

2023-24 Federal Accountability Appeals Guide

August 2024

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Section 1. Overview

The annual federal accountability appeals process allows Tennessee districts to review and validate federal accountability related data files for the past school year prior to the public release of school and district accountability data on the Tennessee's State Report Card. ***This document explains the timeline, process, and parameters for submitting an appeal during the data appeals process.*** Districts may consult the [2023-24 Federal Accountability Protocol](#) and the [2023-24 Federal Accountability FAQ](#) for more information regarding Tennessee's federal accountability framework, systems, and methodologies. For appeals-related questions not addressed in this document, please contact TNED.Accountability@tn.gov.

Section 2. Data Files Release and Appeals Timeline

There are three distinct phases in the 2023-24 Federal Accountability Appeals process. Table 1 summarizes the data files that will be released to districts for review and appeals as well as timeline across all three phases. All data files will be accessible to districts via the Accountability application. To assist districts with the appeals process, a crosswalk between the released data files and the key data points that districts shall review within each data file is included in Appendix A.

Table 1. Appeals Data Files and Timeline by Phase

Phase	Milestones	Data Files
Phase I: August 19-September 6, 2024	<u>Submission window</u> - Aug. 19: Phase I data files released on the Accountability application - Aug. 19: Submission window opens - Aug. 30: Submission window closes <u>Initial response window</u> - Sept. 3: Initial response sent to districts <u>Remediation window</u> - Sept. 4: Remediation window opens - Sept. 5: Remediation window closes <u>Finalization window</u> - Sept. 6: Final responses sent to district; Phase I data files final	2023-24 Assessment data files, including Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) except math end-of-course (EOC) assessments, Grade 2 math assessment, TCAP-Alternate Assessments, Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) tests¹ 2023-24 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) data files 2023-24 Chronically out of school data files 2023 graduating cohort's graduation rate data files (<i>not appealable</i>) 2023 graduating cohort's <i>Ready Graduate</i> data files (<i>not appealable</i>)
Phase II: September 11-October 2, 2024	<u>Submission window</u> - Sept. 11: Phase II data files released on the Accountability application - Sept. 11 Submission window opens - Sept. 24 Submission window closes <u>Initial response window</u> - Sept. 26 Initial response sent to districts <u>Remediation window</u> - Sept. 24 Remediation window opens - Sept. 30 Remediation window closes <u>Finalization window</u> - Oct. 2: Final responses sent to district; Phase II data files final	2023-24 Math EOC and grade 2 English language arts (ELA) tests 2023-24 10th grade cohort data file 2023-24 TCAP participation rate and success rate data file (<i>new</i>)
Phase III: October 28—November 19, 2024	<u>Submission window</u> - Oct. 28: Phase III data files released on the Accountability application - Oct. 28: Submission window opens - Nov. 8: Submission window closes <u>Initial response window</u> - Nov. 13: Initial response sent to districts <u>Remediation window</u> - Nov. 14: Remediation window opens	2023-24 Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) data files (<i>not appealable</i>) - School/district accountability data files - School/district accountability designations - School and district heatmaps (<i>not appealable</i>)

¹ The department started administering DLM math and ELA in 2023-24. Please see Appendix B for more information regarding business rules applied when preparing DLM.

Phase	Milestones	Data Files
	- Nov. 15: Remediation window closes <u>Finalization window</u> - Nov. 19: Final responses sent to districts; Phase III data files final	

2.1. Data Files

Districts shall review the released data files during each phase and submit appeals as appropriate. This section describes specific data elements included in each type of data files.

Assessment files display the counts and percentages for each test, grade, subject, and student group. During Phase I, the file will include all TCAP tests, except grade 2 ELA and math EOC, TCAP-Alt, and DLM tests. Grade 2 ELA and math EOC tests are released in Phase II due to standard setting. Assessment data files include results that do not factor into accountability calculations but are used for State Report Card reporting. Assessment data files are created for the student-, school-, district-, and state levels and contain data for up to the three most recent years. This file, at the student level, will also indicate in which district/school a student's score will be used for accountability purposes once the 50% enrollment rule is applied. This file will also be used to generate subject-level success rate data, where students are assigned to schools in which they are tested, to be published in the State Report Card.

