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## Overview

Persons authorized to travel for business and educational purposes on district business shall be reimbursed for all usual and reasonable travel related expenses incurred. The guidelines established herein have been developed on the premise that travelers will use good judgment and prudence in planning district travel. Travelers are required to select the most economical and practical accommodations, arrangements, and services in accordance with the needs of the trip and attendance is required for all training sessions. Travel reimbursements will not be considered income, benefits or compensation. All travelers, as well as supervisors approving travel, are responsible for compliance with the provisions of the district's travel guidelines. Specific guidelines apply when using state or federal funds, therefore allowable expenditures are based on the more restrictive of district policy or General Services Administration (GSA) rates. Requests for exceptions must be made in writing prior to taking the trip and signed by the appropriate executive council member.

## Processing Travel Requests & Reimbursements

The employee must complete the [Travel Request/Expense](#) form to obtain approval prior to travel. Prior to the event date, payments for registration, lodging and airline tickets will be generated based on the travel request once approved. Other travel expenses (meals, mileage, parking, etc.) reported on the form and approved by the budget manager will be reimbursed upon return from the event.

## Travel Guidelines for In-District, Local, and Out-of-District Travel

### 1) Definitions:

- In-District Travel – All travel within the District's boundaries.
- Local Travel – All travel within the Region 4 Education Service Center's boundaries.
- Out-of-District Travel – All other travel outside the District's and Region 4 Education Service Center's boundaries.

### 2) General Guidelines:

- a. The [Local Travel Reimbursement Request](#) form (available on the Business Services website) shall be completed and submitted for all in-district and local travel mileage. Refer to the [local mileage chart](#) for commonly traveled sites.
- b. Out-of-district travel shall be accounted for using the travel request/expense form and must be submitted by the employee for approval 14 calendar days prior to travel. The employee should include an accurate estimate of expenses (excluding Texas sales tax) for the travel.
- c. If the employee is traveling to a conference, a copy of the conference brochure must be attached to the travel request.
- d. All out-of-state travel must have the approval of the supervisor, the appropriate Assistant Superintendent, and the Superintendent.
- e. Travel reimbursements for all employees must be submitted within 30 days after the travel or purchase was made. Reimbursements submitted more than 30 days after the expenditure occurred will be denied.
- f. Board members travel expenses are paid in accordance with Section 3.16 of the State Comptroller's travel policy titled "Exceptions for certain key officials and other state employees".
- g. The Chief Financial Officer must approve any exceptions to these guidelines.

## Hotel Reservations

### Local & Activity Funds (Funds 199, 461 & 865):

- 1) Hotel expenses shall not to exceed the maximum lodging rate based on the GSA's federal travel regulations, which can be found on the [State of Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts](#) website.

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- 2) If lodging in a conference hotel, the District will pay the reasonable cost of the room plus any locally assessed taxes, with prior supervisory approval. Conference literature identifying the specific hotel and the rate as designated for participants must be attached to the travel voucher in order to be reimbursed more than the GSA's hotel amount per person per night. In the absence of this documentation, or if there is no conference hotel, the District will pay up to the amount on GSA's website for the city or county per person per night plus locally assessed taxes.
- 3) GCCISD may issue advance payment for hotel costs for local funded travel. Hotel receipts must be submitted within 10 days after your return. Advance payment directly to a hotel is also allowed for large groups. Otherwise, use a personal credit card for hotel expenditures and upon your return submit an itemized receipt for reimbursement along with the completed travel request/expense form. Cancelled checks, copies of checks, and summary only credit card sales slips are not valid receipts.
- 4) Hotel charges not eligible for reimbursement include but are not limited to: movie rentals, internet charges, phone charges, room service, exercise room, and courtesy bar/snack items. Work-related phone or internet charges may be reimbursed subject to the approval of your supervisor.
- 5) Double occupancy of rooms is recommended whenever possible to minimize lodging costs. When at least two (2) travelers (district employees) are traveling to the same event and chose to share lodging, each traveler shall submit their portion of the lodging costs on the Travel Request/Expense Form
- 6) 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.
- 7) Employees traveling on official business shall claim exemption from Texas hotel occupancy tax with the presentation of a valid exemption certificate which is available on GCCISD's website. Travelers will not be reimbursed for state taxes.

#### State & Federal Grants:

- 1) All hotel expenditures (including conference host hotels) funded with state or federal funds may not exceed the maximum lodging rates based on the [GSA website](#) for the destination city or county plus all locally assessed taxes.
- 2) All state & federal expenditures must be supported with actual receipts.
- 3) The following maximum hotel rates apply to state/federal grants in-state and out-of-state travel:
  - If local policy restricts travel, per diem, and other travel expenses to a rate less than state law, the traveler must budget and request reimbursement from the grant at the lesser rate.
  - If local policy exceeds the maximum recovery rate specified in the Appropriations Bill, then the difference must be paid from state or local funds, i.e., not from grant funds.

#### **Transportation and Mileage**

Reimbursements for taxi fares, personal and district vehicle parking fees and/or tollbooth fees are authorized when incurred for business purposes. Receipts are required for all fares and fees. The District will not reimburse any excess cost associated with hotel valet parking unless no other parking options are available. Travelers are expected to use the most economical arrangements available. Employees receiving a travel stipend will not be reimbursed for in-district travel mileage.

#### Mileage - Private Vehicle

- 1) The appropriate supervisor or designee must approve reimbursement for in-district and local mileage reimbursements.
- 2) Mileage calculations for in-district travel and common destinations may be found on the District's business services website.
- 3) Mileage incurred for use of a private vehicle will be reimbursed at the current state reimbursement rate. The current mileage rate can be found at the [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website](#).

