, there is almost too much month left at the end of their money. Given that many school systems do not and will not financially support the NIAAA certification process, the stakeholders for this project, when completed, are Tennessee's athletic directors, the coaches they mentor, those who officiate our contests, the athletes and their families who are entrusted to our care, and the communities they represent. Everyone in our state can and will benefit from and be directly or indirectly touched and positively impacted by the additional funding source for education-based professional development listed above, and which will be thoroughly described in detail in this project.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to:

1. Raise awareness of the need for ongoing professional development for athletic administrators in Tennessee and beyond to increase TIAAA membership.
2. Present data that supports that need.
3. Present information on the Tennessee Academy for School Leaders (TASL) approval of NIAAA coursework.
4. Present information regarding Cognia Accreditation, which has been earned by the NIAAA.
5. Share content knowledge of Federal Programs Title II-A funding.

6. Present this project to TIAAA leadership for promulgation to our membership via newsletter, email and/or presentation at the TIAAA Conference in Knoxville in April 2026.
7. Ensure that NIAAA leadership is aware of the project's presentation potential.
8. Submit this project for publication in the NIAAA Library.
9. Submit this project to the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS) membership via email.
10. Submit this project to the Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA) membership via email.
11. Increase the number of participants attending the TIAAA Conference by 20% each of the next four years, with a goal of 100% attendance by 2030.
12. Increase the number of NIAAA certifications by Tennessee athletic administrators by 10% each year.

Project Timeline Origin and Preliminary Planning Documentation

After experiencing the lack of Federal funding for athletic administrator professional development across our state, the origin for this work came to final fruition from an email I sent to NIAAA Associate Executive Director Rich Barton, TIAAA Executive Director Mike Ellson and TIAAA Board Member Patrick Miller on Monday, June 16, 2025, at 3:59 p.m. Central Daylight Time:

On Mon, Jun 16, 2025 at 3:01 PM DAN SCHLAFER <danschlafer@comcast.net> wrote:

Mike, Patrick, and Rich,

Attached is my updated resume (except for my RMSAA certification, which I technically haven't received yet) as I prepare for my CMAA project. Many of the areas I feel might be a focus area, such as sports added, stadiums and alumni center built, and sportsmanship awards earned while I was Principal at Tellico Plains High School, would be difficult to secure supporting documentation because of the years since completion. An area to which I was leaning, where I do have documentation, is my work with the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation and my year-long contribution to rolling out their Character Development Program in Tennessee.

In conversation with Mike Ellson earlier today, after sending my email to Cumberland County administrators this morning, on which I copied all of you, he has suggested

focusing on my Federal Programs Director past, the need for funding for LTC Courses, certification and conference activities which are so often thwarted by lack of funding. Young ADs with a mortgage and raising a family have limited discretionary income to fund their own professional development.

In my Cumberland County email, I mentioned that the Federal Programs Title II Professional Development Grant qualifies for our work because of NIAAA's Cognia Accreditation and the TASL credit afforded by the Tennessee State Department of Education for participating and completing approved course work. This is one of those things where most people don't know what they don't know, through no fault of their own, causing missed opportunities for inclusion in what I have found to be magnificent and uplifting training.

Knowing Mike's suggestion, I'm also asking that, only in your spare time and in absolutely no rush, if you see anything else in the work the Lord has blessed me with that jumps out at you which could be included in my project that would be original, beneficial and helpful to NIAAA and TIAAA.

Thank you in advance for your valued input!

Dan

Dan Schlafer, Ed.S., CAA

TSBA's Representative:

TSSAA Board Of Control

TSSAA Legislative Council

126 Baltusrol Road

Fairfield Glade, TN 38558-7737

423.253.5150 - cell

danschlafer@comcast.net - email

dansplans.com - website

Subsequent texts, emails and phone conversations among Mike Ellson, Patrick Miller, and me on June 20-21, 2025, the response to my email on the same day by Rich Barton confirmed the need and the nudge for this writing. A twenty-nine-minute phone call with him on July 31, 2025, as he and his wife were driving home to Indiana from the NEDC meeting in Asheville, NC, detailed the final project plan, and the explanation of Tennessee Academy for School Leaders (TASL) credit coupled with Cognia Accreditation, which, when applied to the use of Federal Title II-A funds, adds instant approval for that funding stream and its use for this purpose as follows:

Federal Programs Background

In 1965, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The law created funding for public schools, which required systems to write grants for the “Title funds” which were allocated to schools based on enrollment, and the number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students in their system. In December 2015, Congress amended the ESEA by passing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This new law reauthorized and updated the fifty-year-old predecessor. To qualify for use, the items funded are required to be:

1. **Reasonable** - Would someone unfamiliar with Federal Programs funding feel the expense was fair, sensible and a good use of taxpayer dollars?
2. **Allowable** - Do Federal funding mandates permit this use of funds?
3. **Allocable** - Is there a defined line item narrative in the budget for this allocation?
4. **Necessary** - Is this expense essential to the operation of the program?

In addition, this Federal grant funding is meant to “supplement” the school budget, but not “supplant” it, meaning it is extra money used to provide services that would not, and could not have been afforded from the local school system budget. This investment is not meant to take the place of or “supplant” what the local budget is obligated to provide. The program is a “Formula Grant,” distributed and disbursed according to a predetermined algorithm based on population, socioeconomic data, including the number of free/reduced price school meals provided, and any other criteria codified by law.