ELPA files detail the performance and progress of English learners on the WIDA ACCESS exam. These files are created for the student, school, and district levels and contain data for the current school year. This file, at the student level, will also indicate in which district/school a student's score will be used for accountability purposes once the 50% enrollment rule is applied. The school- and district-level files currently do not have the 50% enrollment rules applied.

Chronically out of school files display counts and percentages of students who count in accountability calculations as chronically out of school. These files are created for the student-, school-, and district levels and contain data for the current school year. This file, at the student level, will indicate in which district/school a student's score will be used for accountability purposes once the 50% enrollment rule is applied. The school- and district-level files do have the 50% enrollment rules applied.

Graduation rate data files (not appealable) contain counts and percentages of students who count in accountability calculations as federal graduates as well as Tennessee graduates for the 2023 graduating cohort. These files are created for the student-, school-, and district levels. More information regarding the difference between federal and Tennessee graduation rates is discussed in detail in the [cohort protocol](#). The 2023 graduating cohort's graduation rate data, used for 2023-24 federal accountability calculation, were finalized in the fall of 2023; hence, they are no longer appealable.

Ready Graduate files (not appealable) display the counts and percentages of the 2023 graduating cohort who count in accountability calculations as Tennessee graduates² meeting at least one *Ready Graduate* criterion. These files are created for the student, school, and district levels. The 2023 graduating cohort's *Ready Graduate* data, used for 2023-24 federal accountability calculation, were finalized in July 2024; hence, they are no longer appealable.

10th grade cohort data file, a student-level file, details the accountable assessments and participation rate status for the

² Tennessee graduates are defined in accordance with the SBE's [High School Policy 2.103](#). Students with disabilities who complete four years of English language arts (ELA) and math in extended courses (A/B courses) and those who received three credits of science in accordance with the [High School Policy 2.103](#) will continue to receive a regular diploma and be included in the numerator of the Tennessee graduation rate calculation.

10th grade cohort. This data file is used to calculate the 10th grade cohort success rate for high schools and is used to evaluate high school performance for accountability purposes.

TCAP participation rate and success rate data files (*new*) provide school- and district-level participation rates and success rates including all accountable assessments across all grade levels for all student groups for accountability purposes. Note that the data is preliminary during the submission window, given that districts will review the 10th grade cohort data file and math EOC assessments at the same time. Any approved appeals to these data files will subsequently affect the participation rate and success rate calculation. The finalized participation rates and success rates will be released to the Accountability application by the end of Phase II after taking the approved appeals into account.

TVAAS files (not appealable) display growth data. These files include school and district level composites, educator evaluation composites, and subject-level composites for teachers, schools, and districts.

Accountability data files contain accountability data metrics used to inform accountability calculation, including indicator score by student groups, the overall indicator score, and designation flags.

Accountability designations contain a list of schools/districts receiving designations and key accountability metrics that inform designation decisions, including district designations, Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) designation, Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) designation, and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) designation.

Heatmaps (not appealable) provide snapshots of school and district performance across accountability indicators and student groups.

2.2. Timeline

All appeals shall be submitted **by 9 p.m. CT on the last day of the submission window** during each phase. The department will not review any new submission beyond the submission window. The department will review all submissions posted by the last day of the submission window and provide an initial response. Districts may resubmit additional documentation to support the denied appeals during the remediation window. By the end of each phase, data reviewed during the phase are final and can no longer be appealed in future phases.

2.3. Embargo

All data files will be updated on the Accountability application when finalized. However, these data files, except TVAAS, will be under embargo until the State Report Card's public release. TVAAS embargo timeline and the 2023-24 State Report Card release timeline will be announced in the Commissioner's Update for Directors (CUFD) at a later time.

