

Godley ISD

Travel Guidelines



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Travel Guidelines Overview:

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 in a requisition, approved by the immediate supervisor and the Chief Financial Officer. 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.

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 199 or activity accounts), not to exceed 20% of the meal expense, and under the GSA schedule rates. No tips shall be allowed with Federal funds.
- Excess lodging – may be allowed above the GSA schedule rates, as applicable only with local funds (Fund 199), if no other reasonable or safe lodging accommodations exist. If the rate is above the GSA schedule rates and the traveler is using Federal funds, the overage amount will need to be paid with local funds (Fund 199 or activity accounts).

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 supervisor and in accordance with administrative regulations. For any allowable expense incurred, the employee shall submit a statement, with receipts to the extent feasible, documenting actual expenses.

School Board Policy CBB Legal states: Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of the district. Such costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not to selected days of the trip, and results in charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the district's non-federally funded activities and in accordance with the district's written travel reimbursement policies.

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

In accordance with the State Comptroller's TexTravel Guidelines, the district acknowledges that discount or reward programs, such as flights, hotel, etc., are not things of value belonging to the district. The administrative burden to track the individual reward programs of employees would be administratively impractical and thus the district has determined that the employee may retain the value, if any, that they receive personally due to school business related travel.

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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 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.

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 GSA's Current Travel & Mileage Reimbursement Rates. Refer to the [GSA rates](#) for the current fiscal year.

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 the [GSA rates](#) for the current fiscal year.
- 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.

Travel Rates:

The mileage, lodging, and meal reimbursement rates published by the Texas Comptroller apply to all travel reimbursement rates.

Important Reminders:

1. Travel on or AFTER October 1, 2024 thru September 30, 2025 – Use the 2025 Per Diem Rates
2. Travel on or AFTER October 1, 2025 thru September 30, 2026 – Use the 2026 Per Diem Rates
3. The per diem rate schedule for the city of travel should be uploaded with the Skyward requisition as an attachment.
4. If the city or county of travel is not included on the GSA List, use the Standard Rate (which is the default reimbursement rate for non-listed cities).

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GSA Fiscal 2026 Travel Reimbursement Rates

In-State or Out-of-State Meals and Lodging	<p>Refer to the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA's) federal <u>Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates</u>, effective Oct. 1, 2025.</p> <p>If the city is not listed, but the county is listed, use the daily rate of the county.</p> <p>For locations not listed (city or county), the daily rates are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lodging in state/out of state: up to \$110. • Meals in state/out of state: up to \$68.
In-State or Out-of-State Non-Overnight Meals	Not to exceed \$36 daily
Automobile Mileage	70 cents per mile (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2025)
Aircraft Mileage	\$1.75 per mile (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2025)

Travel rates for Automobile and Aircraft mileage will be adjusted on January 1, 2026. If traveling in different calendar years, please ensure you are utilizing the correct reimbursement rates.

GSA Fiscal 2026 Lodging Breakdown

Primary destination ❶	County ❶	2025 Oct	Nov	Dec	2026 Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rates	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110
Arlington / Fort Worth / Grapevine	Tarrant / City of Grapevine	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181
Austin	Travis	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$187	\$187	\$187	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173
Big Spring	Howard	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114
Dallas	Dallas	\$170	\$170	\$170	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$170	\$170	\$170	\$170	\$170	\$170
Galveston	Galveston	\$111	\$111	\$111	\$111	\$111	\$111	\$111	\$111	\$146	\$146	\$111	\$111
Houston	Montgomery / Fort Bend / Harris	\$128	\$128	\$128	\$128	\$128	\$128	\$128	\$128	\$128	\$128	\$128	\$128
Midland / Odessa	Midland / Andrews / Ector / Martin	\$132	\$118	\$118	\$118	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132
Pecos	Reeves	\$121	\$121	\$121	\$121	\$121	\$121	\$121	\$121	\$121	\$121	\$121	\$121
Plano	Collin	\$123	\$123	\$123	\$123	\$123	\$123	\$123	\$123	\$123	\$123	\$123	\$123
San Antonio	Bexar	\$137	\$137	\$137	\$137	\$161	\$161	\$137	\$137	\$137	\$137	\$137	\$137
South Padre Island	Cameron	\$118	\$118	\$118	\$118	\$118	\$140	\$140	\$140	\$140	\$140	\$118	\$118

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GSA Fiscal 2026 M&IE Breakdown