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- 4) [MapQuest](#) mapping/directions online service shall be used to determine the reimbursable mileage between travel destinations. The traveler must print out the driving directions provided by the site and attach them to the travel request.
- 5) Generally, if two or more employees from the same campus/department are attending the same function, on the same date and time, they are required to carpool. The employee's immediate supervisor must approve exceptions to this reimbursement rule prior to travel.
- 6) Group travel (two or more employees) to the same destination on school business may reserve the district's suburban through the transportation department.

#### Rental Cars

Car rentals shall be utilized for business purposes only when this is the most economical source of transportation. Car rentals will need to be reserved with a purchase order. All rental car occupants should be listed on the purchase order and travel request/expense form. Otherwise, the rental car agency will need to be paid with personal funds and reimbursed upon return and presentation of the actual receipt. Gasoline for a rental car or district vehicle will be reimbursed upon presentation of a detailed receipt. NOTE: Any district employee who rents a vehicle in connection with district business must take the collision damage and/or loss damage insurance coverage for each day the vehicle is rented. This insurance coverage may be called collision damage waiver (CDW) and/or loss damage waiver (LDW) by the company.

#### Airline Tickets

The cost of an airline ticket paid by the traveler for business purposes is reimbursable when this mode of travel has been approved and when the employee is requesting reimbursement/advance for airfare not exceeding the average coach fare.

- 1) Special discounted fares should be used when available, and trips should be planned far enough in advance to qualify for discounted fares.
- 2) If airfare is purchased online, be sure that you print a receipt that shows the expenditures have been charged to your credit card, not just a confirmation.
- 3) Utilization of a district credit card to purchase airline tickets shall be approved in advance by the Superintendent or CFO and will be processed through the business services department.

#### **Meals**

##### Local Funds

Meal and gratuity per diem allowance for all travelers who stay overnight is \$36:

Breakfast	\$ 7	Leave before 6 a.m.
Lunch	\$12	Leave before 12 noon or return after 12 noon
Dinner	\$17	Leave before 6 p.m. or return after 6 p.m.

##### State and Federal Grant Funds (Actual Cost with Receipt)

Travel allowances, in which the per diem is paid to the employee regardless of the amount actually expended, are not allowable. Meals will be reimbursed at actual cost with original receipt, not to exceed the lesser of the District's per diem meal allowance or the State maximum allowable. Note: tips and any type of snack are not reimbursable, only meals are reimbursed.

##### Meal Reimbursements for Overnight Travel

- 1) Meal reimbursements will be handled according to the source of funds paying for the travel.
- 2) Meals for overnight stay will be reimbursed at the per diem (daily) rates listed above. Meal expenses for travel without an overnight stay will not be reimbursed.

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- 3) The District will not provide meal per diem or overnight lodging within the areas bounded by:
  - a. North – Conroe/Kingwood
  - b. South – Galveston
  - c. East – Beaumont/Port Arthur
  - d. West – KatyExceptions to the overnight lodging provision must be pre-approved by the Superintendent.
- 4) Meal reimbursements are the same for in state and out-of-state travel.
- 5) Meal(s) provided during a conference will be deducted from the per diem allowance (Note: continental breakfast is not considered a meal).

### **Student Travel Payments and Reimbursements**

(Please refer to Administrative Guidelines 6.24 and 6.25)

#### Overview

The safe transportation of students is one of the most serious responsibilities of the school district. The care and safety of our students is of utmost importance at all times. This includes traveling to or from a school function or to or from an extracurricular event or practice. Please refer to the District's Administrative Guidelines, AG 6.24 and 6.25 for detailed guidelines and procedures for transportation of students. The following travel reimbursement information is provided to supplement the District's Administrative Guidelines.

#### Local, Extended Non-overnight, Overnight and Extended Overnight Field Trips

- If a vendor payment is required, request through the district's financial software system.
- If school district transportation is needed, submit bus request to the director of transportation along with documentation of trip approval at least 15 days in advance.

### **Financial Responsibility**

#### Fundraising

Funding for all field trips will be the responsibility of the organization or group making the trip. All fundraising activities (or budget line items involved in the trip) must be approved in advance by the building principal and will be limited to the estimated cost of the planned trip. All fundraising activities must conform to the regulations contained in the Goose Creek CISD Activity Funds Manual.

#### Accounting for Funds

A complete financial accounting of monies spent in connection with a trip is to be made not later than thirty (30) days after the field trip. This accounting is to be submitted to the principal or administrator.

#### Travel Expenses

All requests for advance payment of expenses must be submitted through the district's financial software system at least two weeks prior to the date of departure. Approved field trip form and a number of students attending must be attached to the travel request/expense form. All travel related checks must be picked up in the accounts payable office. No student travel money will be sent through district mail or to employees' home addresses.

Non-overnight employee meals – Employees will receive an amount equal to the student dinner meal allowance for non-overnight trips that extend past the normal eight-hour work day.

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Overnight trips – Meals will be advanced for all approved adults traveling with students in accordance with employee travel rates. A breakdown of employees and non-employees must be submitted with the travel request for proper coding of expenditures.

Student meal and gratuity allowance(s) will be based on the time of day the trip occurs as follows:

Breakfast	\$ 6	Leave before 6 a.m.
Lunch	\$ 7	Leave before 12 noon or return after 12 noon
Dinner	\$10	Leave before 6 p.m. or return after 6 p.m.