Section 3. Appeals Submission Process

Districts submitting appeals must explain the appealable issues **in a letter on district letterhead** which must **be submitted by the district's director of schools**. Districts must submit this letter along with proper supporting documentation providing evidence using the following forms:

- Phase I appeals (8/19-9/6): [2023-24 Accountability Appeals Form: Phase I](#)
- Phase II appeals (9/11-10/2): [2023-24 Accountability Appeals Form: Phase II](#)
- Phase III appeals (10/28-11/19): [2023-24 Accountability Appeals Form: Phase III](#)

Any appeals without proper supporting documentation will be denied. Please reach out to TNED.Accountability@tn.gov for consultation regarding proper documentation as needed. The department will not consider appeals or additional supporting documentation submitted past the appeals window deadline as specified in Table 1. Please plan to ensure that all proper documentation is submitted by the specified deadline.

3.1. Appealable Issues and the Required Documentation

Districts may submit appeals in certain circumstances. Below is a list of the appealable issues and the required documentation to support appeals.

- **Residential Facility Records**
 - Per federal guidelines, the department must assign both participation and achievement results of students tested in a residential facility to the sending school and district for accountability purposes. Any test records with a SNT code of 5 (residential facilities) are counted as “enrolled”, “not-tested.” Districts can submit appeals to remove students enrolled in the out-of-state residential facilities from the TCAP participation rates.
 - **Required documentation.** Districts must submit documentation that confirms the student enrolled in an out of state residential facility. The documentation must have the student’s full name and date of enrollment. Appropriate documentation would be an enrollment record or an official letter from the facility administrator confirming the student is enrolled.
- **10th Grade Cohort Appeal**
 - Districts may submit appeals when students are incorrectly identified in or missing from the 10th grade cohort data files and when accountable assessments are incorrectly assigned to the accountable school and/or district.
 - **Required documentation.** Districts must submit the 10th grade cohort appeals worksheet and provide appropriate documentation (i.e., enrollment records, course and corresponding testing records) to update the 10th grade cohort. The documentation must have the student’s full name, state student id, and date of enrollment. If the appeal is regarding accountable assessments and the attribution of the accountable assessments to the calculation of the participation rate and success rate, the documentation must include enrollment records associated with the accountability assessments.
- **Department Errors**
 - Districts may appeal if the errors are made by the department (i.e., the calculations differ from the process outlined in the [2023-24 Federal Accountability Protocol](#)).
 - Districts may appeal if there are data errors in any of the appealable data files, such as 50 percent

enrollment attribution, chronically out of school determination, success rate calculation etc.

- **Required documentation.** Districts must submit documentation that confirms the error. For example, if a student's WIDA ACCESS score is incorrectly associated with a different school than the one in which they spent at least 50% of the school year, the district can submit an appeal for that student.

- **Systematic Errors**

- Districts may appeal if there are systematic and uncorrectable district data errors that are outside of the district's control. The department requires documentation to consider the appeals of systematic data errors.
- **Required documentation.** Districts must submit documentation that confirms the data error that occurred was outside of district control. For example, the district updated SIS absentee codes (date updated must be viewable), but EIS did not process the codes correctly before absentee data was pulled for Chronically Out of School calculations.

3.2. Non-Appealable Issues

There are non-appealable issues/files:

- Student demographic information
- Graduation rate data files
- *Ready Graduate* data files
- TVAAS data files
- Heat map files

3.3. Appeals Submission Format

Districts must submit appeals using the appeals forms as specified in [Section 3](#). The person submitting the appeals form must have an Orion/SSO account in order to submit the form. Districts must submit the following information:

- District Number
- District Name
- Name and Email of person submitting form
- Director of Schools Name
- Director of Schools Email
- Type of data files being appealed
- An Appeals Letter signed by the Director of Schools
 - must be submitted as a PDF file with the naming convention "**###_AppealsLetter**" where ### is the district number. Ex: 999_AppealsLetter
- Supporting Documentation
 - Supporting documentation must be submitted as an excel or PDF file with the naming convention "**###_Documentation**" where ### is the district number. Ex: 999_Documentation
 - The 10th grade cohort appeals worksheet must be saved as an excel file to be submitted. Please use the naming convention: **###_10thgradeappeal_worksheet**. Ex: 999_10thgradeappeal_worksheet
 - **Important Note:** documentation must be provided for each issue being appealed. Failure to include supporting documentation will result in a denial.