Primary destination ❶	County ❷			M&IE total	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental expenses	First and last day of travel
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rates			\$68	\$16	\$19	\$28	\$5	\$51.00
Arlington / Fort Worth / Grapevine	Tarrant / City of Grapevine			\$80	\$20	\$22	\$33	\$5	\$60.00
Austin	Travis			\$80	\$20	\$22	\$33	\$5	\$60.00
Big Spring	Howard			\$68	\$16	\$19	\$28	\$5	\$51.00
Dallas	Dallas			\$80	\$20	\$22	\$33	\$5	\$60.00
Galveston	Galveston			\$74	\$18	\$20	\$31	\$5	\$55.50
Houston	Montgomery / Fort Bend / Harris			\$80	\$20	\$22	\$33	\$5	\$60.00
Midland / Odessa	Midland / Andrews / Ector / Martin			\$74	\$18	\$20	\$31	\$5	\$55.50
Pecos	Reeves			\$74	\$18	\$20	\$31	\$5	\$55.50
Plano	Collin			\$80	\$20	\$22	\$33	\$5	\$60.00
San Antonio	Bexar	\$74	\$18	\$20	\$31	\$5			\$55.50
South Padre Island	Cameron	\$74	\$18	\$20	\$31	\$5			\$55.50

Note: General fund accounts shall be used to pay meal and lodging costs in excess of the GSA's Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates. Godley ISD does not pay for any meals for day trips. A day trip is defined as a trip for a training or conference that does not require an overnight stay.

The GSA rates must be followed for both lodging and meals with the following exceptions:

- The GSA rate is per person, so if staff are rooming together then the amount may be doubled. (Ex: The GSA rate is \$170 for your stay, so if you are booking double occupancy, you are allowed up to \$340 for that one room.)
- If meals are included in the conference fees, please deduct that amount from the overall rate. (Ex: The GSA rate is \$80 for the day, so you would deduct the allotment for lunch of \$30, leaving \$50 to spend on breakfast and dinner.)
- If breakfast is included at the hotel, please deduct that amount from the overall rate. (Ex: The GSA rate is \$80 for the day, so you would deduct the allotment for breakfast of \$22, leaving \$58 to spend on lunch and dinner.)

GISD transportation must be booked in lieu of requesting mileage reimbursement for all trips. If a GISD vehicle is not available, the cost comparison of a rental car versus mileage reimbursement must be considered before making a final decision. Please reach out to the District Business Office for assistance if this comparison is needed.

Eligible Travel Distances

Travel that is seventy-five (75) or more miles from the District Administration Office will be eligible for meals, type of transportation (district vehicle, mileage reimbursement, etc.), and lodging. If the destination is less than seventy-five (75) miles from the District Administration Office, meals and

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lodging are unallowed, with the type of transportation (district vehicle, or mileage reimbursement) allowed based on approval by your supervisor.

If a conference is 2 or more days, an overnight stay may be allowed depending on the distance from the Godley ISD administration office and the daily start/end time of the conference. The supervisor will have the option to approve a purchase order under these new guidelines to be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer for final approval.

If traveling with students, meals will be allowed for employees based on the duration of travel based on prior approval from supervisor and Chief Financial Officer.

Eligible Professional Development Days

If your supervisor approves the travel request for training, you will be eligible to take up to two (2) professional development days per year. Any days beyond two, or days that are unapproved by your supervisor, would need to be taken as a personal day off.

Department supervisors that are over district wide programs are expected to coordinate with campus principals prior to approving a purchase order for travel. If a campus principal does not approve the travel day for their instructional staff, the department supervisor should not allow any travel under their budget for that event. The Chief Academic Officer has final authority in any disagreements.

Campus and district administration are eligible to attend one (1) conference per school year that is not subject to the two day rule. The days must be recorded and approved in Skyward before travel can occur.

Limited exceptions can apply to the two day rule if approved by your supervisor and the Human Resources Department.

Personal Use of Resources

If an employee wants to utilize their personal funds to attend a training, and a supervisor approves a professional development day, the employee will be allowed to travel with the following limitations:

- Will not be eligible for District to pay for cost of training;
- Will not be eligible for meals;
- Will not be eligible for mileage reimbursement;
- Will not be eligible for lodging; and
- With prior approval, employees could be eligible to utilize a district vehicle to attend.

Limited exceptions can apply on a case by case basis with approval from your supervisor and the Chief Financial Officer.

