

SOUTH SAN ANTONIO ISD

TRAVEL GUIDELINES

School Board Policy DEE Local states: 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 and in accordance with administrative regulations.

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:

- Excess lodging above the GSA schedule or conference rate, as applicable only with local funds (Fund 199, to be approved by the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent or the Chief Financial Officer).

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 4) meal expenses shall be in conjunction with overnight travel only.
- The meal expenses for the day of departure and return shall be adjusted based on the date 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.

Federal Guidelines (EDGAR):

- All travel expenses paid with federal grant funds (typically funds 2XX) 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://fm.x.cpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php>
- 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.

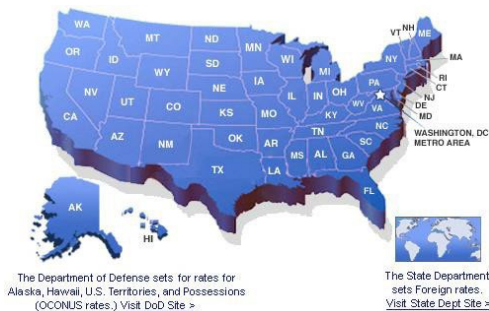
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Local District Guidelines:

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 requisition request along with supporting documentation, approved by the immediate supervisor, and the Purchasing Director. With federal funds, an additional approver(s) will be added to the path. 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. SOUTH SAN ANTONIO ISD does not pay for any meals for day trips. A day trip is defined as a trip that does not require an overnight stay.

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District Allowable Travel Expenses:

Meals-reimbursement only*

- 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 requisition request. The total number of meals reimbursed will be based on whether meals are provided by the event and the day 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.
 - The first and last day of travel will be reduced to 75% of the GSA meal per diem.
- Student Meals: Attach a list of students to support the number of meals requested for co-curricular or extra-curricular events, if applicable. Refer to the district reimbursement rates for in-state and out-of-state travel for students. A detailed receipt for the student meals must be submitted with the Travel Settlement form. Current rates: \$24 per day in-state and \$24 per day out-of-state.
- A check or ACH will be issued to the traveler within 30 days of the travel event for all board members and student meal per diems. All of the required documentation shall be submitted to the business office in accordance with the business office deadlines.
- The traveler shall complete a Travel Settlement 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. If the actual costs are less than the advanced per diem, the traveler must reimburse the unspent funds to the district within 10 business days of the travel event.
- *Meal Per Diem advances are allowed only for students, paraprofessional staff and board members.

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 home city at a commercial lodging establishment.
- The maximum nights of lodging shall be based on the start and end dates 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 Austin 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 maximum lodging rate, shall be for the city of travel and the month of travel based on the GSA website or the conference rate. A copy of the lodging rates for the date(s) of travel shall be attached to the requisition request as supporting documentation for audit purposes.
- The traveler (or campus secretary on behalf of the traveler) shall make the hotel reservation and secure with their personal credit card.
- Hotel and travel websites such as Hotels.Com, Expedia, Travelocity, etc. are discouraged as they require pre-payment and will not remove state tax.
- 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.

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- The traveler shall present a Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate to a Texas hotel. If the traveler fails to present the certificate, the traveler will not be reimbursed for the unallowable tax expense. The Hotel Occupancy Certificate can be found on the district's Business Webpage. 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 will not be reimbursed for the unallowable tax expense. The Sales Tax Exemption Certificate can be found on the district's Business Webpage. 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. Each traveler shall submit a travel voucher for their portion of the lodging costs. District employees shall not be required to share a room with another employee, but may be encouraged to share a room to minimize the lodging costs.
- 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 Cabinet members to support email, Skyward or other work-related access. Internet charges for other staff members shall be subject to pre-approval 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 Settlement Form within 10 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 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.
- Travelers are encouraged to use Southwest Airlines (SWA), as SWA fliers are allowed to check up to two (2) bags, limited to no more than 50 pounds each at no additional cost, but not required.
- All flights shall be purchased by the campus/department with the District credit card for the most economical route and schedule to meet the travel plans. A requisition request shall be submitted along with supporting documentation and approved by the respective supervisor. Supporting documentation for flights shall include two quotes for all fees associated with flight, one must be obtained from SWA.
- A rental car at the event location shall be allowable if it is the most economical method to access the event location, prior approval required.
- 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.