Any appeals and documentation submitted past the specified deadline will be denied. If you need assistance submitting the Appeals Forms, please consult the Microsoft Form Login and Trouble Shooting Guide (see Appendix C) or email TNEducation@tn.gov.

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Appendix A: Federal Accountability Data Files Location

The table below provides the accountability related data files that districts should review during Phase I and Phase II. Districts must navigate to the “File Downloads” section of the Accountability application in order to access the data files listed. The “Use” column identifies key data points that districts shall review and submit appeals as appropriate. The “Review Notes” column highlights the important information that district shall be aware of while submitting appeals.

Data Files	Data File location on the Accountability Application	Use	Public Reporting Location(s)	Review Notes
Assessment data files	• 2023-24 Assessment Student Level File	- Verify student scores - Identify which students are counted in assessment and accountability data files		
	2023-24 Assessment School Level File 2023-24 Assessment District Level File	- Percentages and counts of TCAP participation by grade and student group - Percentages and counts of TCAP results by performance levels by grade and student group	Data Downloads - Assessment files Report Card - Achievement by Subject Area	These data files present data based on where the student tested
ELPA data files	• 2023-24 English Language Proficiency Assessment Files– ACCESS Student Level File	Verify student results from the WIDA ACCESS test		
	2023-24 English Language Proficiency Assessment Files – ACCESS School Level File 2023-24 English Language Proficiency Assessment Files – ACCESS District Level File	- Number and percent of students meeting growth standard - Number and percent of students meeting exit criteria - Literacy and composite averages	Data Downloads Report Card - English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Reporting based on where the student spent at least 50% of the school year
Chronically Out of School data files	• 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Student Level File	- Verify student absence counts - Identify which students are counting in chronically out of school calculations		
	2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism School Level File 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism District Level File	- Number of students enrolled for at least 50% of the school year in the school or district, depending on the level - Number and percent of students who were chronically out of school	Data Downloads - Chronic Absenteeism Report Card - Chronically Out of School	Reporting based on where the student spent at least 50% of the school year
Graduation rate data files	• 2023-24 <i>Graduation Rate Student</i> Level File	Federal Graduation Rate and Tennessee Graduation Rate information for students in the 2023 graduating cohort		<i>Graduation rate</i> data files are finalized in the fall of

