

Mathis I.S.D.



**TRAVEL GUIDELINES, PROCEDURES, RATES &
STMP - (State Travel Management Program)**

MATHIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES: TRAVEL GUIDELINES, RATES & STMP

Procedures: Travel Guidelines, Rates & STMP

Travel Guidelines Overview:

School Board Policy DEE Local states:

Prior Approval

Required: An employee shall be reimbursed for reasonable, allowable expenses incurred in carrying out District business only with the prior approval of the employee's immediate supervisor.

Travel Expenses: Reimbursement for authorized travel shall be in accordance with legal requirements.

Accounting records shall accurately reflect that no state or federal funds were used to reimburse travel expenses beyond those authorized for state employees.

Documentation

Required: For any authorized expense incurred, the employee shall submit a statement, with receipts to the extent feasible, documenting actual expenses and in accordance with administrative procedures.

Exception: Expenses for meals associated with authorized overnight travel not related to a state or federal grant shall be paid to employees on a per diem basis. No receipts shall be required for expenses paid on a per diem basis.

Note: Travel expenses incurred due to the fault of a traveler, except for extenuating circumstances, such as late registration, cancelled flight, etc. are not considered to be reasonable or necessary; therefore, all such expenses shall be paid or reimbursed by the traveler.

All travel expenses shall comply with federal, state and local guidelines. The District shall apply the same travel guidelines and rates for all travel expenses regardless of funding sources, except for the following:

- Tips for meals – shall be allowed only with local funds (Fund 181 & 199), not to exceed 15% of the meal expense, only if budget code ends in 11 or 99.
- Excess lodging above the GSA schedule, as applicable only with local funds (Fund 181 & 199), only if budget code ends in 11 or 99.

Federal guidelines (IRS):

- All travel expenses shall be paid under an Accountable Plan:
 - 1) travel must have a business connection;
 - 2) the traveler shall account for all expenses;
 - 3) excess advances, if any, shall be reimbursed to the district; and
- The meal expenses for the day of departure and return shall be adjusted based on the time of departure and return as noted in the District travel guidelines.
- Travel advances will not be provided to a traveler more than 30 days prior to the travel event.
- If any travel expenses fail to meet the accountable plan guidelines, the payment to (or on behalf of) the traveler shall be taxed through the normal payroll cycle.

MATHIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES: TRAVEL GUIDELINES, RATES & STMP

Federal Guidelines (EDGAR):

- All travel expenses paid with federal grant funds (typically funds 2XX or 3XX) shall meet the new EDGAR requirements (200.474) such as:
 - 1) all travel costs must be reasonable and necessary.
 - 2) all travel costs must be consistent with the district's travel policy.
 - 3) all travel costs must be directly related to the grant award; and
 - 4) all travel costs must meet the obligation of expenses rules.
- In addition, all federally funded travel expenses must meet the TEA's Current Travel & Mileage Reimbursement Rates (as published in the most recent TEA Correspondence).

State Guidelines (TEA):

- All mileage, lodging, and meal reimbursement rates published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts apply to all grants (federal and state, typically funds 2XX, 3XX and 4XX) funded by TEA for individuals on travel status. Refer to GSA rates for the current fiscal year at:
- <https://www.gsa.gov/policy-regulations/regulations/federal-travel-regulation-fttr/i1206091#i1204279>
- All travel expenses paid with federal and state grant funds shall meet the allowable travel expenses as specified in the TexTravel Guidelines, subject to limits imposed by District travel guidelines.

Local Guidelines:

The local District guidelines shall apply to all travel expenses regardless of funding source for in-state and out-of-state travel. All anticipated travel costs shall be submitted on a Pre-Travel Authorization Form, approved by the immediate supervisor, Business Manager, Human Resource Director and Superintendent. All anticipated travel costs shall be encumbered to the appropriate budget account code(s) before any travel-related costs are incurred by the district or traveler.