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Transportation – Mileage

- Mileage reimbursements shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home.
- Travelers shall be reimbursed at the current mileage rate established by the Texas Comptroller and/or TEA.
- 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 Google Maps printout with the mileage from the point of origin [campus or district address] to the point of destination shall be printed and attached as supporting documentation to the requisition request.
- 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 daily rate shall not exceed \$120/day; plus all applicable taxes and mandatory charges.
- Charges for liability insurance supplement, personal accident insurance, safe trip insurance or personal effects insurance are not allowable costs.
- A requisition request is required to be submitted along with a quote from Enterprise.com for the dates of rental and preferred vehicle information.
- Rental car reservation will be made by the Purchasing department based on the traveler's submitted preference.
- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if requesting reimbursement, for travel in a rental car.
- Rental car deviations from the required travel plans, such as pre or post personal days will not be permitted. 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.
- Detailed rental car and fuel receipts must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Settlement Form within 10 business days after the travel event.

Transportation – Parking Charges

- Parking charges shall be allowable for all travel events within Bexar County, 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.

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- Parking receipts must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Settlement Form within 10 business days after the travel event.

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 10 business days after the travel event. 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 and registration fee.
- A copy of the registration form and Schedule of Events shall be submitted with the requisition request as supporting documentation.

District Non-Allowable Travel Expenses:

- 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.

Travel Preparation and Authorization

- All travel must begin with the submission of a complete Travel Request. This includes a filled-out travel form and a purchase order listing the appropriate budget codes. Travelers are responsible for ensuring hotel reservations are made in advance and should submit current-year GSA reports for both lodging and meals to establish allowable reimbursement limits.
- Mileage should be verified through a GoogleMaps printout, which must be submitted along with the event agenda showing the official conference dates. Excess lodging above the GSA schedule or conference rate, as applicable only with local funds (Fund 199, to be approved by the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent or the Chief Financial Officer).

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- Multiple requisitions must be submitted when multiple vendors are involved—such as airfare (booked with district credit card), registration fees (payable to the event organizer), lodging, meals, mileage (payable to the traveler), and car rental (typically through Enterprise). Each requisition must clearly identify the event name, travel dates, destination city, travelers' names, and budget codes. Campus or department secretaries will process these requisitions through the operating system, where they must be electronically approved by the traveler's supervisor before routing to the Purchasing Department.

All of these steps must be completed prior to any disbursement of funds by the Business Office. Delays in completing pre-trip documentation may result in delayed or denied reimbursement.

During the Trip

- If unexpected circumstances such as weather or travel delays extend the trip, the traveler must immediately notify both their supervisor and the Business Office to seek approval for an extension of authorized travel dates and additional funds, if needed.
- Attendees should retain a certificate of attendance or a conference badge as evidence of participation.

Post-Trip Reconciliation and Reimbursement

Within ten (10) business days after travel concludes, the traveler must complete and submit the settlement portion of the Travel Form. This submission must include:

- A signed purchase order and a copy with budget codes
- The hotel folio showing charges
- A payment voucher for any advance payment
- Updated GSA lodging and meal rates
- Mileage verification via Google Maps
- Receipts for any additional allowable expenses (e.g., transportation, parking)
- The conference badge or a certificate of completion
- Signatures from both the employee and their supervisor

All receipts must reflect actual expenses incurred and comply with district travel rates. Any unused funds from a travel advance must be returned to the Business Office within ten business days. A receipt will be issued for the return of excess funds.

Note: Texas state occupancy tax for hotel stays will not be reimbursed, and travelers should utilize the district's hotel tax exemption form at check-in.

Use of Credit Card During Travel

District-issued credit cards may be used for approved travel-related expenses, but only in accordance with established procedures and budget authorizations. Credit card use must align with the traveler's pre-approved requisitions and may only be applied to allowable costs such as airfare, lodging (excluding taxes in Texas), rental vehicles, and registration fees.

- **Airfare** should be booked using the district credit card after two comparative quotes are submitted and the travel has been approved.
- **Hotel expenses** may be charged to the district card if pre-approved, but travelers are encouraged to use the district's hotel tax exemption form to avoid paying non-reimbursable Texas occupancy taxes.

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- **Rental cars** must be arranged in advance and may be charged to the district credit card through the Purchasing Department.
- **Personal purchases**—including meals, entertainment, alcohol, or additional charges for family members—are strictly prohibited on the district credit card.
- **Receipts** for all purchases made using a district card must be submitted with the Travel Settlement Form, and all transactions must fall within approved budget codes.

Misuse of the district credit card, including unapproved expenses or failure to provide receipts, may result in the traveler being personally responsible for the charges and subject to disciplinary action.