Data Files	Data File location on the Accountability Application	Use	Public Reporting Location(s)	Review Notes
(not appealable)	2023-24 Graduation Rate School Level File 2023-24 Graduation Rate District Level File	- ACT Participation Rate - Number of students in the cohort - Number and percent of students in the cohort who are counted as federal graduates and Tennessee graduates	Data Downloads - Graduation Rate Report Card - Graduation Rate	2023; not appealable at this time.
Ready Graduate data files (not appealable)	2023-24 Ready Graduate Student Level File	Ready Graduate criteria information for students in the 2023 graduating cohort		Ready Graduate data files are finalized in June 2024; not appealable at this time.
	2023-24 Ready Graduate School Level File 2023-24 Ready Graduate District Level File	- ACT Participation Rate - Number of students in the cohort - Number and percent of students in the cohort who achieved Ready Graduate status (i.e., Tennessee graduates meeting at least one Ready Graduate criterion)	Data Downloads - Ready Graduate Report Card - Ready Graduate	
10 th Grade cohort data files	10 th Grade Cohort File	- Verify student list identified in the 10th grade cohort - Accountable math assessment identified - Accountable ELA assessment identified		
TCAP participation rate and success rate data files (new)	2023-24 TCAP Participation Rate and Success Rate School Level File 2023-24 TCAP Participation Rate and Success Rate District	- Verify participation rates for student groups - Verify success rates for student groups - Verify adjusted success rates for student groups		
TVAAS data files (not appealable)	TVAAS Teacher Evaluation Composites File	Teacher TVAAS composites (both single- and multi-year) by test type		TVAAS data files are finalized; not appealable at this time.
	- TVAAS School Composites File - TVAAS District Composites File	Composites by test type	TVAAS public site Data Downloads - TVAAS Composites	
	- TVAAS Teacher Subject-Level Data File - TVAAS School Subject-Level Data File - TVAAS District Subject-Level Data File	Growth measures, indices, and levels for individual grades and subjects	TVAAS public site Data Downloads (school and district only)	
School accountability data files	2023-24 School Accountability Files	Metrics Tab Data for all accountability indicators and student groups	Report Card - Achievement - Growth	

Data Files	Data File location on the Accountability Application	Use	Public Reporting Location(s)	Review Notes
			- Chronically Out of School - Graduation Rate <i>Ready Graduate</i> - ELPA	
		Indicator Scores Tab Scores by indicator and overall accountability score by student group	Data Downloads Report Card - Achievement - Growth - Chronically Out of School - Graduation Rate <i>Ready Graduate</i> - ELPA	The overall accountability score by student group is used in TSI identification.
		Overall Performance Tab - Overall indicator scores by school - Overall accountability score by school - Designation flags	Report Card - About This School	The overall indicator score on the Report Card comes from the corresponding column in the Overall Performance worksheet (i.e., Achievement on Report Card is the value from the score achievement column)
		Overview Tab Data for all accountability designations. Information for Reward status is updated	Report Card - About This School School Accountability website	
	School Status List File	Overview Tab List of schools in the district with a designation		
		CSI Tab List of CSI schools and the associated data used CSI identification		
		TSI Tab Overall accountability score for all student groups, along with rankings and if a school was designated as TSI for		

Data Files	Data File location on the Accountability Application	Use	Public Reporting Location(s)	Review Notes
		one or more student groups		
		ATSI Tab Success rates by student groups for ATSI identification and the comparison to the highest success rate of a Priority school in the school pool		
District accountability data files	2022-23 District Accountability Files	Metrics Tab Data for all accountability indicators and student groups	Report Card - Achievement - Growth - Chronically Out of School - Graduation Rate - ELPA	
		Designations Tab - Overall district accountability score - District designation	Data Downloads Report Card - About This District	

Appendix B. DLM Data File Preparation

The TCAP Alternate (TCAP-Alt) Assessments are designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The department started using the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) ELA and math tests as the TCAP-Alt assessments in place of MSAA ELA and math tests. For students in grades 3 to 8, students are tested annually, and their scores are included in accountability. For high school students, students who are on the Alternate Academic Diploma (AAD) track are expected to take DLM math and ELA once in 11th grade.

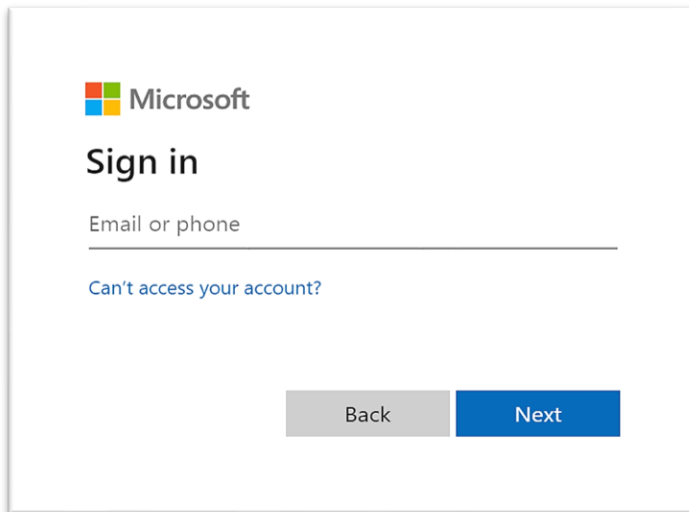
Per USED requirements, students from the same cohort are expected to take one high school math and one high school ELA during their high school years. Hence, for high school accountability purposes, the 11th grade AAD track students are the accountable cohort, and their DLM math and ELA tests are the accountable assessments.