Personal Connection

I had the privilege to serve as Federal Programs Director for the Monroe County, Tennessee School System from 2006-2015. In the fall of 2015, I was asked to take control of the Cumberland County, Tennessee, School System Federal Programs Office, after previously being elected to four terms on our school board. I remained the Federal Programs Director in Crossville until I retired in July 2019. However, two months after I left, the Hamilton County Department of Education in Chattanooga, Tennessee, reached out to me to come to work for them, mentoring their new Federal Programs Director for the 2019-2020 school year. It was there that I served as their Federal Programs Coordinator.

To provide context for the scope and sequence of all Federal Programs, captioned below is a list and explanation of all the Federal Programs I managed during my final year of service as Federal Programs Director. I promulgated it to each school system employee each year in my transparency effort to educate them about our supplemental funding:

CUMBERLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS

CURRENTLY FUNDED FEDERAL PROGRAMS

2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

FUNDING YEAR 2020 (FY20) – PRELIMINARY ALLOCATIONS

TITLE I – Improving Academic Achievement: Disadvantaged Students

- \$2,034,009.00 allocation, our largest Federal Program grant (+\$34,143.00).
- Money can be used in and for Title I schools only to supplement, not supplant.
- There are 10 Title I schools in the Cumberland County School System during FY20; our 9 elementary schools plus The Phoenix School.
- Based on poverty rate – percentage of free and reduced meal qualifiers.
- “Maintenance of Effort” ranking “spirals down from highest to lowest poverty.”
- Contains several “subparts”; minimum of 35% poverty rate required.
- Has 588 regulations; must serve schools with 75% poverty rate.
- Most of this grant is used for salary and benefits for teachers and teaching assistants.

- Title I currently funds salaries and benefits for 24 certified teachers (14.85 FTE), and 28 support staff (21.6 FTE).
- Provides supplemental supplies, materials, plus computer software and hardware.
- Provides professional development for teachers and tutoring for at-risk students.
- Provides parental involvement money on a per-pupil basis for students in poverty attending Title I schools.
- Provides support for homeless students.

TITLE I A - Neglected and Delinquent Children

- \$7,458.00 allocation is allocated for a part-time teaching assistant and parent involvement for Crossville's Cumberland Mountain School (-\$3,658.00).

TITLE II – Preparing, Training, & Recruiting High Quality Teachers & Principals

- \$257,612.00 allocation, our second-largest Federal Program (+\$26,504.00).
- Pays salary and benefits for three and a half instructional coaches.
- Pays for staff development programs based on school system data.
- Pays for conferences, workshops, “bringing in the experts” and travel for ongoing, research-based training.
- Reimburses teachers to become “Highly Effective” in hard-to-staff areas.
- Pays stipends for mentors to support new teachers.

TITLE III – Language Instruction: Limited English Proficient; Immigrant Students

- \$15,334.42 grant for English Learners (ELs) (+\$876.58).
- May not be used for required ESL teacher or teaching assistants' salaries and benefits.
- Used for instructional equipment, supplies, and professional development.
- ESL instruction, currently delivered at 11 of our 12 schools.
- Pine View is currently the only school without ELs.
- Six teachers and two teaching assistants currently deliver instruction to more than 146 English learners system-wide.

TITLE IV – Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant

- \$151,316.00 allocation (+\$11,023.72).
- New grant tied to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- This grant will be transferred to Title II to support our instructional coaching program.

TITLE V – Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) Program

- \$130,888.92 grant for rural, low-income school systems, must qualify by poverty rate **(-\$6,400.21)**.
- Can be used in Title I, Title II and Title III-like fashion.
- Pays 1.6 FTE salary, benefits and retirement for two supplemental ESL teaching assistants.
- Pays for in-county travel expenses for instructional coaches to provide technical assistance to schools.

CONSOLIDATED ADMINISTRATION

- \$295,200.00 “set aside.”
- Cost to administer all Federal Programs and is limited to no more than 20% of each grant (except for Title III, which is limited to 2%).

Cumberland County will only use 11.8% of our total allocation (12% from Title I, 2% from Title I N & D, 17% from Title II, 1% from Title III, 1% from Title IV and 17% from Title V) for all administrative costs, a total of \$285,300.00.

TITLE IX – MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

- \$30,000.00 has been allocated for this year (**grant renewal submitted for FY20**).
- This is a significant reduction from the previous year.
- The services listed below will be adjusted accordingly.
- Pays half of the salary and benefits for our local Homeless Liaison.
- The other half of the salary and benefits for this employee is supported by our Family Resource Center grant.
- Pays for before and after-school tutoring for 308 homeless students.
- Pays for transportation to the school of origin.
- Pays for reasonable, allowable, allocable and necessary school supplies support.
- Pays for enrichment field trips.

21st CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

- \$397,500.00 for FY19 (**grant renewal has been submitted for FY20**).
- Provides extended learning programs at eight elementary schools.
- A minimum of 12 hours per week of programming is required in before and after school activities.
- Programs do not replicate the school day.
- Students are referred based on academic, social and/or emotional need.

