

FORT HANCOCK ISD

PROCEDURES: TRAVEL PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES, & RATES

Travel Guidelines Overview:

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 immediate supervisor. Reimbursement for authorized travel shall be in accordance with legal requirements. Accounting records shall accurately reflect that no state or federal funds were used to reimburse travel expenses beyond those authorized for state employees. For any authorized expense incurred, the employee shall submit a statement, with receipts to the extent feasible, documenting actual expenses and in accordance with administrative procedures.

Note: Travel expenses incurred due to the fault of a traveler, except for extenuating circumstances, such as late registration, cancelled flight, etc. are not considered to be reasonable or necessary; therefore, all such expenses shall be paid or reimbursed by the 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), not to exceed 15% of the meal expense.
- Excess lodging above the GSA schedule, as applicable only with local funds (Fund 199)

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 TEA's Current Travel & Mileage Reimbursement Rates (as published in the most recent TEA Correspondence).

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 GSA rates for the current fiscal year at: <https://fm.xcpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php>
- 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.

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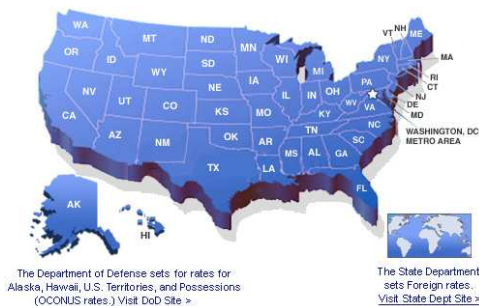
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Local District Guidelines:

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 on a Travel Authorization Form, approved by the immediate supervisor, Superintendent and Business Manager. 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.

Travel Rates:

The mileage, lodging, and meal reimbursement rates published by the comptroller apply to all travel reimbursement rates. The link below to the Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates should be used to determine the appropriate rates for in-state and out-of-state travel: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>



Note: General fund accounts shall be used to pay meal and lodging costs in excess of the Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates.

Fiscal 2016

Employees

Refer to the GSA's federal [Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates](#), effective Oct. 1, 2014.

In-State or Out-of-State Lodging

If the city is not listed, but the county is listed, use the rate of the county.

For areas not listed (city or county), the rates are:

- Lodging In-State: up to \$85
- Lodging Out-of-State: up to \$83

In-State or Out-of-State Non-Overnight Meals Not to exceed \$36 (not allowable expenses for the District)

56 cents per mile (Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, 2014)

Automobile Mileage

57.5 cents per mile (Jan. 1 – Aug. 31, 2015)

Note: Excerpt from Texas Comptroller website: <https://fmx.cpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php>

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District Allowable Travel Expenses:

Meals

- Full Meal Per Diems – 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 Travel Authorization form. 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 1st 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.

Breakfast - \$10.00

Lunch - \$12.00

Dinner - \$14.00

It is the travelers responsibility to retain their meal receipts and report the actual cost for audit purposes. Food receipts ARE required. It must be an original, time-stamped and dated, itemized receipt. The time guidelines for meal reimbursement remain the same:

- Breakfast Leave before 6 a.m. or return after 9 a.m.
- Lunch Leave before 11 a.m. or return after 1 p.m.
- Dinner Leave before 5 p.m. or return after 7 p.m.

Tips will be reimbursed only if it falls within the standard per diem rates.

- 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 district reimbursement rates for in-state and out-of-state travel for students. A detailed receipt for the student meals must be submitted with the Travel Settlement form. Current rates: \$24 per day in-state and \$30 per day out-of-state.
- A check will be issued to the traveler within 5 days of the travel event for all staff and student meal per diems. All of the required documentation shall be submitted to the business office in accordance with the business office deadlines.
- The traveler should complete a Travel Itinerary and for out of state travel a signed Medical Release Form for each student.
- The traveler shall complete a Travel Settlement after the travel event and shall certify the “actual costs”. The actual costs shall not include any meal tips. Travelers do have to submit receipts for their meal expenses. If the actual costs are less than the advanced per diem, the traveler must reimburse the unspent funds to the district within 5 days of the travel 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 in the traveler’s home city at a commercial lodging establishment.
- 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.
- The traveler shall estimate the lodging expense per night (including all taxes, surcharges, etc). A conference or event hotel shall be the first priority to minimize transportation costs at the event city.