Business rules applied when managing DLM data file are summarized below:

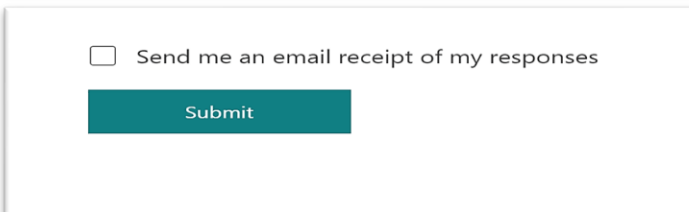
1. DLM ELA records in grades 3 to 8 are included as ELA records.
2. DLM math records in grades 3 to 8 are included as math records
3. DLM ELA records in grades 9 or above are included as English II records.
4. DLM math records in grades 9 or above are included as Algebra I or Integrated Math I records, depending on the district's curriculum sequence (i.e., whether the district has more Algebra or Integrated Math records).
5. Any DLM test records in the DLM general research file (GRF) with a Current_grade_Level other than 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 11 are removed.³
6. Any DLM test records in the DLM GRF with a Current_grade_Level equal 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 11 are included in the denominator of the participation rate calculation (i.e., counted as enrolled).
7. Any DLM test records in the DLM GRF with a Performance Level of 1, 2, 3, or 4 are counted as "tested". The interpretation of the performance level are summarized below:
 - 1 = emerging (equivalent to below expectations)
 - 2 = approaching the target (equivalent to approaching expectations)
 - 3 = at target (equivalent to meet expectations)
 - 4 = advanced (equivalent to exceed expectations)
8. Any DLM test records in the DLM GRF with a Performance Level of 9 are counted as "not tested" with two exceptions:
 - Medically exempted students are excluded from the participation rate calculation. Hence, when a student has a Performance Level of 9 AND has one or more essential element flagged with medical waiver, the student will be removed from the denominator and numerator of the participation rate calculation.
 - Students with special treatment center (i.e., residential facilities) flag in the testing records are included in the denominator of the participation rate calculation. However, districts may submit appeals if they are able to provide documentation indicating the student was in an out-of-state residential facility or treatment center during all possible testing windows throughout the school year (see Appealable Issues in [Section 3.1](#) for how to submit such appeals).

³ In TN, high school students on the AAD track are expected to take DLM math and ELA tests once when they are in 11th grade. Students who are unable to take the test in 11th grade due to medical conditions can be exempted from the participation rate calculation with a medical waiver and take the test while they are in 12th grade in order to meet their graduation requirements. High school students who took DLM tests prior to 11th grade will be counted against school/district participation rate at the school/district in which they are enrolled in 11th grade.