- Programming includes science, technology, engineering, arts, and math activities.
- An hour of physical activity per week is required.
- Students are highly encouraged to participate for thirty consecutive days or longer.
- Academic and behavioral gains are quantified.
- Pays stipends and benefits for 140 employees and 9 site coordinators.
- Pays for transportation home after program hours have been completed each day.

READ TO BE READY SUMMER GRANT

- \$90,000.00 for a 20-day summer camp program for at-risk K-3 students.
- Held at four sites (COES, HES, NCES, & PHES).
- Serves 90 students beginning June 4th through June 27th: 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Tennessee Academy For School Leaders (TASL) - <https://www.tn.gov>

An essential priority of the Tennessee Department of Education is ensuring that all schools in Tennessee have effective teachers and leaders who receive the feedback and support needed to continually improve student outcomes. Tennessee is transforming what it means to be an effective leader at all phases of a leader's career by setting high standards for effective leadership based on research and best practice, supporting leaders to reach those standards, and empowering districts to build a network of exceptional instructional leaders who get results.

Administrators are required to earn TASL credits if they spend 50% or more of their time in direct delivery of instructional services to the following: teachers, principals, and/or other educators in administrative or supervisory positions. Directors of Schools may request a new position to receive TASL mandated status if that position meets the guidelines for TASL mandated status. The TASL Office may request documentation to support approval of such a request.

Recognizing the importance of engaging in a continuous improvement process, Tennessee seeks to transform what it means to be an effective instructional leader at all phases of a leader's career. This aim is accomplished by setting high standards for effective leadership based upon research and best practice, supporting leaders to reach those standards, and empowering districts to build a network of exceptional instructional

leaders who get results. Operating from the belief that ethical behavior permeates the mindset and actions of every effective leader, the revised Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) embed the phrase, “ethical and effective instructional leader,” into the opening stem of each leadership standard. The purposeful placement of this phrase articulates the intrinsic nature of ethical behavior in all facets of school leadership. Attributes such as honesty, respect, sound judgment, commitment, fairness, compassion, work ethic, and a genuine belief that all children can learn and grow, contribute to the foundation of ethical behavior connected to leadership. Effectiveness pertains to “educators’ capacity to meet performance expectations, implement evidence-based practices, create and sustain conditions for effective learning, and increase student learning” (Learning Forward, 2011). Based upon best practice and current research, and sharpened by the wisdom of experienced educators, the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) identify core performance indicators of ethical and effective instructional leaders.

Standard A: Instructional Leadership for Continuous Improvement An ethical and effective instructional leader facilitates professional practice that continually improves student learning. Indicators:

1. Collaborates with stakeholders to establish and communicate a clear, compelling vision for continuous improvement.
2. Builds capacity of educators to provide all students a rigorous curriculum, aligned with Tennessee adopted state standards.
3. Collaborates with educators to analyze and use multiple forms of data throughout the year to establish specific goals and strategies targeting student achievement and growth.
4. Leads educators to develop and execute interventions to address all students’ learning needs, grounded in multiple sources of data (academic, social, and/or emotional).
5. Systematically monitors and adjusts progress toward established goals and facilitates procedures and practices leading to continuous improvement.

Learning Centered Leadership Policy Standard B: Culture for Teaching and Learning

An ethical and effective instructional leader collaborates with stakeholders to create and sustain an inclusive, respectful and safe environment conducive to learning and growth for all. Indicators:

1. Collaborates with stakeholders to establish and communicate a clear, compelling vision for a culture conducive to teaching and learning.
2. Leverages educator strengths to engage all students in meaningful, relevant learning opportunities.
3. Fosters a safe, respectful, and orderly environment for all.
4. Takes measures to actively involve families in the education of their children.
5. Models and communicates expectations for individual and shared ownership of student, educator, and school success.
6. Recognizes and celebrates improved educator and student performance related to school vision and goals.

Standard C: Professional Learning and Growth

An ethical and effective instructional leader develops the capacity of all educators by designing, facilitating, and participating in collaborative learning informed by multiple sources of data. Indicators:

1. Collaborates with stakeholders to establish, communicate, and facilitate a clear, compelling vision for professional learning and growth.
2. Implements and monitors a rigorous evaluation system using an approved Tennessee evaluation model.

3. Uses educator evaluation data to inform, assess, and adjust professional learning goals and plans.
4. Engages faculty and self in data-informed, differentiated professional learning opportunities for educators, aligned with the Tennessee Standards for Professional Learning.
5. Collaborates with others to induct, support, retain and grow/extend effective educators based on evidence of student and educator outcomes.
6. Identifies and supports potential teacher-leaders and provides growth opportunities in alignment with the Tennessee Teacher Leadership Standards.
7. Improves self-practice based on multiple sources of feedback, including performance evaluation results and self-reflection.

Standard D: Resource Management Learning Centered Leadership Policy

An ethical and effective instructional leader facilitates the development of a highly effective learning community through processes that enlist diverse stakeholders and resources. Indicators:

1. Strategically utilizes community resources and partners to support the school's mission, vision, and goals.
2. Includes a diverse set of educators and stakeholders in school improvement decisions.
3. Establishes, communicates, and enforces a set of standard operating procedures and routines aligned with district, state, and federal policy.
4. Performs all budgetary responsibilities with accuracy, transparency, and in the best interest of students and staff.