Travel Rates:

The mileage, lodging, and meal reimbursement rates published by the comptroller apply to all travel reimbursement rates. The link below to the Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates should be used to determine the appropriate rates for in-state and out-of-state travel:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>

Note: General fund accounts shall be used to pay meal and lodging costs in excess of the Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates. A day trip is defined as a trip that does not require an overnight stay.

Employees In-State or Out-of-State Meals and Lodging

Refer to the GSA's federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates, effective Oct. 1, 2021. If the city is not listed, but the county is listed, use the rate of the county. For areas not listed (city or county), the rates are:

- Lodging In-State: up to \$96
- Lodging Out-of-State: up to \$192
- Meals In-State/Out-of-State: \$55 up to \$118

MATHIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES: TRAVEL GUIDELINES, RATES & STMP

In-State or Out-of-State Non-Overnight Meals Not to exceed \$54 (not allowable expenses for the District)

Automobile Mileage 58.5 cents per mile effective January 1, 2022

Note: Excerpt from Texas Comptroller website: <https://fm.xcpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php>

District Allowable Travel Expenses:

Meals

- Full Meal Per Diems – If the dates of travel are all full days and no meals are provided by the event, indicate the number of days for meals on the Travel Authorization form. The total number of meals advanced will be based on whether meals are provided by the event and the time of departure and/or return and the current GSA meal per diem for the destination location/month.
- Adjusted Meal Per Diems:
 - Adjust the requested amount for meals if the conference/workshop will include any meals. If meals (except continental breakfast and receptions) are provided as part of the event, reductions should be made in accordance with the GSA Schedule on the Adjusted Meal Per Diem Calculation.
 - The meal per diem must be adjusted on the 1st and last day of travel based on the time of departure and/or return.
- A check will be issued to the traveler within 30 days of the travel event for all staff and student meal per diems. All of the required documentation shall be submitted to the business office in accordance with the business office deadlines, within 3 business days following trip.
- The traveler shall complete a Travel Reconciliation Report after the travel event and shall certify the “actual costs”. The actual costs shall not include any meal tips. Travelers do not have to submit receipts for their meal expenses unless traveling with students but may be required to validate the actual costs with receipts, as appropriate. If the actual costs are less than the advanced per diem, the traveler must reimburse the unspent funds to the district within 10 days of the travel event.

Lodging

- Lodging costs shall be allowable for travel events that require an overnight stay away from the traveler’s home. No lodging shall be allowable in the traveler’s local Education Service Center area or within 75 miles of Mathis at a commercial lodging establishment.
- The maximum nights of lodging shall be based on the start and end times of the travel event and the distance of the travel location. Lodging costs that exceed the required minimum shall not be deemed necessary or allowable travel costs. For example, if an event in San Antonio has a 10 am or later start, lodging costs would not be reasonable, necessary or allowable travel costs.
- The traveler shall estimate the lodging expense per night (including all taxes, surcharges, etc). A conference or event hotel shall be the first priority to minimize transportation costs at the event city.
- The federal per diem rates for lodging shall be used to determine the maximum amount that may be charged to a state or federal grant. The maximum lodging rate, for state and federal grants, shall be for the city of travel and the month of travel based on the GSA website. A copy of the lodging rates for the date(s) of travel shall be attached to the Travel Authorization Form for audit purposes.
- The traveler (or campus secretary on behalf of the traveler) shall make the hotel reservation and secure with credit card, a district travel card or American Express card, as appropriate.

MATHIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES: TRAVEL GUIDELINES, RATES & STMP

- Hotel and travel websites such as Hotels.Com, Expedia, Travelocity, etc. shall not be used to make hotel reservations if the website requires pre-payment of the hotel stay.
 - Below are 800 numbers for some hotels
 - Best Western 800-528-1234
 - Choice Hotels 800-999-4715
 - Courtyard 888-236-2427
 - Extended Stay 800-368-7829
 - Fairfield 888-236-2427
 - Hampton Suites 800-426-7866
 - Hilton 800-445-8667
 - Holiday Inn 800-465-4329
 - Hyatt 800-233-1234
 - Indigo (San Antonio) 210-527-1900
 - La Quinta 800-753-3757
 - O'Brien's (San Antonio) 800-257-6058
 - Marriott 888-236-2427
 - Quality Inn 877-424-6423
 - Radisson 866-820-7796
 - Red Roof 800-733-7663
 - Sheraton 800-325-3535
 - Super 8 800-800-8000

- Lodging costs shall be paid with a district-issued credit card (Amex) via credit card authorization form or by the traveler paying on site with a check at the time of arrival and/or departure based on the hotel's charging policy. Travelers shall not pay the hotel expense with personal funds and seek reimbursement after-the-fact unless some of the travel costs are for personal travel days. Under this scenario, the traveler must ensure that only district-authorized travel costs are paid with the district credit card.
- The traveler may, at his/her request, stay with a family member or friend instead of at a hotel. If the traveler selects this option, the traveler shall not receive any payment in lieu of lodging costs.
- The traveler may, at his/her request, choose to return to their home city each day of a multiple-day travel event if the distance from their home city to the event city is less than 100 miles each way. The traveler may receive mileage reimbursement for each trip in lieu of the lodging costs if the mileage is less costly.
- The traveler shall present a Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate to a Texas hotel. If the traveler fails to present the certificate, the traveler shall reimburse the district for the unallowable tax expense. The Hotel Occupancy Certificate can be found on the district's Business Webpage and the State Comptroller's Website. The hotel occupancy tax exemption does not apply to out-of-state travel.
- The traveler shall present a Sales Tax Exemption Certificate to a Texas hotel for parking costs. If the traveler fails to present the certificate, the traveler shall reimburse the district for the unallowable tax expense. The Sales Tax Exemption Certificate can be found on the district's Business Webpage and the State Comptroller's Website. The sales tax exemption does not apply to out-of-state travel.
- When at least two (2) travelers (district employees) are traveling to the same event, they may share the lodging, and each receive the maximum lodging rate on the GSA schedule. District employees will be encouraged to share a room to minimize the lodging costs.

MATHIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES: TRAVEL GUIDELINES, RATES & STMP

- When a traveler shares lodging with a non-district employee or district employee not in travel status, the maximum lodging costs shall be the appropriate GSA schedule rate for single occupancy.
- Internet charges at a lodging facility shall be allowable only for Board Members and Administrators to support email, or other work-related access. Internet charges for other staff members shall be subject to pre-approval on the Travel Authorization on a case-by-case basis.
- Lodging costs such as movies, gym facility, spa or other non-essential costs are not allowable for reimbursement or payment with any district funds.
- Lodging tips may be paid at the traveler's discretion but will not be allowable travel costs for reimbursement or payment with any district funds.
- A detailed lodging receipt must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Reconciliation Form within 3 business days after the travel event.

Transportation – Flights

- Flight costs shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home.
- The departure and return dates of the flight shall be based on the start and end times of the travel event and the distance of the travel location.
- The actual cost of commercial air transportation (lowest coach fare) to accommodate the required travel dates of the travel event shall be allowable costs.
- Travelers should travel to their destination location by the most economical means, i.e. either flight, school vehicle or mileage; however, travelers may opt to travel to their event destination via district/personal vehicle in lieu of flying to the event for medical or personal comfort reasons. If the traveler opts to travel to an out-of-state destination, the costs/reimbursement for transportation shall be limited to the lesser of the mileage or estimated flight cost.
- All flights shall be purchased by the Business Office for the most economical route and schedule to meet the travel plans. Travelers shall submit their travel preferences to their respective supervisor for approval – the campus or department shall forward the preferences to the Business Office for final review and approval.
- All flights shall be purchased through Southwest Airlines (SWA) unless there is no flight service to the destination. Travelers on a SWA flight are allowed to check up to two (2) bags, limited to no more than 50 pounds each at no additional charge. Luggage charges for a third (3rd) bag shall not be allowable with district funds.
- For all flights, other than SWA, luggage charges, if any, shall be limited the fees for one (1) bags, up to 50 pounds per bag.
- A rental car at the event location shall be allowable if it is the most economical method to access the event location.
- All flight costs associated with deviations from the required travel plans, such as pre or post personal days shall be paid by the traveler. For example, if the required travel dates are Sunday through Wednesday, but the traveler opts to depart on Friday to spend personal days at the travel destination, the additional cost, if any, to fly on Friday shall be paid by the traveler.

