

Trustee Training & Travel — Proposed Policy Change

Fellow Trustees,

As we prepare to vote on the proposed changes to our Board Operating Procedures, I wanted to share my reasoning behind recommending that we reduce the number of discretionary district-funded conferences from three to one per trustee each year.

My proposal is focused solely on the number of conferences allowed annually. The 70-mile travel requirement will be considered under a separate action item on the Board agenda. This proposal does not address that requirement or any other travel reimbursement guidelines, and it is independent of the Board's decision on the separate item. I believe reducing the conference allowance is a reasonable adjustment that continues to support trustee education while demonstrating our commitment to being responsible stewards of district funds.

Under our current Board Operating Procedures, trustees may attend up to three statewide conferences per calendar year without prior Board approval. I would like the Board to consider reducing that allowance to one discretionary district-funded conference or training per trustee per year.

Proposed Change

Reduce the number of discretionary district-funded conferences or trainings from three per trustee per year to one per trustee per year.

- Each trustee would select the one discretionary conference or training that best meets their continuing-education needs.
- No changes to travel reimbursement guidelines are proposed under this action item.
- Training specifically required by law or state requirements would remain separate from the one discretionary conference or training.

Trustees should select their annual discretionary training with their continuing-education requirements in mind. If additional hours are needed, they could be completed through available online, district-provided, or other options that do not require another district-funded conference trip. This proposal would not change the district's responsibility to provide training specifically required by law or the state.

Training Usage and Available Options

Last year, the full three-conference allowance was used by one trustee, while the remaining trustees attended fewer than the maximum allowed. That use was consistent with current Board policy. I include it only to consider whether allowing three district-funded conferences per trustee is still necessary going forward.

We are not sure when the three-conference allowance was originally adopted or how long it has been part of our Board Operating Procedures. Today, trustees have access to numerous online and on-demand training opportunities that can provide continuing-education hours

without the additional costs of travel, lodging, mileage, meals, and other conference expenses.

Recent Conference Costs

Our Governance Conference in Galveston provides a recent example of expenses associated with conference attendance.

Expense	Amount
Conference registration — 7 trustees + superintendent	\$3,976.00
San Luis Resort — 7 trustees + superintendent	\$3,801.32
Registration + lodging	\$7,777.32
Cost per attendee	\$972.17

One trustee also submitted \$289.85 in allowable expenses. That reimbursement was permitted under current policy. I include it only as an example of an expense that may be incurred under existing guidelines.

If all seven trustees had incurred and submitted the same \$289.85 in reimbursable expenses, the additional cost would have been \$2,028.95 ($\289.85×7). This is a hypothetical example, not an expense LISD actually incurred. Actual expenses vary by trustee and trip.

The larger point is that current trustees may not use every conference opportunity available under our policy. Future trustees may make different decisions while still operating within that same policy. We should consider not only what we currently spend, but also what our policy allows.

Current vs. Proposed Structure

Current	Proposed
Up to 3 statewide conferences per trustee	1 discretionary district-funded conference/training per trustee
Up to 21 conference trips for 7 trustees	Up to 7 discretionary conference trips for 7 trustees
Existing 70-mile lodging/per diem requirement	Not addressed by this proposal; separate action item
Current reimbursement rules apply	No changes proposed under this action item
Required training remains separate	Required legal/state training remains separate

As trustees, we voluntarily chose to run for these positions knowing that Board service is unpaid. The district should provide the training and resources we need to perform our responsibilities, and I believe it should reasonably cover the expenses associated with doing so. At the same time, our role includes being mindful of those expenses and being good stewards of district resources.

We ask our administration to carefully manage district funds every day. I believe it is appropriate that we apply that same consideration when reviewing policies governing our own expenses.

This proposal would continue to support trustee education while reducing the number of discretionary district-funded conferences from three to one per trustee each year. It does not address the separate action item concerning the 70-mile travel requirement or propose changes to other travel reimbursement guidelines.

Respectfully,

Keith Conley

Luling ISD School Board Trustee