After an exhaustive and extensive review of the NIAAA's Leadership Training Institute, Leadership Training Courses and their Professional Development Academy, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) has recently approved issuing TASL credit to properly licensed administrators who serve as athletic directors for NIAAA,

TILS qualifyning coursework, thereby qualifying this training for Title II-A support, as evidenced by the TIAAA Conference Program and registration information.

Cognia Accreditation - <https://cognia.org>

Cognia accreditation signifies that a school or educational institution has met rigorous, research-based standards for quality and continuous improvement, demonstrating a commitment to effective practices and student success. It involves a comprehensive process of self-assessment, engagement with Cognia's team, and ongoing monitoring to ensure sustained quality.

Key Aspects of Cognia Accreditation:

Rigorous Standards:

Cognia accreditation is based on research-backed performance standards that are regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring institutions are held to high expectations.

Continuous Improvement:

The accreditation process emphasizes a commitment to ongoing improvement, with institutions regularly evaluating their practices and making necessary adjustments to enhance their programs.

External Validation:

Cognia accreditation provides external validation of a school's quality, signaling to students, parents, and other stakeholders that the institution is committed to excellence.

Global Recognition:

Cognia accreditation is a globally recognized mark of quality, providing institutions with international recognition and credibility.

Benefits for Institutions:

Accredited institutions gain access to resources, support, and professional learning opportunities, as well as national and international recognition.

Benefits for Students:

Accreditation can enhance a student's competitive edge when applying for higher education or employment, as it demonstrates a commitment to quality education.

In essence, Cognia accreditation means that a school is committed to providing a high-quality education based on established standards and a dedication to continuous improvement.”

The NIAAA website reveals: “The NIAAA is the first athletic administration association to offer professional development accredited by Cognia—giving our program the same pedigree as Career, Technical and Postsecondary Institutions. Being awarded a mark of quality and distinction through Cognia’s ongoing review process demonstrates our ability to meet and exceed national and international standards of excellence.”

Having personally led two high schools (Knoxville Catholic High School, and Tellico Plains High School) through this accreditation process, I can assure you this is a rigorous, ongoing undertaking which requires an in-depth, introspective process, examining, in detail, everything you do as a school community, making upgrade changes as needed and to ensure you are leading the right way.

Cognia accreditation, combined with TASL credit, double-guarantees NIAAA coursework qualifies for Title II-A funding support.

A Detailed Explanation of Title II-A <https://www.ed.gov>

Title II-A, also known as Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants, is a federal program under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that provides funding to states and local educational agencies (LEAs) to improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders. This funding supports professional development activities aimed at increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

Purpose:

Title II-A funds are intended to improve the effectiveness of educators by providing professional development opportunities. The ultimate goal is to improve student outcomes by ensuring educators have the skills and knowledge to support student learning. The program aims to provide equitable access to effective educators for all students, particularly those in low-income and minority communities.

Key Areas of Focus:

Professional Development

Title II-A funds support a wide range of professional development activities, including training on instructional strategies, curriculum development, technology integration, and data analysis.

Teacher and Principal Support

The program also funds activities related to teacher recruitment, hiring, induction, and retention, as well as principal and school leader development.

School Improvement

Title II-A can be integrated with broader school improvement efforts to address specific needs and challenges.

How it Works:

Federal Funding:

Title II-A provides funding to State Educational Agencies (SEAs), who then distribute subgrants to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs).

State and Local Planning:

SEAs and LEAs develop comprehensive plans that outline how they will use the funds to address their specific needs and priorities related to educator quality.

Accountability:

Agencies are held accountable for demonstrating improvements in student achievement as a result of the program.

Specific Examples of Allowable Activities:

- **Training on effective instructional strategies .**
- **Professional development focused on integrating technology into the classroom .**
- **Data analysis training to improve student outcomes .**

- Leadership development for principals and other school leaders.
- Mentoring and coaching for new teachers.
- Parent and family engagement strategies.
- Opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from experienced educators.
- Activities to improve school climate and culture.

In essence, Title II-A is a crucial federal program that invests in the professional growth of educators, ultimately benefiting students and promoting educational equity.

It is crystal clear that Title II-A funds are appropriate for the support of ongoing professional development training for athletic administrator training and certification.

Assimilating

1. The need for athletic administrators' ongoing professional development.
2. The need for a consistent funding stream to support this training.
3. The Tennessee Academy for School Leaders (TASL) approval for this learning opportunity and certification process.
4. The "highest marks" Cognia Accreditation earned by the NIAAA and its approval of the certification program in place, having found that "the NIAAA is the most uniquely amazing group associated with education."
5. The Federal Programs Title II-A funding specifically in place to support this learning opportunity.