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District Allowable Travel Expenses:

Meals

- Full Meal Per Diem – 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 requisition. 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 first and last day of travel based on the time of departure and/or return. If the traveler will be away from home during a meal time, the meal per diem should be included in the adjusted meal per diem calculation.
- 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 Athletic Director for meal rates for student athletes and the Chief Academic Officer for non-student athlete rates. A detailed receipt for the student meals must be submitted upon return from the 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 within sixty (60) miles from the traveler's home. The traveler may receive mileage reimbursement for each trip in lieu of the lodging costs.
- 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 Austin has a 10 am or later start, lodging costs may not be reasonable, necessary or allowable travel costs.
- The traveler shall estimate the lodging expense per night (including all taxes, surcharges, and incidentals).
- 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 requisition for audit purposes.
- The traveler (or campus secretary on behalf of the traveler) shall make the hotel reservation and secure it with their UMB purchasing card. If the hotel requires a one (1) night's deposit, the deposit shall be paid with their UMB purchasing card and notated in the requisition that early funding of the card is needed.
- Upon approval, the traveler's UMB purchasing card will be loaded with funds for the approved, estimated lodging expense as reflected on the requisition.

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- Lodging costs shall be paid with a district-issued UMB purchasing card on site 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 their UMB purchasing 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 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 tax exemption does not apply to out-of-state travel.
- The traveler shall present their district issued ID badge to ensure they receive the Government Rate as noted in the GSA schedule of rates.
- 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 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.
- Programs such as AirBnb and VRBO must follow the district's guidelines for student travel. Please reach out to the High School administration for additional information.
- Programs such as AirBnb and VRBO will be allowed for use with local funds (Fund 199 or activity accounts) for employee travel. Such a reservation must be made on the traveler's personal credit card and submitted for reimbursement at the applicable GSA schedule rate. Reimbursable costs include the nightly fee, cleaning fee, and service fee, but the taxes will not be reimbursed.
- 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 within 10 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.

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- 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.
- A rental car at the event location shall be allowable if it is the most economical method to access the event location. No Uber or other ride sharing company will be allowed unless it is the only means of transportation within the destination.
- All flight costs associated with deviations from the required travel plans, such as pre or post personal days or canceled travel plans due to personal reasons shall be paid and/or reimbursed 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.
- Flight costs for students shall be allowed for travel events that require travel away from the student's home depending on the most economic and safe mode of transportation. The requesting campus shall submit a cost comparison between flights, vehicle travel and/or charter bus, as appropriate.
- State Government (GST) Fares are not available on Southwest.com and may only be purchased through an eligible state government personnel's authorized travel agency or through the Southwest Government Reservation Desk by calling 1-888-871-8167.

Transportation – Mileage

- Mileage reimbursements shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home.
- Travelers should use a district-owned vehicle as the preferred method of transportation. A request for a vehicle shall be submitted with the Transportation department. The driver shall be listed on the Authorized Drivers of District-Owned Vehicles. 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 rental car, as appropriate.
- Travelers who opt to drive their personal vehicle instead of a district-owned vehicle, shall be reimbursed at the current mileage rate established by the Texas Comptroller and/or TEA.
 - Any mileage reimbursements must be claimed within 90 days of the last travel date and cannot be claimed after the last date of the fiscal year.
- 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 Google Maps system to document mileage reimbursements. A Google Maps printout with the mileage from the point of origin [home or district address] to the point of destination shall be printed and attached to the requisition.
- 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.

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- 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. An exception may be made during the summer months due to the inconvenience/cost of driving to a common location.

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 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 UMB purchasing card 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.
- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if any, for travel in a rental car.
 - o Fuel needs to be purchased with a district-issued UMB purchasing card, and not use the district fuel card.
- 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 allowed 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 within 10 days after the travel event.

Transportation – Parking Charges

- Parking charges shall be allowable for all travel events 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 within 10 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.

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- Toll receipts, as appropriate, must be submitted by the traveler within 10 days after the travel event. Toll charges while in a district-owned vehicle are forwarded to the district by the toll authority.

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.
- A copy of the registration form and Schedule of Events shall be submitted with the requisition, if available.

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)
- Temporary dependent care costs above and beyond regular dependent care that directly results from travel to required conferences. If the event is not mandatory for the participant, no reimbursement will be allowed.
- 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 required to reimburse the district for the fraudulent reimbursements and shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- Travel expenses incurred after an employee terminates employment with the district.
- Travel expenses incurred by an employee who subsequently resigns (over the summer or other break), unless there are extenuating circumstances.

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