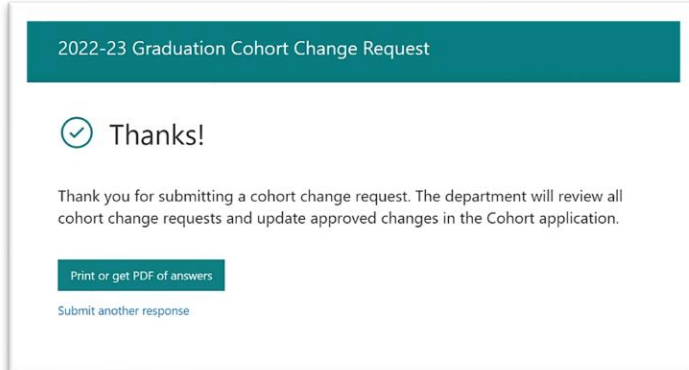
Appendix C: Microsoft Form Login and Trouble Shooting Guide



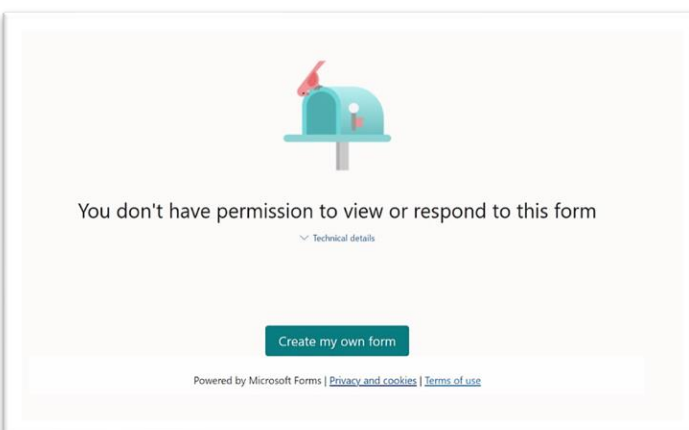
The Microsoft Sign in screen features the Microsoft logo at the top left. Below it, the text "Sign in" is displayed. A text input field labeled "Email or phone" is positioned below the sign-in text. A link "Can't access your account?" is located below the input field. At the bottom, there are two buttons: a grey "Back" button and a blue "Next" button.



This section contains a checkbox labeled "Send me an email receipt of my responses". Below the checkbox is a large teal "Submit" button.



The confirmation screen has a teal header with the text "2022-23 Graduation Cohort Change Request". Below the header is a green checkmark icon followed by the text "Thanks!". A paragraph of text reads: "Thank you for submitting a cohort change request. The department will review all cohort change requests and update approved changes in the Cohort application." Below this text are two buttons: a teal "Print or get PDF of answers" button and a smaller teal "Submit another response" button.



The permission error screen features a cartoon illustration of a mailbox with a red envelope. Below the illustration, the text reads: "You don't have permission to view or respond to this form". A link "Technical details" is provided below the text. At the bottom, there is a teal "Create my own form" button. The footer text reads: "Powered by Microsoft Forms | [Privacy and cookies](#) | [Terms of use](#)".

Microsoft Form Login Requirements

- School and district accountability staff must have an SSO/Orion account to submit a Microsoft Forms for accountability related data appeals, including ACT, Cohort, *Ready Graduate*, accountability data files, accountability and designation, and Report Card data verification process.
- When clicking on the Microsoft Form link, staff will be prompted to sign in. Make sure to sign in with your SSO/Orion account.
- If staff have trouble logging into their SSO/Orion account, they should refer to the [User Guide](#) and contact DT.Support@tn.gov for assistance.

Submitting a Form

- Staff shall answer all questions and upload the required documentation following the instructions provided by the department.
- When ready to submit, check "Send me an email receipt of my responses" to receive a record of the submission.
- After clicking the Submit button, staff also have the option to save a PDF version of the submission by selecting "Print or get PDF of answers."

Troubleshooting Common IT issues

If seeing "you don't have permission to view or respond to this form," please attempt the following:

- If the SSO/Orion login information has saved in the internet browser previously, and if
- Using Google Chrome, open a new incognito window and re-sign into the SSO/Orion account.
- Using Microsoft Edge, open a new InPrivate window and re-sign into the SSO/Orion account.
- Using Firefox or Safari, open a new private window and re-sign into the SSO/Orion account.

If attempting to open the Microsoft forms link from within the data appeals resource guides, make sure the form window opens in the same browser in which the resource guide was opened.