The opportunity is ripe for the taking to share this information across Tennessee and beyond with appropriate others as follows:

Timeline For Development And Implementation Of This Project

1. Completion and submission of the project - August 2025
2. Hopeful approval of the project from NIAAA - August 2025
3. Inclusion of the project in the NIAAA Library - August 2025
4. Sharing the project with TIAAA leaders - August 2025
5. Sharing the project with TIAAA membership via email - August 2025
6. Potential sharing of the project to the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS) - TBD
7. Sharing the presentation with the Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA) leaders and membership - August 2025
8. Presenting an overview of the project at the 2026 TIAAA Conference - April 2026, and other state association conferences - TBD
9. Presenting the project at TSSAA Regional Meetings - TBD
10. Presentation of the project at the NIAAA National Conference - TBD

Conclusion

Taking and completing NIAAA certification courses, earning the RAA, RMSAA, and CAA certifications has been an impressive, and eye-opening experience. Seeing firsthand the detail-oriented content, the resources presented, and the professionalism of the National Faculty, while also learning from peers from across the country, has underscored the clear and present need for ongoing training for athletic administrators.

The following LTC Courses have influenced my decision to complete this project:

LTC 501 - Guiding Foundations, Philosophies, and Resources

LTC 502 - Fundamentals of Education-Based Athletic Management

LTC 503 - Innovative Strategies in Education-Based Athletics Management

LTC 504 - Legal Issues I (Liability for Sports Injuries & Risk Management)

LTC 506 - Legal Issues II (Title IX and Sexual Harassment)

LTC 508 - Legal Issues III (Hazing, Constitutional Law, Disabilities,
Employment/Labor Laws)

LTC 510 - Legal Issues IV (Social Media, Transgender Security, Intellectual Property)

LTC 618 - Management of Interscholastic Athletic Player Equipment

LTC 700 - Principles and Philosophies of a Developmentally Appropriate Middle
School Athletic Program

LTC 701 - Administration and Application of Middle School Athletic Programs

LTC 726 - Student Leadership Development

LTC 799 - Standards of Excellence in Interscholastic Programs

Implementation of this uniform, reliable funding source to support ongoing, high-quality, TASL-approved, and Cognia-Accredited professional development will positively impact the administration of athletics, which are the “front porch” of every school. Tennessee’s athletic directors, the coaches they mentor, those who officiate our contests, the athletes and families who are entrusted to our care, and the communities they represent will feel the effect of professional educators, and the lifelong impact it brings to the servant leadership techniques, principles, evidence-based best practices, and resources this certification training affords. Everyone in our state will benefit from, and be directly or indirectly touched, and positively impacted by the additional funding

source for education-based professional development which has been thoroughly described in this project, allowing additional educators to access training they might not otherwise be able to afford. Thank you for the privilege to compile and share this information! **Soli Deo Gloria!**

I'll close by sharing this article I was honored and humbled to have been asked to write for INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR magazine:

There Is No Finish Line To Learning
By Dan Schlafer, Ed.S., CAA

My Dad was a powerful, positive influence on my life. Born in 1952, it doesn't take a math major to realize I'm now seventy-three. Throughout my young life, he reminded me on a regular basis that "If what you did yesterday is still important to you today, you haven't done much today, son!" It's against that backdrop that I've been asked to share these thoughts.

I retired in 2020 after a forty-two-year-career as an educator. That journey included: high school teacher, department chair, coach, athletic director, high school principal, central office supervisor, and school board member, along with several other duties along the way. As you ponder that list, it could easily prove I couldn't keep a job!

Was I prepared for retirement? Absolutely not! The reality I had lived and the daily responsibilities, obligations and titles which once were mine vanished the day after I packed up and walked away for the final time with tears in my eyes. Nothing prepared me for doing nothing. I needed and yearned to be a part of something difference-making, meaningful, and positive.

It was at that fork in the road when I became more aware of, and involved in the NIAAA. Through the strong, steady leadership of Mike Ellson, Executive Director of Tennessee's counterpart, I learned of the first-class, top-shelf leadership, mentoring, networking, and certification options available for active and retired athletic directors. Had I known twenty years ago what I know now, I wouldn't be trying to make up for lost time by playing catch-up.

What I've found on this new path is professional people at every level who care deeply, give more than they take, encourage and listen, mentor and serve, and have a passion for learning and a growth mindset, all of which has given a renewed sense of meaning and purpose to my life. Like you, with every young person I coached, I made it clear they should "finish strong." Now, with far fewer calendar pages to pull off than I once had, I find myself following that advice, with help and support from too many selfless, wonderful people to comprehend.

I've been asked to share why, at 73, I have earned the NIAAA's RAA, RMSAA and CAA certifications, with the CMAA hopefully soon completed. That answer is crystal clear. In our sacred profession, where former players seek you out by text, email, phone call and visit to tell you how much you mean to them, we have not only an obligation, but a responsibility to pay it forward to the next generation of leaders, those who will take our place. The valuable information I've learned in the Leadership Training Courses Curriculum is detail-oriented, professionally presented and has given me growth opportunities to share when I become certified to be a part of the national faculty, hoping to teach others what I've learned.

In closing, I'll share a quote from John Wesley, recently posted on X by NIAAA Associate Executive Director Rich Barton:

"Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can."

Please let me know if I can ever be a help to you. I wish you all the best as you PRESS ON!

Dan Schlafer can be reached via his website at: dansplans.com or by email at danschlafer@comcast.net.

PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS

DANIEL MARK SCHLAFER

126 Baltusrol Road Fairfield Glade, TN 38558-7737

423.253.5150 - Personal Cell

danschlafer@comcast.net - Personal Email

www.dansplans.com - Website

OBJECTIVE:

It is my ambition, goal and purpose to work as hard as I can, as often as I can, for as long as I can to make a positive difference for as many people as I can.

