



Food Purchasing Guidelines

In support of the SLPS mission to be responsible stewards of public resources and contractual commitments, these guidelines establish the requirements for the purchase of food and beverages using District funds. This guidance applies to food and beverages purchased for District-sponsored meetings, training, events, student activities, student snacks, and food-based incentives during the school day or at District-sponsored activities, whether on or off campus. These guidelines are not intended to govern food provided through Parental Involvement Activities, which are addressed separately in this document. All food purchases must serve a legitimate educational, instructional, or business purpose, comply with applicable District policies and funding requirements, and demonstrate responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars while supporting the District's mission and objectives.

Coffee and Light Refreshments

Coffee encompasses any non-alcoholic beverage, such as tea, soft drinks, juice, or milk. A light refreshment is an edible item that may be served between meals, such as donuts, granola bars, fruit or cheese.

Refreshments may be provided to those attending school or department-sponsored meetings and training if the following criteria are met:

- Attendance is mandatory
- There is a published agenda and sign-In Sheet
- The meeting or training has an intended duration of two (2) or more hours
- There are ten (10) or more attendees; and
- The total cost per attendee per day cannot exceed \$6.00 per person

Meals

Includes breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner.

District funds may be used to provide meals for attendees of school- or department-sponsored meetings or training sessions only when all of the following criteria are met:

- The meeting or training is scheduled for three (3) or more hours.
- A published agenda and sign-in sheet are maintained.
- There are at least ten (10) attendees.
- The meeting location, schedule, or other logistical considerations do not reasonably allow for a meal break.
- The meeting includes a business purpose that is enhanced by a unique professional or celebratory event, such as:
 - Employee recognition or awards
 - Guest speakers
 - Presentations
 - Other professional or interpersonal exchanges that support the meeting objectives

Maximum Allowable Meal Costs

The total cost, including all applicable fees, may not exceed:

- Breakfast: \$14.00 per person
- Lunch or Dinner: \$16.50 per person

Tips and gratuities are not allowed and will not be paid or reimbursed.

The meeting must include significant professional development, training, recognition, or strategic planning components beyond routine operational business. Examples include employee recognition events, guest speakers, formal presentations, facilitated workshops, or strategic planning sessions that directly support the meeting objectives. **Routine staff meetings, status updates, and regular departmental meetings do not qualify.**

Vendor Payments or reimbursements can only be one (1) option from the two (2) below categories in a single calendar day:

- Coffee and Light Refreshments
- Meals (Breakfast, Lunch, or Dinner)

For example, if you provide Coffee and Light Refreshments, you cannot provide a meal option (Breakfast, Lunch, or Dinner) for the rest of the calendar day.

For example, if you provide Breakfast for your meeting, you cannot provide Lunch, Dinner, or Coffee and Light Refreshments for the rest of the calendar day.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Refreshments or Meals may be provided for staff that are required to stay for Parent/Teacher Conferences during the two (2) weeks observed during the school year for Parent/Teacher Conferences.

- Attendance is mandatory
- All Teachers/Staff present must sign a Sign-In Sheet that specifically identifies it is for Parent Teacher Conferences
- The total cost per attendee meal cannot exceed:
 - \$12 per person for Breakfast (including all applicable fees)
 - \$16.50 per person for Lunch or Dinner (including all applicable fees)
 - **Tips/Gratuities will not be paid or reimbursed**

Parental Involvement Activities

Federal funds cannot be used to purchase **full** meals. However, reasonable expenditures for light refreshments or food, particularly when parent involvement activities extend through mealtime are allowable. Title I, Part A funds may be used to purchase food for family/parent involvement/engagement activities if the following conditions have been met:

- Expenses are reasonable and necessary; and the meeting is at a time when parents would normally eat.
 - Breakfast (7-10am)
 - Lunch (11-1pm)
 - Dinner (4-7pm)
- There is a published agenda and sign-In Sheet
- Meeting is **1** Hour or more
- The total cost per attendee per day cannot exceed \$6.00 per person
 - If expenses are more than 6.00/person, RSVPs should be provided to prove why the amount of snacks/food was ordered. If this cannot be supplied, expenses will be paid to your GOB funding.
- Schools are advised to use caution in determining how much to spend on food. For example, if the school is allocated \$4,000 for parent involvement, spending \$3,500 on food would not be considered reasonable. This would also significantly limit the other types of activities the campus could fund for parent involvement.

Schools should also use caution when serving staff at this same meeting since it is designed for parents. For example, while a few bagels would not substantially change the costs associated with the parent meeting; if the school provided bagels for 100 staff members and only a few parents, it would appear as if the meal was designed for staff rather than parents.

Student Snacks and Food-Based Incentives

The District recognizes that, in limited circumstances, modest snack purchases will be made. Purchases must be reasonable in cost, proportional to the number of students participating, and documented with a clear educational purpose. District funds shall not be used for routine classroom treats, holiday parties, birthday celebrations, or purchases that primarily benefit staff.

The following guidelines apply:

- **ALL** food, beverage, snack, and consumable student incentive purchases must be submitted on a separate BusinessPlus requisition. These items cannot be combined with non-food purchases. Each requisition must include a detailed note explaining the purpose of the purchase, the event or activity, and who will benefit from it.
- Food purchases must directly support an approved educational, instructional, or student engagement activity.
- Whenever practical, healthy food and beverage options should be selected in alignment with the District's commitment to student wellness.
- Employees are encouraged to use non-food recognition and incentive strategies whenever possible.
- Any exception to these guidelines must have a documented educational or programmatic purpose and receive prior approval from the appropriate supervisor or department.

Examples of Unallowable Purchases

The following are generally not allowable uses of District funds:

- Chocolate
- Soft drinks or soda
- Caffeinated beverages or energy drinks
- Large quantities of snacks or candy

How to Submit Payment for Food Costs

To request payment for food costs, follow the steps below:

1. Submit a requisition in BusinessPlus at least **two (2) weeks prior** to the event or activity.
2. Include the following with the requisition:
 - Vendor quote
 - Event or activity purpose
 - A detailed description explaining the purpose of the event or activity and the intended audience
 - Event agenda, including the event date, start time, and end time
 - List of staff, participant roster, or invite list
 - Attendance must be mandatory for the event or activity.
 - Staff events would require printed name, signature and job title.
3. **Within 48 hours after the event or activity, complete the following in BusinessPlus:**
 - Attach the official sign-in sheet(s) to the original requisition, with the PO number noted at the top of the page.
 - Enter a Goods Receipt in BusinessPlus and send the invoice to Accounts Payable with the requisition number attached to ensure the vendor is paid in a timely manner.

Please note that **vouchers are no longer accepted for food purchases.**

Please contact the Finance Office if you have any questions and we would be happy to assist.

Note: If the number of attendees on the official sign-in sheet differs by more than 20% from the submitted staff list, participant roster, or invite list, a justification form must also be attached.

Compliance

If a purchase does not comply with the above guidelines, the District will take the following actions:

- Send an email identifying the noncompliance to the Network Superintendent, with Finance and the Chief of Schools and/or Division Chief copied on the communication.
- Refer significant or recurring instances of noncompliance to District Leadership for further review and any appropriate action.