

TISA Steering Committee Meeting

June 26, 2023, 4:00 PM CST, Microsoft Teams

Meeting Notes

Attendees

Warren Wells, Member, State Board of Education
Debra Moody, House Education Instruction Chairlady
Cat Stephens, Director of Schools, Tullahoma City Schools
Steve Barnett, Director of Schools, Johnson City Schools
Sara Carpenter, Executive Director, The Memphis Lift
Christy Carroll Highfill, Parent
Jen Aprea, Parent, The Arc Tennessee
Guy Respass, Data Management Director, Knox County Schools
Teresa Winter, CFO, Bartlett City Schools
Nancy Dishner, Executive Director, Niswonger Foundation
Victor Evans, Executive Director, Tennessee CAN
Jack Powers, Regional Legislative Director, ExcelinEd
Gini Pupo Walker, Executive Director, EdTrust

TDOE Staff Attendees

Sam Percy, Interim Commissioner of Education
Meghan McLeroy, Chief of Statewide Supports
Shannon Gordon, Chief Operating Officer
Maryanne Durski, Chief Financial Officer
Eve Carney, Deputy Commissioner of Districts and Schools
Christy Ballard, General Counsel
Aimee LaGrone, Senior Director of Engagement
Reed Cook, Director of Legislative Affairs
Grace Shelton, Asst. Commissioner of Program & Financial Performance & Evaluation
Nia Perry, Engagement Specialist

Greetings and Opening Comments

Interim Commissioner Sam Percy welcomed all committee members and staff to the meeting. After the welcome, he gave an overview of the meeting's priorities for discussion.

- The TISA allocations for the current year,
- TISA professional development strategy, insights and feedback, and
- TISA Report updates.

Priority 1: TISA Allocations

Interim Commissioner Sam Percy began the conversation by sharing the framework of a student-based funding formula with the committee.

- The framework of a student-based funding formula covers the base, weights, directing funding, and outcomes funding. All allocation information shared has been on the base, weights, and direct funding.
 - Outcomes Funding is on a lag indicator. After analyzing TCAP results and other school indicators, outcomes funding information will be released in the fall.
 - All information shared has been presented using the TISA Calculator. The department continues to present information to district and charter schools using the same format to ensure consistency.
 - Interim Commissioner Sam Percy noted that line items in the 'Other Funding' category, such as fast-growing, cost differential factor, and salary equity, were covered more broadly in the TISA Act that was filed and the State Board rules related to it. Aside from outcomes, those line items are outside the TISA funding formula.

TISA Projected Estimates:

- Estimates will be released monthly, beginning with data sets in January 2024.
- Information includes a formal letter displaying the TISA calculator and Local Contribution Calculator.
 - The Local Contribution Calculator was released in April after receiving fiscal capacity estimates from partnering agencies, the University of Tennessee's Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research and the Tennessee Advisory Commission for Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR).
 - Districts can only approach local budgeting with the local contribution information as it differentiates between the state dollars and local responsibility.
- Districts and charter schools have secure access to student-level data files and workbooks that roll-up to the overall allocations.
 - The data files will include student IDs and reporting data by all nine reporting periods, allowing districts to see what students are accounted for on every line of the funding formula.
 - Charter schools can access individual data files and workbooks that estimate total charter funding.

TISA Final Allocations:

- Final allocations will be available July 2023 and cover the FY24 fiscal year.
- TISA allocations will be accompanied by TISA resources and professional development.

Priority 2: Professional Development Strategy and Insights

Professional Development

- One element that is required by law regarding TISA includes professional development. The department will meet this requirement through professional development modules posted on our website.
- A no-cost professional development series aims to provide a digestible overview of TISA-related information, such as:
 - The TISA Act and TISA Guide,
 - How to budget to increase achievement,
 - How to connect achievement with investments, and
 - How to hold decision-makers accountable.
- Each module will consist of a short guide that references its key information.
- Each module will be five to 10 minutes long, excluding the module sharing the introduction to the TISA formula.
- The department plans to add more modules as we learn more about TISA and the needs of our stakeholders.
- Stakeholders include directors, state and local school board or governing board members, ED of SBE and Charter Commission, and state and local employees responsible for LEA and school budgets.
- Optional professional development will be provided at no cost for school employees related to maximizing investment to increase achievement.

TISA Implementation Update

Interim Sam Percy gave the committee an update on the TISA implementation timeline and active TISA related contracts.

- TDOE notified legislative leadership on November 29, 2022, that processes to develop PD would be completed within 45 days of TISA rules being final.
- Most TISA rules were finalized by February 15, 2023. A new outcomes rule was proposed and received a positive recommendation from the State Board of Education in February 2023.
- The data verification window for districts opened in January 2023.
- Districts received their first TISA allocation in February 2023.
- Active contracts, including PD:
 - SAS - State Report Card with TISA Allocations & Expenditures
 - Accenture - Website Resource Hub
 - PCG - TN Plans for Learning Success (web platform for ILP-D, ILP, IEP, and 504 plans)
 - Trainings for district staff planned for July 2023
- Procurements underway that will act as training supports:

- Higher Education Institution
- Statewide Contract

Priority 3: TISA Reporting Updates

TISA Implementation Reporting Update

Grace shared TISA reporting updates with the committee, which included:

- TISA reporting will be primarily featured on the State Report Card.
 - The department will continue to share user-friendly navigation tools and dashboard updates as we receive them.
- The State Report Card is a tool for states to report on accurate and transparent data to better inform public stakeholders on school and district performance.
 - Many data elements are required by federal law.
 - Finance reporting is included in these requirements. States are required to report on the preceding year.
 - That means the immediate next release of the report card will include BEP expenditure data with a few elements to prepare stakeholders for TISA-required reporting.

