



Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement



## Summary for Teachers

If you are currently a public-school teacher in Tennessee, it's likely that public schools have been funded the same way for your entire career. The Basic Education Program (BEP), the current funding formula that determines how much state and local funding schools receive each year, has been in place since 1992.

In recognition of the need to modernize Tennessee's public school funding formula, and increase transparency for how dollars are allocated to public schools, on May 2, 2022, Governor Bill Lee and the **Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) Act** ([Chapter 966 of the Public Acts of 2022](#)). Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, the TISA will replace the BEP and invest an additional recurring state investment of \$1 billion for Tennessee public schools.

The TISA enacts a student-based approach to K-12 public school funding that will increase funding transparency and ensure that each student generates dollars based on the unique supports they need to achieve academic success. This overview highlights the specific components of the TISA that can educate and empower teachers to advocate for the critical resources needed for their students, schools, and communities.

## Student-Based Funding Model

The TISA is a student-based funding model, meaning the model generates funds for districts based on the individual needs of students, rather than averages and ratios. As a Tennessee public school teacher, it is important for you to understand the main funding components in the TISA so you can leverage the new funding model to improve student outcomes in critical areas, such as literacy and postsecondary success. There are 4 tiers of funding under the TISA:

**BASE FUNDING:** The TISA starts by ensuring that all public-school students are funded at a base amount. For each student enrolled, the district will receive a base funding amount of \$6,860.

**WEIGHTED FUNDING:** The weighted funding portion of the TISA allocates additional dollars to districts based on the unique characteristics of each student. Weights work by providing districts a percentage of the \$6,860 base funding amount in additional dollars for each student. Recognizing that some students need additional resources to achieve their full academic potential, the TISA includes a 25% weight for students who are economically disadvantaged, a 5% weight for students who attend a Title I eligible school, and between 15% and 150% weights for students who have certain unique learning need (ULNs). ULNs include students receiving special education services, English learners, and students with characteristics of dyslexia.

**DIRECT FUNDING:** On top of the base funding and weighted funding, the TISA provides additional funds for each student enrolled in a public charter school or who receives strategic programming, including K-3 literacy, 4th grade tutoring, career and technical education (CTE) programs, and ACT participation.

**OUTCOMES FUNDING:** Finally, the TISA provides additional funding based on student outcomes.



## Teacher Pay

Tennessee teachers are the foundation for student success, and as a teacher, you deserve transparency related to your pay. Under the previous funding formula, when the state legislature invested money into teacher pay raises, there was no guarantee that those funds would directly result in teacher salary increases. However, the TISA contains new requirements that ensure that when state dollars are invested in teacher raises, those dollars must go toward teacher raises. The TISA includes a requirement that school districts use any state funds allocated for teacher salaries to provide salary increases.



## Accountability and Transparency

How does a student-based funding approach empower teachers? One way is increased accountability and transparency. A student-based funding model allows teachers to see how the specific students they teach generate the funding their districts receive each year which in turn, allows teachers to effectively advocate for more resources, or different resources, to meet the needs of their students. In addition to this added transparency, the TISA contains built-in avenues for stakeholders, such as teachers, to submit feedback to the department and contains certain accountability measures to ensure districts strategically leverage funding to increase outcomes for students. These accountability and transparency measures will allow stakeholders, such as teachers, to understand how state and local education funds are allocated and spent in their districts, and effectively advocate for change.



## Professional Development

Under the TISA, directors of schools, school board members, State Board of Education members, Public Charter School Commission members, and other stakeholders, like teachers, will have the opportunity to engage in a no-cost, department-provided professional development series on how to budget strategically, make investments in student achievement, and hold decision-makers accountable. These resources ensure everyone involved in public school funding and spending decisions has a comprehensive understanding of the TISA. This means the building and district level leaders you trust as a teacher to be good stewards of public school funding dollars will have the necessary knowledge to make spending decisions that benefit your classroom and the students you serve.

