

TRAVEL – TRAVEL GUIDELINES

APPROVAL

All employees must obtain approval from their Campus Principal or Department Director, the Budget Manager funding the travel (if not the same person) and the Deputy or Assistant Superintendent before making any travel arrangements. For instance, if you are a CTE teacher that is traveling and your expenses will be paid for by the CTE Director, you will need approval from the High School Principal, the CTE Director, and the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

The Superintendent or designee must approval all out-of-state travel prior to booking any arrangements.

PROCEDURES

1. At least 10 business days prior to traveling (or when plans are made), complete the Request for Travel form (in electronic format), which includes the destination, purpose of trip, dates, budget codes, lodging, meals, parking, registration, and other estimated expenses.
2. Send the completed electronic version of the form and an electronic copy of the registration form to the Campus Bookkeeper or Department Secretary to be entered as a requisition.
3. Upon approval(s), a check for registration will be mailed directly to the vendor unless other arrangements are made for the distribution. Lodging can be requested and picked up in accounts payable. All other travel expenses (such as meals, parking, and mileage) will be reimbursed after the trip. If traveling with students, the student meals (if applicable) can be advanced prior to travel.
4. While traveling, be sure to keep all receipts including those for hotel, parking, gas, meals, taxis, rental cars, etc. For most employees, meal receipts are not needed as the District reimburses meals on a Per Diem basis. However, for those individuals whose travel is paid with Federal Funds, detailed/itemized receipts are required for all expenditures, including meals. Per diems for meals are not allowed with Federal Funds.
5. Upon hotel checkout, the traveler should request a detailed receipt showing all charges and balances paid.
6. Within 15 days of return, the Request for Travel form should be updated (electronically) with the actual travel expenses including mileage, parking, taxis, and other approved incidental costs. Unless your travel is being funded with Federal Funds, meals are reimbursed at the Per Diem Rates shown below. Per the IRS, meal per diems are taxable to the employee unless they are completely expended; therefore, each employee must certify that all meal per diem funds were expended during the authorized job-related travel.
7. To be reimbursed, print, sign and submit the completed **Request for Travel – Final Report** with copies of all detailed receipts including hotel receipt to Stefanie Brumfield in the Business Office. Meal receipts are not necessary unless the travel is being paid with Federal Funds.

8. All documentation must be submitted for payment to be processed. If the employee has requested direct deposit for accounts payable reimbursements, the reimbursement will be directly deposited into the account established for the employee's payroll. If a check is to be issued instead of direct deposit, the check will be mailed to the employee.

STATE AND FEDERAL TRAVEL

TEA Travel Guidelines for state and federal funds shall be utilized to ensure that all travel expenditures follow State and Federal guidelines.

When travel is being paid with Federal Funds, the actual expense shall not exceed the rate established in federal travel regulation for each locality. Please refer to the U.S. General Services Administration Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates for meal and lodging reimbursements at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120>.

If the local rates set by the District exceed the state and federal grant per diems, the excess travel costs shall be paid from local funds. For areas not listed, use the rate for the nearest city or county. Detailed/itemized receipts are required by federal law for all travel using federal funds, including meals. Per diem meal reimbursements are not allowed with Federal Funds.

MEALS

Employee Meals (In and Out of State)

Employee meal advances shall no longer be provided except in the case of demonstrated financial hardship (contact Business Office for approval). **Meal advances for students will be provided.**

The District requires an overnight stay for meal reimbursements. IRS regulations state that meals are not reportable as income when the business trip is overnight or long enough that you need to stop for sleep or rest to properly perform your duties.

The District defines the 'trip' to consist of one day prior to the training, extending through the last day of the training. If employees decide to travel to their destination early, or decide to stay later than the training, said travel will not be eligible for reimbursement.

The District's Per Diem Meal Reimbursement Rate is \$45 based on the following schedule:

<u>Breakfast:</u>	\$12 - if you leave TCISD before 6:00am or return to TCISD after 6:00am
<u>Lunch:</u>	\$15 - if you leave TCISD before 12:00pm or return to TCISD after 12:00pm
<u>Dinner:</u>	\$18 - if you leave TCISD before 6:00pm or return to TCISD after 6:00pm
<u>Full Day:</u>	\$45 - if you are out for the full day

Student Meals

Student meals for extra-curricular activities and competitions will be advanced and paid for by the District. Travel advance forms should be completed at least 10 days prior to the travel date whenever possible. Travel reimbursement forms should be completed within 15 days upon return of the trip. The maximum allowable meal reimbursement per student per meals are \$8 for Breakfast, \$10 for Lunch, and \$12 for Dinner.

The Sponsor is required to pick up the check for student meal advancements at the Business Office and complete the *Travel Advance Withholding Authorization* form.

MILEAGE

The District reimburses the current state rate per mile to a maximum of 450 miles or up to airfare (average coach fare) plus taxi and other transportation costs to same location. Travel calculations originate from place of employment (TCISD Admin Building). The TCISD Mileage Chart should be used to calculate in-district and other designated travel locations. When traveling to locations not designated on the TCISD mileage chart, MapQuest or another mapping website should be used and attached to the reimbursement request.

Generally, all employee travel should be consolidated to minimize the amount of reimbursements needed. As such, when multiple employees are driving to the same destination, the Business Office will only reimburse mileage for every group of 4 people travelling. If employees decide to drive individually, the mileage may be split amongst the drivers, but should be communicated to the Business Office prior to the trip.

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LODGING / HOTEL RATES

When using local funds, the maximum allowable hotel rate is \$175 per night. Rates more than \$175 will not be reimbursed without prior approval from the Superintendent. Exceptions to the maximum room rate can be made when booking conference-specific lodging.

Hotel reservations should be combined when possible to minimize District expense. This means that each hotel room should be used for two District employees of the same gender, when applicable. The expectation of room sharing applies to trips funded by both local & federal budgets.

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PARKING

Parking is reimbursable with receipts. Self-parking is preferred unless the employee feels the area is unsafe, then valet parking is acceptable.

OTHER COSTS

Reimbursable costs with proof of expenditures include registration fees, taxis, and tolls.

ADVANCED EXPENSES

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires a settlement of advanced business expenses within a reasonable time period. Amounts received by employees in excess of the substantiated amounts must be returned to the District; otherwise, they must be properly taxed on the next paycheck. Any advanced business expenses not expended are reportable as income on the employee's W-2. To avoid creating any tax-related issues, employee meals are not paid in advance. Only student meals are eligible for advance payment.

Under extenuating circumstances and at the discretion of the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, or Assistant Superintendent, other local funds may be expended in excess of this policy for travel. Please contact the Business Office for prior approval.