



# ACT Appeals Guidance

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## Section 1: Overview

The ACT appeals process allows districts to resolve ACT data issues in line with federal and state guidelines. This document explains what, how, and when districts may appeal. Please contact [TNEA.Accountability@tn.gov](mailto:TNEA.Accountability@tn.gov) for questions not addressed in this document.

Due to COVID-19, school closures occurred in the spring of 2020. This required the following legislation and policies to be put in place to waive testing requirements both at the [state](#) and [federal](#) levels. The department did not administer any required assessments for the 2019-20 school year, including TCAP, MSAA, TCAP-Alt, WIDA, or EOC tests. This waiver for required assessments also included the requirement of all students to participate in the ACT or SAT to earn a Tennessee high school diploma. For students who were intended to test in the spring and were unable due to testing cancelations, the Tennessee Department of Education will allow for the inclusion of these seniors in the cohort but will waive their requirement in participation rates.

## Section 2: Appeals Parameters

### 2.1 Appeals Context

ACT data included in accountability reflect **only** the students in the prior graduation cohort who earned an on-time regular diploma. These data have been reviewed in partnership with ACT to reflect a student's highest score. Additionally, students count in a cohort based on the year they entered grade 9. Please consult the [2020-21 Graduation Rate Protocol](#) on the cohort application for more information.

### 2.1 Appealable and Non-Appealable Situations

Districts may submit ACT appeals **only** for graduates who are missing ACT data or whose scores increase based on the parameters listed below<sup>1</sup>. **Districts will also not be held accountable for seniors who were scheduled to test in the spring or summer of 2020 but were unable due to COVID-19 school closures.** Other appeals may not be accepted.

Appealable issues:

- Missing ACT data
  - The district has score reports and/or data files that contain valid ACT scores for students with missing score information in the student level file on the accountability application.
- Higher ACT data
  - The district has score reports and/or data files that contain valid ACT scores for students whose scores are higher than the reported data in the student level file on the accountability application.
- SAT data
  - The district has score reports and/or data files that contain valid SAT scores for students with missing score information in the student level file on the accountability application.

Non-appealable issues:

- Super scores
  - The district submits a super score for a student by combining the student's highest subtest.
- Cohort change
  - A student who graduated early (i.e., the year before their expected cohort graduation year) does not appear in the file.
    - Graduates must count with their graduation cohort rather than their graduating class per federal law.
- Student demographic changes
  - All demographic data must be corrected through EIS as part of the graduation cohort process. Please consult the [2020-21 Graduation Rate Protocol](#) on the Cohort

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<sup>1</sup>This appeals process considers students whose higher scores would affect these calculations. These data will be used to determine post-secondary readiness and participation rates in accountability calculations.

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application for more information.

The department requires documentation to consider ACT appeals. Acceptable evidence includes:

- Data files from ACT or SAT that include the appealed student(s)
- Student score reports from ACT or SAT

The department **will not** consider the following types of documentation:

- Transcripts that list ACT or SAT scores
- Student Information System screenshots of students' recorded scores
- Letters from schools or families stating scores

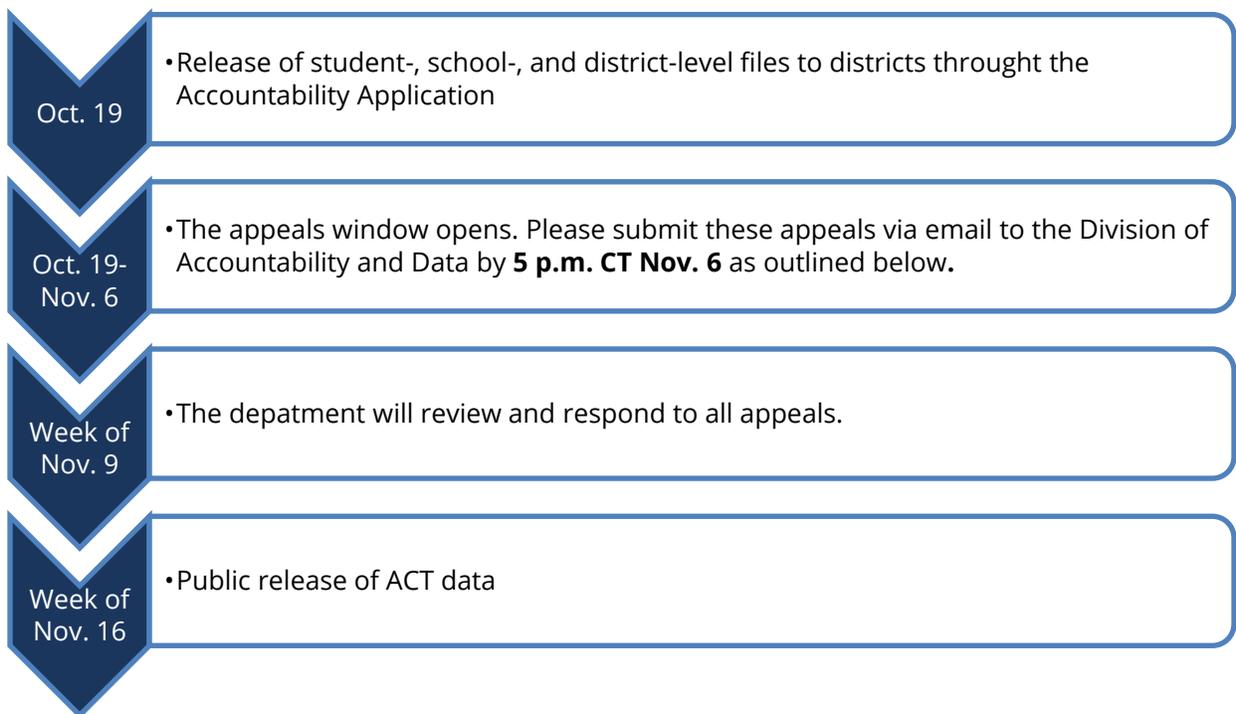
Districts should submit a spreadsheet of all 2020 graduates and their ACT scores as part of their appeal. Please see [section 3.2](#) for more information.

