

Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA)

Understanding Options for Families and Students with Disabilities

WHAT ARE TEXAS EDUCATION FREEDOM ACCOUNTS?

In 2025, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 2 (SB 2), creating the Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA) program. This program, previously known as as Education Savings Accounts, is often referred to as a voucher program. SB 2 provided \$1 billion in state funding for TEFA. The program allows some families to use public education funding for education options outside the public school system, such as private schools or homeschooling.

Eligibility & Funding for Students with Disabilities

To participate in TEFA, families must apply and be accepted into the program before enrolling their child in a private school. TEFA applications for the 2026- 2027 school year open Feb. 4 and close March 17. Students with disabilities may be eligible for up to \$30,000 per year if they have an individualized education program (IEP) on file with the Texas Education Agency by the end of the application period. The IEP is only used to estimate how much funding the student would have received in public school. That estimate determines how much money is placed into the student's TEFA account. Even though an IEP is required for a student to qualify for this higher funding amount, a private school is not required to provide the services listed in an IEP.

Special Education Evaluations & Timelines

Families should be aware of timelines for special education evaluations. Parents of students who attend private school or are homeschooled have the right to request a special education evaluation from their district of residence or from the district in which their private school is located. Once a written request is submitted, the district has 15 school days to respond. If the district agrees to evaluate and receives parental consent, it has 45 school days to complete the evaluation and issue a report. After that, an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee must meet within 30 calendar days to determine eligibility and develop an IEP. Because this process can take time, families considering a TEFA should plan ahead.



Important Dates & Next Steps

TEFA applications for the 2026- 2027 school year open Feb. 4 and close March 17. Families should receive notice of acceptance in early April.

Since eligibility rules, approved expenses, and program details may change, families should review the most up-to-date information on the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website and carefully consider whether the TEFA program can fully meet their child's individual needs before applying. Learn more on the TEFA website at educationfreedom.texas.gov.



Differences in Special Education Rights & Protections

Families should understand that important legal protections do not transfer when a child leaves public school. Private schools are not required to follow an IEP and do not have to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This means families give up rights such as guaranteed special education services, due process protections, and formal ways to resolve disputes. Families of students with disabilities, especially those who need significant or specialized supports, should take this into account when determining if the TEFA program is the best fit for their child's educational or therapy needs.