



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### General Questions

#### 1. Why is LIS being merged into TIS? Why now?

At the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, we had hope that we were starting a true turnaround for Lakeshore. Since then, first-year principal Curtis Walker, a dynamic and experienced leader, worked to improve the quality of instruction and significantly improved the culture. Unfortunately, LIS did not make the progress we had hoped for in the first year of a multi-year turnaround plan.

- Recently released preliminary student test scores on state tests and nationally-normed assessments are down.
- Our strong principal, Curtis Walker, was recruited to serve as a principal in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District.
- Key staff positions at LIS are vacant, including administration, homeroom teachers and support staff, making the challenge to turnaround LIS even greater and putting students at risk of falling further behind.
- Our sponsor may decide not to renew us after next year.
- Enrollment remains low.

In the end, our best option was to merge LIS into TIS, which gives us an opportunity to strengthen the educational experience for our LIS and TIS students alike by maintaining student-teacher ratios, enhancing the multigeneration educational experience, and realigning our focus and resources to better support all our children and families.

#### 2. Why has LIS had so many problems in recent years (safety, staff turnover, hiring qualified/licensed teachers, declining enrollment, poor performance, etc.)?

LIS is not immune from issues facing most schools across the country. The unprecedented national teacher shortage, a residual impact of the pandemic, has taken a toll. We have been working to address these challenges and reset our school culture to create the best possible educational experience for our students and a supportive environment for our teachers and staff. Unfortunately, LIS did not make the progress we had hoped for in the first year of a multi-year turnaround plan.

#### 3. Why merge with TIS? How is TIS performing compared to LIS?

Ongoing teacher shortages and staffing challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education for students everywhere, and our schools were no exception. Fortunately, with strong

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leadership, TIS and Near West are rebounding, with encouraging growth in reading scores and overall academic performance this year while maintaining enrollment and a strong culture. That has not been true at LIS the past two years. Despite our best efforts, ongoing leadership and staffing challenges have left LIS struggling to regain its footing.

**4. Why won't LIS students be going to NW?**

While NW also has strong and consistent leadership and has shown encouraging growth in reading scores and academic performance, it is much further away than nearby TIS and we're only able to offer free transportation for LIS students to TIS. Also, NW is near enrollment capacity.

**5. Are TIS or NW in danger of closing too?**

No. TIS and NW are strong financially, have strong leadership, and have encouraging growth in reading scores and overall academic performance while maintaining enrollment and a strong culture.

**6. What will happen to the LIS staff?**

We will transfer most of our newly-hired, high-quality and licensed teachers to TIS, which will maintain that school's student-teacher ratio, while some will transfer to NW, when staffing needs and licensure align.

**7. How will decisions about LIS consider equity and access for all students?**

Our plans to transition staff and students prioritize our educational model, maintaining student-teacher ratios, and will align highly-qualified, licensed teachers with staffing needs. Additionally, we will offer free transportation to LIS students and current TIS students who live in the immediate area of LIS to TIS, prioritize admission to TIS and NW for LIS students, and continue to provide access to intervention specialists for our students.

**8. If LIS closes, what happens to the school building and facilities?**

IGS leases the building from the Diocese of Cleveland. While we will honor our lease, that question is best directed to the Diocese.

**9. How will the closure of LIS impact IGS's overall financial standing and viability going forward?**

IGS is financially strong. This is an opportunity to realign our focus and resources to better support TIS and NW, enhancing the educational experience for all our children.

**10. What options besides merger or closure have you explored? Can a new operator come in and take over at the same location?**

In addition to merger with TIS, we considered trying to recruit a new principal to keep LIS open for another year, a merger with a new operator and outright closing the school. The Board decided that merging LIS into TIS was best aligned with our mission and would best serve our students. With the Key staff positions at LIS are vacant, including administration, homeroom teachers and support staff, making the challenge to turnaround LIS even greater and putting students at risk of falling further behind.



## LIS Parents/Guardians Questions

**1. Why can't we stay open through the next school year, so we have more time to try to turn it around?**

Our sense of urgency to take this action was rooted in our mission and our long-standing commitment to create an exceptional educational experience for our children. With academic performance declining, the need to hire an experienced turnaround leader in a very short period, and key staff positions (including administration, homeroom teachers and support staff) vacant, would put our students at risk of falling further behind if we remained open.

**2. Is there anything we can do to keep LIS open?**

No. Despite our best efforts, ongoing leadership and staffing challenges have left LIS struggling to regain its footing. We're not willing to risk our children's educational experience or future, which is much brighter merging LIS into TIS. The merger gives us an opportunity to strengthen the educational experience for our LIS and TIS students alike by maintaining student-teacher ratios, enhancing the multigeneration educational experience, and realigning our focus and resources to better support all our children and families.

**3. Is my child guaranteed acceptance at TIS? How about NW?**

All currently enrolled LIS students are guaranteed acceptance at TIS and will receive free transportation to TIS. Currently enrolled LIS students may receive priority enrollment at Near West, depending on capacity. We will provide more information in the coming days and provide details regarding next steps and the timeline.

**4. What types of support services will be offered to help my child(ren) cope with this transition to TIS?**

We are committed to making this transition as smooth and easy as possible for you and your child. We're working closely with TIS Principal Aziz Ahmad on the details and will be in touch soon with more clarity on transition support and timeline.

**5. Will transportation options be available if my child has to change schools?**

Free transportation to TIS will be available for all current LIS children who enroll in TIS, as well as current TIS students who live in the immediate area of LIS. More details regarding this will be available soon.

**6. How will you ensure a smooth transition and consistent quality of education if my child chooses to transfer to TIS?**

With strong leadership and many returning teachers steeped in the culture and IG educational model that is producing encouraging results, TIS is positioned well to navigate the merger, support children and mentor staff coming over from LIS. We are committed to making this transition as smooth and easy as possible for you and your child.

**7. My child has special educational needs – can TIS accommodate their needs?**

Yes. TIS is staffed with experienced intervention specialists.