Transportation – Mileage

- Mileage reimbursements shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home. No mileage reimbursements shall be allowable if a district vehicle is available.
- Travelers should use a district-owned vehicle as the preferred method of transportation. A request for a vehicle shall be submitted with the Pre-Travel packet. If a district-owned vehicle is not available for the travel event, the traveler shall be authorized to use their personal vehicle or request a flight, as appropriate. Travelers who drive their personal vehicle shall be reimbursed at the current mileage rate established by the Texas Comptroller and/or TEA.

MATHIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES: TRAVEL GUIDELINES, RATES & STMP

- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if any, for travel in a district-owned vehicle. Travelers shall not be required to submit any fuel receipts for travel in a personal vehicle.
- The District has chosen the MapQuest mapping system to document mileage reimbursements. A MapQuest printout with the mileage from the point of origin [district address] to the point of destination shall be printed and attached to the Pre-Travel Authorization form.
- Mileage costs related to personal destinations before, during or after the travel event shall not be allowable costs. In addition, mileage costs due to the traveler's error in reaching the destination, such as getting lost shall not be allowable costs.
- When four or fewer employees travel on the same itinerary, only one may be reimbursed for mileage. When more than four employees travel on the same itinerary, only one out of every four may be reimbursed for mileage. The district shall allow for an equal distribution of the mileage allotment among the travelers if they opt to drive separately to the event.

Transportation – Rental Car

- Rental car costs shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home via a flight if use of the rental car is the most economical mode of transportation.
- Rental car costs shall not be allowable if the traveler can reach the travel destination via taxi or shuttle at a lower cost.
- Rental car costs shall include all applicable taxes and mandatory charges. Costs may also include a charge for a collision damage waiver or a loss damage waiver if not already included in the contracted rate for the rental. [Note: The district auto insurance policy includes liability coverage for hired autos such as rental cars up to the policy limits.]
- Charges for liability insurance supplement, personal accident insurance, safe trip insurance or personal effects insurance are not allowable costs.
- Rental car costs shall be paid with a district-issued credit card (Amex) via credit card authorization form or with a check to be provided on site at the time of arrival and/or departure based on the rental car company's charging policy. Travelers shall not pay the rental car expense with personal funds and seek reimbursement after-the-fact unless some of the travel costs are for personal travel days. Under this scenario, the traveler must ensure that only district-authorized travel costs are paid with the district credit card.
- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if any, for travel in a rental car.
- Rental car costs associated with deviations from the required travel plans, such as pre or post personal days shall be paid by the traveler. For example, if the required travel dates are Sunday through Wednesday, but the traveler opts to depart on Friday to spend personal days at the travel destination, the additional cost, if any, for the additional days (Friday & Saturday) shall be paid by the traveler.
- Charges for additional drivers may only be reimbursed if incurred for a business reason such as both drivers are district employees on travel status.
- Detailed rental car and fuel receipts must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Reconciliation Form within 3 days after the travel event.

