

412 TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to identify school district travel expenses that involve initial payment by an employee and qualify for reimbursement from the school district, and to specify the manner by which the employee seeks reimbursement.

II. AUTHORIZATION

All school district business expenses to be reimbursed must be approved by the supervising administrator. Such expenses to be reimbursed may include transportation, meals, lodging, registration fees, required materials, parking fees, tips, and other reasonable and necessary school district business-related expenses.

III. SECURING APPROVAL FOR TRAVEL, EXPENSES, AND REIMBURSEMENT

In-District Travel

No prior approval is necessary if the travel is a regular part of your assignment. Any other travel is subject to the approval of your immediate supervisor.

Out-of-District Travel

All employees must secure prior approval from their supervisor. A travel authorization form must be completed prior to the travel. A copy of the meeting schedule must accompany the request.

Out of State Travel

All travel out of state requires approval from the Supervisor and Superintendent.

IV. USE OF PRIVATELY OWNED AUTOMOBILES

The maximum compensation for use of a personal automobile shall be at the approved Internal Revenue Service rate. The purchasing department shall make contract employees aware of changes in this rate.

Mileage shall be paid on the basis of the most direct route according to the in-district

mileage chart or based on actual mileage from place of work or home whichever is less. No additional reimbursement will be made for operation or maintenance of a personal automobile for school business except for payment of toll charges or parking expenses.

Employees are required to carpool. Mileage will be reimbursed for one car per four employees. Administrators are exempt from this requirement due to the potential need for an administrator to leave suddenly due to a district emergency.

V. COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION

School employees may travel out-of-state by commercial transportation when authorized by the Superintendent and the Supervisor, as required.

Flights must be booked for and paid for by the district. Flights will not be booked until an approved travel form is received.

When an employee has a reservation for a flight that is not going to be used, such employee shall be accountable to notify the Business Services department. If a refund is not available, the appropriate budget code will be charged.

Travel to and from the Minneapolis/St. Paul airport will be at the approved Internal Revenue Service rate, from the employee's work location or home whichever is less, plus the economy parking lot rate. Executive Express is also an allowable expense. Any exceptions to this must have prior approval by the Superintendent.

Car rentals must have prior approval by the Executive Director of Business Services. Car rentals will only be approved with proof of personal insurance.

VI. AIRLINE TRAVEL CREDIT

Employees utilizing school district funds to pay for airline travel are required to ensure that any ~~vouchers or~~ credits ~~or other benefits~~ for cancelled flights issued by any airline accrue to the benefit of the school district rather than the employee.

1. To the extent an airline will not honor a transfer or assignment of credit ~~or benefit~~ from the employee to the school district, the employee shall report receipt of the credit ~~or benefit~~ to the designated administrator within 90 days of receipt of the credit ~~or benefit~~.
2. Reports of the receipt of an airline credit ~~or benefit~~ shall be made in writing and shall include verification from the airline as to the credit ~~or benefit~~ received. Reimbursement for airline travel expenses will not be made until such documentation is provided.

Employees who have existing credits ~~or benefits~~ issued by an airline based upon previously reimbursed airline travel for school district purposes will be required to utilize those credits ~~or benefits~~ toward any subsequent airline travel related to school district purposes, prior to reimbursement for such travel, to the extent permitted and/or feasible.

If the District pays for a flight for an employee who is unable to use the credit or benefit for future District travel and the airline issues a credit or benefit directly to the employee, the employee will reimburse the district for the cost of the flight.

The requirements of this section apply to all airline travel, regardless of where or how the tickets are purchased. The requirements of this section do not apply to frequent flyer miles or other airline rewards programs.

VII. RECEIPTS / REIMBURSEMENT

An employee who claims reimbursement for expenses incurred in travel shall file properly executed itemized receipts with the approved travel form for bus commercial transportation, lodging hotel or motel accommodations, registration, baggage, meals, convention or banquet fees, etc. or other reasonable and necessary expenses.

Parking fee receipts are also to be attached if one is received. If receipts were unavailable, an appropriate notation should be made on the expense claim and initialed by the Supervisor.

All reimbursement requests for travel expenditures need to be submitted within eight weeks of the travel date.

No reimbursement shall be made for laundry, dry cleaning, valet service, room service, personal telephone calls, and other similar personal services.

If an employee resigns and is unable to attend a conference scheduled after their last date of employment, the employee will reimburse the District for registrations, hotels, or other costs for which the District is unable to cancel or receive a refund.

VIII. MEALS

An employee in travel status may claim reimbursement for meals under the following circumstances:

- a. Breakfast, providing the employee is required to leave his/her work location before 6:30 a.m. or is away from home overnight.
- b. Lunch, providing the employee is in travel status more than 35 miles away from his/her work location or is away from home overnight.
- c. Dinner, providing the employee is required to return after 7:00 p.m. or is away from home overnight.
- d. Employee shall not claim or be entitled to additional reimbursement for meals when meals are included in registration fees paid by the District.
- e. Banquet charges in connection with a convention or school activity will be reimbursed at actual cost.

- f. Tips will be reimbursed up to ~~15%~~ 20% or in full when they are automatically included by the restaurant.

Receipts are required for all meal reimbursements. Maximum reimbursement for single meal claims (including tip) will be the approved Internal Revenue Service rates, of the Continental United States or the approved MMB Commissioner's rates, whichever is less.

IX. LODGING

As a general procedure, overnight lodging prior to meeting will be approved only when the meeting starts prior to 7:00 a.m. or is in excess of 120 miles from home or due to extreme weather or road conditions.

If a conference agenda extends into the evening and continues the following day but does not meet the above requirements for overnight lodging, the district may authorize overnight lodging on a case-by-case basis. Requests should be submitted to the business services department for approval.

Reservations must be booked and paid for by the District. Rooms will not be booked until an approved travel form is received.

~~X. EXPENSE ADVANCE~~

~~Expense advances may be approved by the Superintendent in limited circumstances.
Approved expense advances will be issued at 75% of estimated expenses.~~

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 15.435 (Airline Travel Credit)
Minn. Stat. § 471.665 (Mileage Allowances)
Minn. Op. Atty. Gen. 1035 (Aug. 23, 1999) (Retreat Expenses)
Minn. Op. Atty. Gen. 161b-12 (Aug. 4, 1997) (Transportation Expenses)
Minn. Op. Atty. Gen. 161B-12 (Jan. 24, 1989) (Operating Expenses of Car)

Cross References: Board Policy 214 (Out-of-State Travel by School Board Members)

BOARD POLICY 412

St. Cloud Area School District 742
St. Cloud, Minnesota

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