QUALIFICATIONS:

My experiences as a teacher, coach, athletic director, TSSAA Board of Control and Legislative Council member, high school principal, federal programs director, school board chairman and TSBA president have allowed me to become a highly effective administrator. No matter what the task, job, or position, I have always given my best. I have been blessed with a quick wit, a great sense of humor, strong written and verbal communication skills, caring, compassionate concern for others, and an innate desire to be fair, honest and ethical.

EDUCATION:

1995 - Educational Specialist (Ed. S.), Lincoln Memorial University

1987 - Master of Science (M.S.), University of Tennessee at Knoxville

1974 - Bachelor of Science (B.S.), Carson-Newman College

1970 - Diploma, Knoxville Holston High School

AREAS OF CERTIFICATION:

NIAAA Registered Athletic Administrator-RAA; Registered Middle School Athletic Administrator;

Certified Athletic Administrator-CAA

Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Wellness: K - 12

General Science

Professional Administrator's License
Secondary Principal
Elementary Principal
Supervisor of Instruction
Supervisor of Attendance
Superintendent
Career Ladder

PROFESSIONAL CAREER:

2022 – Present: Stonehenge Golf Club Pro Shop, Cumberland County
2020 – Retired
2019 – 2020: Federal Programs Coordinator, Hamilton County School System
2015 – 2019: Federal Programs Director, Cumberland County Schools
2006 - 2015: Federal Programs Director, Monroe County Schools; Athletic Director
1996 - 2006: Principal, Tellico Plains High School
1992 - 1995: Teacher/Head Football Coach, Cumberland County High School
1984 - 1992: Teacher/Athletics Director/Coach, Knoxville Catholic High School
1978 - 1984: Teacher/Coach, Tennessee School for the Deaf
1976 - 1978: Teacher/Coach/Dorm Supervisor, Harrison Chilhowee Baptist Academy
1974 - 1976: Teacher/Coach, West Greene High School

MEMBERSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - PAST AND PRESENT:

Cumberland County Board of Education Member – Chairman: 2002 – 2003, 2010-2012, 2014
CCBOE Vice Chairman: 2009-2010
CCBOE Tennessee Legislative Network (TLN) Representative: 2008 - 2009
Authored Nine AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD JOURNAL Articles: 2009-2010
Authored TSBA Delegate Assembly Proposal Regarding Funding Accountability: 2009
Authored Six TSBA JOURNAL Articles: 2005, 2009-2010
Authored Three Articles for the TN TESOL NEWSLETTER
Authored “Dan’s Plans for Education Fans” Column After CCBOE Meetings
Authored Three Articles For HIGH SCHOOL TODAY MAGAZINE
Authored One Article for INTERNATIONAL ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR
NSBA Convention Delegate Assembly Representative: 2009 & 2010
NSBA Southern Region Delegate, Little Rock, Arkansas: 2009; Williamsburg, VA 2010

NSBA Nominating Committee: 2009
TSBA President: 2010
TSBA President-Elect: 2009
TSBA Treasurer: 2008
TSBA School Board Academy Advisory Committee: 2009-2015
TSBA Planning and Development Committee: 2009-2010
TSBA Audit Committee Member: 2008 – 2010; Chairman: 2008 – 2009
TSBA Finance Committee Chairman: 2008 – 2009
TSBA GASB 45 Trustee: 2009 – 2010
TSBA Board of Directors: 2008 – 2011
TSBA Executive Committee: 2008 - 2011
TSBA Level V Master School Board Member: 2005
TSBA Presidential Appointment 2003 – 2009, 2014:
TSBA Journal Editorial Review Board
TSBA Presidential Appointment 2006 – 2011: TLN Board of Directors
TSBA Presidential Appointment 2006 – Present: NSBA's Federal Relations Network
TSBA Convention - Credentials Committee: 2004 & 2006
TSBA All Tennessee School Board Judge: 2007, 2012, 2014
TSBA Student Recognition Committee Judge: 2009
TSBA Nominating Committee: 2006; Chairman 2011
TSBA Convention Delegate
TSBA Ambassador: 2004 – Present
TSBA "Most Ambassador Contacts": 2005 & 2009
TSBA's Inaugural Premier Ambassador Award Winner: 2009, again in 2012
TSBA's C. Hal Henard School Board Member of The Year: 2009
TSBA's Scholars Circle Inductee: 2010
National School Boards Association Distinguished Service Award Winner: 2005, 2009, 2012
TSBA 2005 & 2009 All Tennessee School Board Award Winner
TSBA All Tennessee School Board Chairman: 2009
TSBA 2006 & 2010 Excellence in Education Programs Award Winner
Carson-Newman College Education Advisory Committee: 2009 – Present
Carson-Newman College NCATE Reaccreditation Team: 2012
Presenter: TIAAA Conference Chapel Service: 2024 & 2025
Presenter: TSBA Convention – 2007: "Help for the Homeless and Hurting"
Presenter: TSBA Convention – 2008: "Do Good Guys Ever Win Title VI & IX Cases?"