Transportation – Parking Charges

- Parking charges shall be allowable for all travel, in-state and out-of-state, as appropriate, if the traveler is traveling in a rental car, district-owned vehicle, or personal car while on travel status.
- Parking at the airport at the traveler's home location shall be allowable, as appropriate, for all required travel dates. Additional parking days, at the traveler's option due to pre or post travel days shall not be allowable costs with district funds.
- Parking receipts must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Reconciliation Form within 3 business days after the travel event.

MATHIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES: TRAVEL GUIDELINES, RATES & STMP

Transportation – Toll Charges

- Toll charges shall be allowable for all in-state travel events, as applicable, if the traveler is traveling in a rental car, district-owned vehicle, or personal car while on travel status.
- Toll receipts, as appropriate, must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Settlement Form within 3 business days after the travel event or when the toll invoice arrives. Toll charges while in a district-owned vehicle are forwarded to the district by the toll authority.

Transportation – Taxi, Shuttle, etc.

- Taxi and shuttle costs shall be allowable for all in-state and out-of-state travel events, as applicable, if the traveler is on travel status.
- Taxi and shuttle tips may be paid at the traveler's discretion, but will not be allowable travel costs for reimbursement or payment with any district funds.

Registration Fees

- Registration fees for a conference, workshop, or other training event as supported by a registration form are allowable costs. Fee-based optional events such as a speaker or awards luncheon shall be approved on a case-by-case basis if the event fee is reasonable and the traveler would derive a work-related benefit from attending the event. Fee-based optional events such as socials, excursions, tours, or other purely entertainment events are not allowable costs.
- The authorized travel expenses shall be supported by the registration form and Schedule of Events. The documentation shall include the start and end dates of the event, event location, event times and registration fee.
- A copy of the registration form and Schedule of Events shall be submitted with the Pre-Travel Authorization Form.

District Non-Allowable Travel Expenses:

- Supplies and/or other conference resources. [This type of expense may be allowable if a purchase order is submitted before the travel event, typically an Open PO not to exceed a specified amount.]
- Alcoholic drinks or beverages
- Entertainment expenses, such as in-room movies, fee-based hotel amenities such as gyms, spas, etc.
- Expenses for spouses or other non-district employees
- Expenses due to the traveler's failure to cancel a registration or travel arrangements (except for extenuating circumstances)
- Hotel Internet charges (unless expense is work-related and pre-approved on travel authorization)
- Non-substantiated or fraudulent travel reimbursement requests shall be non-allowable travel expenses. Travelers who submit fraudulent travel reimbursement requests shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment by the Superintendent or the School Board of Directors.

The State Travel Management Program (STMP)

The State Travel Management Program (STMP) through the Comptroller's office ensures that state agencies use taxpayer dollars more efficiently by helping them manage their travel expenditures by providing discounted travel services through vendor contracts and monitoring state travel activity.

MATHIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES: TRAVEL GUIDELINES, RATES & STMP

As a TPASS Co-Op member, the district shall utilize the STMP travel contracts, as appropriate.

Travel Contracts

Texas Procurement and Support Services (TPASS) Co-Op Purchasing Program has negotiated the following travel contracts. Use of each of these contracts will require the district's contract number (obtain the number from the Business Office). Website:
<http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/>

Airlines

American Airlines – 800-433-7300 or Delta Airlines – 800-221-1212 or Southwest Airlines – 800-435-9792 <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-airline-contract/>

Hotels [Term: October 1 – September 30]

Multiple vendors - *(SEE PAGE 5)

- For more information refer to the TPASS link at:
<http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-hotel-contract/>

Rental Cars

Avis Rent A Car System, Inc. & Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Note: If you rent a vehicle from a contract rental car vendor using a rate other than the State of Texas Contract Rate (e.g., a promotional rate), the insurance may not be included. You MUST request the State of Texas Contract Rate.

Re-Fueling Provisions:

Vehicles are provided to travelers with a full tank of gas. If the vehicle is not returned with a full tank of gas, a gasoline charge will be incurred per gallon of fuel.

For more information refer to the TPASS link at:

<http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-rental-car-contract/>