



2026 TEFA Appeals in APEX-ESA – School System Guidance

Overview:

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) and its vendor, Odyssey, have initiated an appeals process related to the Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA) program. TEA will, at the request of CPA and/or its vendor, facilitate local educational agency (LEA) compliance with records requests related to TEFA appeals involving special education eligibility and coordinate data-validation activities in the APEX-ESA system.

This overview explains district and charter responsibilities when TEA requests assistance related to TEFA application appeals.

Scope:

The appeals process in the APEX-ESA system is a process for confirming special education information for students and validation of the state-level data shared with the Texas Comptroller as part of the TEFA program. It is not an extension of program applications or eligibility.

Procedure:

When a special education TEFA application is in appeal:

TEA will change the student's APEX-ESA submission to "in Appeal" and will notify the district/charter of the change by an APEX-ESA notification. (For students without a record in APEX-ESA, TEA will create a **new record** to allow the LEA to enter the student's special education information and upload their IEP.)

TEA will provide a list of LEAs with students in an appeal status to the ESC SPED directors to help support this process, particularly as submissions and updates during summer breaks may prove difficult.

District Responsibilities:

- Log into APEX-ESA to review the student submissions marked "in Appeal".
- Make any needed edits or corrections to student information such as, primary disability, instructional setting, or most recent IEP date.
- Submit an updated IEP or EFA IEP, if available (IEPs must be from 8/1/23 to 3/31/26 – IEPs completed outside of this window, even if more recent, will not be accepted).
- Once corrections and/or updates have been made, click "certify & submit" to indicate to TEA that it has been updated.
- If an appeal does not have an eligible IEP or the LEA cannot confirm the student's eligibility to receive special education services, the LEA should communicate this by adding a note in APEX-ESA.

Next Steps:

- TEA will review the information provided by the LEA, and will mark the appealed submission as either "approve" or "deny".
 - APEX-ESA "approved" or "denied" appeals are **not final TEFA appeals decisions**. Approval of an appealed APEX-ESA record is *only* an indication that a student meets special education eligibility under the TEFA program requirements.



- If needed, TEA will move submissions back to “clarify” and add a system note to communicate any additional questions.
- TEA will share APEX-ESA appeal data with CPA and Odyssey, who will make the final appeal determination and share the decision with the family.

Timelines:

APEX-ESA submissions related to TEFA appeals will be marked as **“In Appeal” on a rolling basis** as CPA and Odyssey notify families of TEFA application decisions. As a result, LEAs may see APEX-ESA submissions enter an appeal status at different points throughout the coming months.

LEAs are encouraged to **review and respond to submissions marked “In Appeal” as soon as practicable** in order to support timely resolution of the appeals process. TEA recommends that LEAs complete their review and submit updates or notes in APEX-ESA **within 10 business days** of receiving the APEX-ESA notification, when operationally feasible.

Recognizing that appeals may occur during periods of limited staffing (e.g., summer break), LEAs should complete submissions as promptly as possible and utilize available ESC supports as needed.

Sample Appeal Scenarios:

Appeal Scenario	LEA Action in APEX-ESA
Student is SPED eligible, but IEP was not uploaded to APEX-ESA	Upload IEP, verify SPED data, certify & submit
Parent reported instructional setting does not match information in TSDS	Upload most recent IEP, verify SPED data, certify & submit
Parent reports their student is SPED eligible, but student is on a 504 plan or ISP	Mark student as not eligible in APEX-ESA, add a system note, certify & submit
Parent reports child has IEP from acceptable window, but student was dismissed	Mark student as not eligible in APEX-ESA, upload dismissal record, certify & submit
Student never eligible for special education	Mark student as not eligible in APEX-ESA, add note stating no eligibility record, certify & submit
Student record created by TEA; LEA has no matching records	Add note explaining inability to confirm student

Support:

LEAs may reach out to APEX-ESA@tea.texas.gov for any questions or support needs.