Presenter: TSBA Convention – 2008 & 2009: “Mock School Board Meeting - Chairman”
Presenter: NSBA Convention – 2010: “Do Good Guys Ever Win Title VI and IX Cases?”
Presenter: Tennessee Tech University’s School Law Conference - 2010
Presenter: Fall Creek Falls Leadership Conference - 2010
Presenter: TSBA Convention – 2008: Leadership Conference Inspirational Speaker
Presenter: TSBA Convention – 2008: Awards Banquet Inspiration Speaker
Presenter: LEAD Conference – 2007 & 2008, “Do Good Guys Ever Win...”
Presenter: Cheatham County Board of Education – 2008, “Do Good Guys Ever Win...”
Presenter: Robertson County Board of Education – 2014, “Do Good Guys Ever Win...”
Presenter: TN TESOL Convention – 2010 & 2011: “Do Good Guys Ever Win...”
Presenter: TN TESOL Convention – 2011 & 2012: “Creating Model Parent Involvement”
Presenter: Monroe County School System In-Service – 2007, “Let’s Explore 504”
Presenter: Monroe County School System In-Service – 2007, “Help for the Homeless”
Presenter: Monroe County School System In-Service – 2007, “Do Good Guys Ever Win”
TN TESOL Board of Directors At Large Member: 2009-2013
TN TESOL Secretary/Treasurer: 2012 – 2014
TN TESOL President’s Award: 2014
TN TESOL Distinguished Service Award: 2014
Pi Lambda Theta National Educational Honor Society
Guest Lecturer - The University of Tennessee, Human Performance and Sports Studies
Tennessee Department of Education Exemplary School District Administrator
Monroe County School System Disciplinary Hearing Authority
Monroe County Family Resource Center Advisory Board
Monroe County Dropout Prevention Advisory Board
Monroe County Mental Health Advisory Board
Monroe County Preschool/Pre-K Advisory Board
Guest Lecturer - Maryville College Football Clinic
Roane State Foundation Fundraising Team
American Football Coaches Association
Tennessee Athletic Coaches Association
TIAAA Loyalty Award - 2023
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association
National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations
TACA Football All-Star Team Selection Committee
Gatlinburg Town Square Phase I Board of Directors President: 1992 – 2004
TSSAA Hall of Fame Inductee – Class of 2013
Tennessee School for the Deaf Hall of Fame Inductee – Class of 2018

TSSAA Distinguished Service Award - 2013
TSSAA Board of Control Ex-Officio Member: 2010 - present
TSSAA Legislative Council Ex-Officio Member: 2010 - present
TSSAA District Football Chairperson
TSSAA District Tennis Chairperson
TSSAA District Tennis Tournament Director
TSSAA Regional Tennis Tournament Director
TSSAA District Pepsi Cup Chairperson
Member - Tennessee School for the Deaf Athletic Hall of Fame
Originator - Cumberland County Jets Football Clinic
Originator - Cumberland County Jets Football Camp
Originator - Cumberland County Elementary All-Star Game
Originator – “Has Beens v Will Bees” Spring Football Game
Originator - Cumberland County Combined Elementary School Spring Football Practice

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE:

Cumberland County Board of Education - Overwhelmingly elected 9th District Representative in 2002, 2006, 2010 & 2014, elected Chairman of the Board at the first meeting in 2002, 2010, 2011, 2014 & 2015, TLN Representative in 2008-2009, Vice Chairman in 2009-2010, directed the process and earned TSBA's Board of Distinction designation for the CCBOE in just one year, chaired a Director of Schools hiring process, earned TSBA's Level V Master School Board Member status in two and a half years, was named a TSBA Ambassador, served on the TSBA Journal Editorial Review Board, and the TSBA Credentials and Nominating Committees, the Tennessee Legislative Network Board of Directors, Federal Relations Network, TSBA Board of Directors, was elected TSBA Treasurer, TSBA President-Elect, and TSBA President, has been Finance and Audit Committee Chairman, a two-time winner of the National School Boards Association's Distinguished Service Award, named to the TSBA's 2005 & 2009 All Tennessee School Board, earned TSBA's inaugural Premier Ambassador Award, selected as the C. Hal Henard School Board Member of the Year, named to the TSBA Scholars Circle, given the Crossville Chronicle's "Community Communicator" Dimpled Globe Award, member of the CCBOE's Baseball/Softball Complex Committee, Safety Committee, Energy Savings Committee Chair, helped spearhead construction projects for five schools and the new Central Services Complex, named Federal Programs Director in October 2015

Monroe County School System Central Office – Federal Programs Director in 2006, overseeing \$3,000,000 in Title I, II, III, IV, and VI projects, Title VI and Title IX Compliance Coordinator, ADA/504 Compliance Coordinator, Homeless Liaison, Migrant Liaison, High School Textbooks, Regular Education Homebound Services Director and TSSAA athletics rules and regulations compliance, wrote \$30,000 Safe Schools Act Grant ten consecutive years, wrote \$300,000 LEAP Grant for Sweetwater High School, assisted with Race To The Top Scope of Work-\$1,200,000 School Improvement Grant and \$100,000 Focus Grant for Monroe County