Feedback Synthesis

- In the last Steering Committee meeting, Grace shared additional functionality for this year's report card: the TISA Calculator and School Comparison Tool. Those tools are undergoing updates that encompass feedback given by the committee.
- Feedback was comprehensive and included:
 - Ensuring clear and accurate reporting that explains the differences in funding formula requirements and a "spending plan".
 - Providing ample opportunities for districts to tell the story of what makes their investments unique.
 - Creating easy comparisons in areas where comparison is possible while understanding the unique qualities of districts and schools across the state.
 - Creating and reporting in a way that guides users to ask the right questions of the right people.

Additional Opportunities for Engagement

- The department will release the District Information Survey asking stakeholders to share a message from their district or school leader as an opportunity to showcase what makes their district or school unique and speak directly to parents or users of the report card tool.
- The department will be expanding the survey this year. The survey will include district messages and additional narrative components for stakeholders to share on the strategic investments they plan to make with the dollars allocated to them under the TISA formula.

- The survey will also conclude with a section where stakeholders can list specifically the extracurriculars and programs they invest in that make their district or school unique. This information will be used for future comparisons.
- Beginning mid-summer, TDOE will partner with a vendor to conduct stakeholder focus groups across the state for tools like the TISA Calculator and Comparison tool.
- Information will be collected on the following:
 - What questions do you have when viewing this information?
 - What is the "why" behind your interest in these tools?
 - What actions do you plan to take when viewing this information?
 - What is the most important takeaway for you when using these tools?
 - Additional information will be shared with the steering committee after each group meeting

Topic Discussion and Questions

Questions and Comments Related to TISA Allocations

A Committee member asked when the target date is to release TISA allocations.

- The release date for TISA allocations is June 30, 2023.

A committee member highlighted that it would be helpful if data specialist or Education Information Specialist supervisors could be notified when estimates are released to districts because information gets lost in translation between their directors and EIS supervisors.

- The department is mindful of information sharing. While releasing information to district leaders first is vital, we have heard it will be helpful to send a simultaneous notification to data and finance leads.

Discussion on Understanding the Funding Formula

Considering their role as a stakeholder, Interim Commissioner Sam Percy asked the committee what elements of the funding formula they are most interested in understanding. He further asked the committee members to think of this question from three perspectives:

- How the formula operates,
- What is important for reporting data, and
- How can information inform decision making.
- A committee member shared that reporting could be more straightforward. It would be helpful to see how reporting is or intends to look from a visual and indicator perspective.
- A committee member inquired about opportunities for different stakeholders to learn the pros, cons, and best practices of the funding formula and if there was an apparatus for districts and schools to call with questions and ideas on their plans.
- Interim Commissioner Sam Percy asked the committee members, specifically district leaders, if they felt like they would benefit more from the opportunities

coming from the regional groups or designated districts, no matter where they are in this state.

- A committee member answered that their regional groups would benefit more, as they have strong relationships with safety. There's also an understanding of the location regionally, so it is advantageous for them to learn, grow, and think together. There would be value in a broader superintendent community also.
- A committee member emphasized CORE or regional groups are a safe space. They shared an experience as an administrator: looking at similar schools in the region was helpful. However, if there is a way to connect individuals in the local district, that may prove to be insightful also as some relationships and access to information are not given in the regional group. TISA will allow districts to challenge each other for better and share information, understanding that it's not scary.
- Interim Commissioner Sam Percy asked the committee members, especially community partners, how the department connects strategy opportunities to them and their thoughts on best practices that have worked for their organizations and initiatives.
 - A committee member shared that during the COVID-19 pandemic, their organization conducted Facebook live videos on social media and gave families a lot of information directly. Families want to understand TISA and how it works and affects their children. It would be good to have a presentation, a short video, or a live stream where that information can be presented to families.
 - A committee member answered that their organization works primarily with marginalized families. It would be helpful to share information specific to the needs of the families living in that area. One valuable event their organization hosted was a speaker series where different spokespersons came to give parents a breakdown of the information.
 - Interim Commissioner Sam Percy highlighted the theme of parent translation as necessary among the committee. The department could benefit from creating a parent translation packet to help them understand TISA.
 - A committee member shared that their organization believes their role is to be a support vehicle for their superintendent. They have seen great results, providing them opportunities such as a retreat to spend time working in-depth. Also, some support and ideas will come as TISA progresses, such as how the department allowed community partners to facilitate tutoring.
 - Interim Commissioner Sam Percy highlighted the importance of community-based approaches and a holistic approach as necessary. He asked the committee members to continue to think about that trajectory as community partners will have a role to play as TISA becomes clearer.
 - A committed member expressed the importance of explaining the difference between TISA and the BEP, as people may only understand it once it is tangible. They believe stakeholders will want visual explanations of how a funding formula is made, the implementation, and what factors ensure it is doing well.

- Interim Commissioner Sam Percy shared that some storylines are about having billions of state dollars to spend but not a storyline about students. The department has entered the phase of helping stakeholders understand the formula is about students because TISA is for students.
- Interim Commissioner Sam Percy noted it is important to understand the involvement and roles of the different stakeholder groups, understanding what levels of influence exist and where and how that plays into the TISA storylines.

Wrap Up/Announcements

Interim Commissioner Sam Percy highlighted Key Dates and Important Highlights for the committee

Key Dates and Important Highlights

- TISA Guide released by July 1, 2023
- TISA Training Modules by June 30, 2023
- Superintendent Study Council Conference - September 10th - 13th
- Year-Long Professional Development Series

Interim Commissioner Sam Percy shared that although TISA has a technical side, there is a heavy relational component. He encourages the committee members to continue to share feedback and insights.

Adjourn

Next meeting: July 31, 2023, at 4:00-5:00 PM CT via Microsoft Teams