

Descriptor Term: SCHOOL DISTRICT TRAVEL CARD PROGRAM

Descriptor Code: DJD-1

Rescinds:

Board Approved: 4/15/2013

Previously Approved:

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

This policy authorizes Gulfport School District to participate in The Office of Purchasing and Travel, (OPT), travel card option for the payment of approved official travel expenses. The travel card can be used only by the individual whose name appears on the card. Cardholders have no authority to allow any other individual to use their school district travel card.

The Office of Purchasing and Travel offers two (2) different types of accounts available through the Travel Card Program. The type of card/account the cardholder will receive is determined by the school district's designated travel card program administrator, school district management, and/or the Office of Purchasing and Travel, Travel Manager based on travel needs. All cards/accounts must be issued in the school district's/employee's name and all accounts are subject to internal control responsibilities and oversight by the district.

### **Types of Travel Card Accounts**

The school district Travel Card Program has carded and cardless options available.

**Carded Travel Card Account** – This type of card allows for approved travel related expenses to be made by one or more individuals who have signed a cardholder agreement for that card. This card is normally kept locked in a central location where the Program Administrator may check the card out and in as needed.

**Cardless Central Travel Account** – The central travel account allows travel related expenses to be delegated to one person, the school district program administrator, who is the designated person responsible for making official school district business travel arrangements for others may have a special account set up for the purchase of travel related services. Any travel related services, such as travel agency fees, airfare, lodging deposits, etc., which are normally direct billed may be then billed to this account.

This type of account is also called a “Ghost Account”, which essentially means a plastic card is not issued. Instead of an actual card, the school district Program Administrator will receive an account number.

This type of account is recommended for airfare, railway, or lodging reservations. All authorized vendors except the intended merchant types will be blocked to add additional controls to the account.

### **Vendor Services**

Travel contracts are available online for use of lodging, vehicle rental, and travel agency services. These contracts may be found by visiting the Office of Purchasing and Travel's website at:

<http://www.dfa.state.ms.us/Purchasing/Travel/Travel.html>

School districts may utilize other travel resources to coordinate and procure their travel arrangements as long as it provides a cost savings for the school district and is in accordance with the state Travel Manual and/or Procurement Manual.

Travel arrangements and purchases made using the school district travel card account program should be in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Office of Purchasing and Travel. The Travel Account is to be used for school district travel only.

### **Account Limits**

The school district will establish reasonable and appropriate purchase limits and controls for the school district travel card program accounts.

### **Cardholder Responsibilities**

- A. Sign and abide by the school district Travel Cardholder Agreement
- B. Ensure that the types of travel card charges are in accordance with the following:

### **Authorized vs. Unauthorized Expenses**

**The following types of expenses are allowable and includes but are not limited to:**

#### **a) Authorized Expenses**

- Airfare
- Registration fees
- Lodging (room only, no incidental expenses allowed)
- Rental cars
- Tolls
- Parking
- Business Related Phone Calls/Internet/Fax Service

**The following types of expenses are not allowable and includes but are not limited to:**

#### **b) Unauthorized Expenses**

- Business related airfare combined with personal airfare
- Cash advances
- First class and business class travel
- Travel expenses for traveling companions or spouses
- Food and beverages
- Personal items
- Personal calls
- Gasoline for personal and rental vehicles
- Any purchase for which the District does not receive direct benefit

#### **(c) Unauthorized Hotel Incidentals**

- Movies
- Meals
- Alcohol
- Room Service
- Any non-lodging expense

### **Card Violations**

The Gulfport School District requires individual cardholders and users to strictly adhere to the policies and procedures governing use of the school district travel card program which may be

established and modified from time to time as necessary. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and reimbursement to the District of all unauthorized charges. Additionally, such failure could result in prosecution to the fullest extent of the law, including financial restitution and criminal prosecution. This policy will be administered in accordance with other State procurement and travel policies and the laws of the State of Mississippi.

Violations of policies governing use of the school district travel card accounts may be classified as minor or major. The action taken is dependent upon the type of violation and the number of previous cardholder violations. The school district superintendent is authorized to suspend a cardholder's privileges as deemed necessary without prior notice. Any alleged violation or questionable transaction could result in an immediate temporary suspension of card privileges pending a review to determine what, if any, action is appropriate.

### **Minor Violations**

Minor violations are instances that are "accidental" and without willful intent, or a delinquent reconciliation process. Examples would include, but are not limited to: accidentally using the wrong credit card when conducting personal shopping but includes immediate discovery and notification of the error to the Program Administrator; purchases with the card that should be made through the institution requisition system or some other established means; and failure to reconcile and submit the statement to the supervisor and Program Administrator in a timely manner.

### **Major Violations**

Major violations are instances that show "Willful Intent" to disregard established policy. Examples include but are not limited to: purchasing equipment or computers, splitting orders to avoid the single purchase limit, or knowingly making purchases for personal use. The circumstances of the violations will determine the appropriate action, which could include termination of employment. Each instance will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Any major violation will result in immediate temporary suspension of the cardholder's privileges and notification of the school district's superintendent. If deemed appropriate the bank, police, and the appropriate school board president and/or members will also be notified. Possible disciplinary actions include:

- Cardholder receives written counseling by the appropriate school district personnel. This will be placed in the employee's official personnel file and is only an option for a first offense
- Temporary suspension of cardholder privileges for 30 or more days and mandatory retraining before the cardholder's privileges are reinstated
- Suspension without pay for 5 days. These actions will be in full day increments and the school district superintendent will coordinate with Human Resources before imposing suspension
- Reimbursement to the District of all unauthorized charges
- Permanent suspension of card privileges
- Termination of employment - coordination with Human Resources required

### **Failure to Comply with Laws, Policies, and Procedures**

Cardholders or supervisors/approving officials will use cards in accordance with all policies and procedures as referenced in this document which may be amended as necessary. Cardholders or supervisors/approving officials who knowingly, or through willful neglect, fail to comply with the following may be subject to suspension or termination of card privileges or other disciplinary

action; and criminal prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.

- Official State of Mississippi Code Annotated, sections related to governmental purchasing
- Applicable requirements of the Small Purchase Procurement Card Policy and Procedures Manual, Applicable requirements of the Statewide Procurement Manual
- Applicable requirements of the Statewide Travel Manual
- Internal policies and procedures governing procurement and the Small Procurement Purchase Card Program and Travel Card Program
- Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct
- Applicable requirements, policies and procedures as set forth by the Mississippi Department of Education

The Office of Purchasing and Travel, school district superintendent, or his/her designee reserves the right to withdraw any authority or delegated approval due to non-compliance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures, or the terms of any conditional approval.

### **Program Administrator Designation**

The school district will designate a program administrator and at least one alternate program administrator to direct the operation of the program and the Office of Purchasing, Travel and Fleet Management and Issuer may rely on instructions from these individuals as properly authorized by the District. A current list of authorized Program Administrators will be provided to the Office of Purchasing, Travel and Fleet Management as required by using the **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR DESIGNATION REQUEST FORM.**