Tellico Plains High School - Ten years as a successful principal overseeing 525 students and 50 employees, directed day-to-day operations, hired faculty and staff, ensured correct financial management, ensured that all policies, procedures, and laws were followed, completed teacher evaluations, chaired special education IEP Team meetings, was a member of the Monroe County Disciplinary Hearing Authority, directed the first successful SACS accreditation process in Monroe County's public education history, turned around a \$17,500 Athletic Department debt into profitability in just one year, directed construction of three stadiums and an athletic complex, was named TSSAA Principal of the Year, won TSBA's Excellence in Education Programs Award, Monroe County Board of Education's Safe School Award two consecutive years, won consecutive Tri County Football Officials Sportsmanship Awards, won TSSAA's Just Do What's Right Sportsmanship Award

Knoxville Catholic High School - Athletics Director/Head Football Coach oversaw hiring of coaches, budgeting, athletic transportation, scheduling, purchasing, scheduling of officials, and media relations for twenty-two athletic teams, was the TSSAA District Pepsi Cup Chairperson, TSSAA Regional Tennis Tournament Director, TSSAA District Football Chairperson, SACS Steering Committee Chairperson, and was named Coach of the Year in two sports several times

Gatlinburg Town Square - Timeshare resort Board of Directors President from 1992 – 2004, chaired oversight of policies, procedures and a \$1,500,000.00 budget for 3,200 owners, oversaw two construction and renovation projects, and the budget was always in the black

NOTABLES:

Directed SACS accreditation at KCHS and TPHS

Led “worst to first” T-CAP score reversal at TPHS (1996-1997)

Improved 11th grade writing scores from 33% to almost 70% proficient in one year

Wrote and won a \$1,000 TSSAA grant for the construction of the baseball complex

Won back-to-back sportsmanship awards from the Tri County Football Officials

Instituted a monthly newsletter at TPHS to communicate with all stakeholders

Helped raise \$60,000 for the TPHS Alumni Center construction

Named the TSSAA’s A.F. Bridges Principal of the Year in 2003

Nominated for Tennessee Education Association’s Distinguished Administrator Award

Took over an 0-10 football program at TSD; first year went 7-3

Coached 3 East Tennessee Independent Conference (ETIC) Championship teams

Coached 2 Deaf National Championship Runner-up teams at TSD

Coached the best teams at that time in school history at TSD and Knoxville Catholic

Inherited a \$12,000 debt at Knoxville Catholic, which was in the black in nine months

Coached the first KCHS team to qualify for the TSSAA State Football Playoffs

Coached seven TSSAA District Championship teams at KCHS

Made five straight football playoff appearances at KCHS

KCHS teams were TSSAA State Quarterfinalists two consecutive years

Coached 7 Deaf Prep Football All-Americans

Coached 2 National Deaf Prep Football Players of the Year

Coached 10 Associated Press First Team Football All-State Players

Had 3 players selected to play in the Tennessee-Kentucky All-Star football game

Coached 6 National Football Foundation Scholar-Athletes of the Year

Ranked 5th in all-time wins - Knoxville Football League

Inducted into the TSSAA Hall of Fame

Inducted into the Tennessee School for the Deaf Hall of Fame

Served on the Tennessee State Task Force on physical activity and health

Directed the completion of the TPHS football, baseball, and softball stadiums

Added cross country, golf, volleyball, and soccer teams at TPHS

Wrote “Dan’s Plans for Education Fans” column after each CCBOE meeting

Given the Crossville Chronicle’s “Community Communicator” Award, 2006

Procured \$100,000 worth of donated computers from ORAU for TPHS

Instituted and directed the Mike Stratton Shootout Golf Tournament fundraiser

Received a perfect “100” on an unexpected TPHS State Health Department inspection

Top Gateway scores in Monroe County earned at TPHS while serving as Principal

“Tennessee Exemplary School System” Administrator: 2014-2015
NFL Foundation InSideOut Transformational Coaching TN Advisory Committee
Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation Character Development Program:
Tennessee Planning and Implementation Committee

COACHING HONORS:

National Deaf Prep Football Coach of the Year: 1980 - The Deaf American Magazine
East Tennessee Independent Conference Football Coach of the Year: 1979, 1980, 1982
District Football Coach of the Year: 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989
District Girls’ Tennis Coach of the Year: 1990, 1991, 1992
District Boys’ Tennis Coach of the Year: 1991, 1992
The Crossville Chronicle’s “Best Coach in Cumberland County”: 1993 & 1994

REFERENCES:*

Mr. Rich Barton, CMAA
NIAAA Associate Executive Director
9100 Keystone Crossing,
Suite 650 Indianapolis, IN 46240
Rbarton@niaaa.org
317.719.4847

Mr. Mark Reeves, Executive Director
Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association
3333 Lebanon Pike
P.O. Box 319
Hermitage, TN 37076
Mreeves@tssaa.org
615.719.1008

Mr. Mike Ellson, Executive Director
Tennessee Interscholastic Administrators Association
9000 Poplar Creek Road
Nashville, TN 37221
Mike.ellson46@gmail.com
615.301.3552

Dr. Tammy Grissom Ganger, Executive Director
Tennessee School Boards Association
525 Brick Church Park Dr.
Nashville, TN 37207
Tganger@tsba.net
615.815.3900

*Other references can be found on my website at: dansplans.com