# Section 3: Appeals Submission Timeline and Process

## 3.1 Timeline

2020 ACT data appeals must be submitted **between Oct. 19 and Nov. 6** for the data to be reflected for public reporting and in accountability. The department will conduct a second appeals window in the spring through the *Ready Graduate* page on the Cohort application for inclusion in accountability **only**. More information about the spring appeals process and timeline will be available in the *Commissioner's Update for Directors*.

The timeline below outlines important dates for the fall ACT appeals process.



## 3.2 Submission Process

### 3.2.1 Required Documentation

The department will only consider appeals that include all of the following components:

- Score reports and/or data files that list score information for each graduate with missing data
- Completed ACT Appeals Submission Worksheets (please consult [section 3.2.3](#) for more details).

### 3.2.2 Submission Format

Districts must submit all ACT appeals in one email to [TNE.Accountability@tn.gov](mailto:TNE.Accountability@tn.gov) before **5 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 6**. ACT appeals emails must come from the district's director of schools.

### 3.2.3 ACT Appeals Submission Worksheet

ACT Appeals Submission Worksheets are available on [the department's website](#) must be complete and correct. Please follow the submission instructions on the next page closely to expedite appeals processing.

1. Please save the ACT Appeals Submission Worksheet Excel file using the following naming convention: **"###\_Appeals\_Submission\_Worksheet"** where "###" is your district number.
  - a. Please only change the Appeals Submission Worksheet as specified in the instructions below.
  - b. If you are unable to locate your district and school number, please consult any of the files on the accountability application or search the [School Directory webpage](#).
2. If your district is submitting documentation for each student, please name each document as follows: **"DistrictNumber\_SchoolNumber\_StateStudentIdNumber"**
  - a. As an example, district number **001** submitting documentation for school **100** and student **1234567** would name the corresponding document: **"001\_100\_1234567"**
2. If your district is submitting documentation that includes information for multiple students, please submit one document per school that includes all affected students at that school. Please name each document as follows: **"DistrictNumber\_SchoolNumber\_AllStudents"**
  - a. As an example, district number **001** submitting documentation for school **100** would name the corresponding document: **"001\_100\_AllStudents"**
3. Please **submit all documentation as attachments to the appeals email**.
4. Please submit only one ACT Appeals Submission Worksheet per district as an email attachment to [TNEA.Accountability@tn.gov](mailto:TNEA.Accountability@tn.gov). **Please note that this email must come from the director of schools in your district.**
5. Please fill out the **"Contact\_Info"** tab of the ACT Appeals Submission Worksheet **before** filling out the "District\_Appeals" tab. Please enter current contact information for the relevant personnel in your district.
6. Please enter the state student ID number in column A of the **"District\_Appeals"** tab **before** entering school and student information. Please do **not** change any column headings.
7. Please enter the school number in column D. Please enter last, first, and middle names in columns E through G. Please enter score information in columns H through L.

Districts submitting appeals must explain the appealable issues in a letter on district letterhead from the district's director of schools. Districts must submit this letter along with any supporting documentation to [TNEA.Accountability@tn.gov](mailto:TNEA.Accountability@tn.gov).