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- 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 Travel Authorization Form for audit purposes.
- The business office will arrange hotel accommodations when overnight lodging is required and secure with a district credit card as appropriate. Hotel rates vary, and every effort should be made to obtain the lowest rate available. The government rate may be available and will require District Identification. We will check to make sure that the government rate is actually lower than other special or discount rates that are being offered. If the hotel requires a one (1) night's deposit, the deposit shall be paid with a district credit card as appropriate.
- Hotel and travel websites such as Hotels.Com, Expedia, Travelocity, etc. shall not be used to make hotel reservations if the website requires pre-payment of the hotel stay.
- Lodging costs shall be paid with a district check 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 the district check.
- 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 may, at his/her request, choose to return to their home city each day of a multiple-day travel event if the distance from their home city to the event city is less than 100 miles each way. The traveler may receive mileage reimbursement for each trip in lieu of the 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 Certificate can be found at the district's Finance Department or on the district's Business Webpage and the State Comptroller's Website. The hotel occupancy tax exemption does not apply to out-of-state travel. The District will not provide reimbursement for Texas Sales Tax. Employee will be charged for the tax incurred. All receipts must be itemized.
- The traveler shall present a Sales Tax Exemption Certificate to a Texas hotel for parking costs. If the traveler fails to present the certificate, the traveler shall reimburse the district for the unallowable tax expense. The Sales Tax Exemption Certificate can be found at the district's Finance Department or on the district's Business Webpage and the State Comptroller's Website. The sales tax exemption does not apply to out-of-state travel. All receipts must be itemized.
- 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. Each traveler shall submit a travel voucher for their portion of the lodging costs. 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.
- To avoid cancellation fees, the employee is responsible for notifying the hotel prior to the cancellation deadline. If the hotel is not notified by the required deadline, the employee may be required to pay any fees assessed by the hotel.
- The District will **not** reimburse hotel charges for internet connection fees unless the employee receives prior approval from the supervisor or budget manager. **Expenses for movies and other personal charges will not be reimbursed.**
- Internet charges at a lodging facility shall be allowable only for Cabinet members to support email, TxEIS or other work-related access. Internet charges for other staff members shall be subject to pre-approval on the Travel Authorization on a case-by-case basis.

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- 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 with the Travel Settlement Form within 5 days after the travel event.
- If we have multiple employees attending the same conference, sharing a room is helpful and preferred when at all possible

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.
- 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.
- All flights shall be purchased by the Business Office for the most economical route and schedule to meet the travel plans. Travelers shall submit their travel preferences to their respective supervisor for approval – the campus or department shall forward the preferences to the Business Office.
- All flights shall be purchased through Southwest Airlines (SWA) unless there is no flight service to the destination. Travelers on a SWA flight are allowed to check up to two (2) bags, limited to no more than 50 pounds each at no additional charge. Luggage charges for a third (3rd) bag shall not be allowable with district funds.
- For all flights, other than SWA, luggage charges, if any, shall be limited the fees for two (2) bags, up to 50 pounds per bag.
- A rental car at the event location shall be allowable if it is the most economical method to access the event location.
- All flight 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, to fly on Friday shall be paid by the traveler.
- Advance planning is crucial when requesting air travel, attach the preferred flight information and estimated charges to the Travel Authorization form.
- All employees must have valid photo identification when traveling. The name on the plane ticket must match the name on the driver's license or valid identification card. Tickets are electronic and non-transferable, so please notify the Business Office prior to the date of travel if a trip is cancelled. An increase in a fare, due to an employee changing travel plans without supervisor approval, could result in the employee absorbing any additional fees charged to the District.
- All employees must use the lowest fare available. Whenever possible, business travel should be planned to take advantage of advance purchase discounts and group fares. The lowest fare routing must be used when available—not more than one stop each way and layover time not to exceed two hours.
- The appropriate travel account (6411 or 6412) to be charged has sufficient funds at the time tickets are requested. Tickets are charged to the District credit card; so depending on the billing cycle, budget

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accounts will be charged immediately from the date of purchase. Only District employees tickets will be charged on the school credit cards.

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. 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 flight, 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, i.e. the current rate is \$.575 per mile.
- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if any, for travel in a district-owned vehicle. Travelers shall be required to submit any fuel receipts for travel in a personal vehicle.
- The District has chosen the Mapquest mapping system to document mileage reimbursements. A Mapquest 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 Travel Authorization form.
- 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.

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 not be allowable if the traveler can reach the travel destination via taxi or shuttle at a lower cost.
- 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.
- If requesting the use of a rental car, the cost of the vehicle shall be submitted on the Travel Authorization form under the travel section. The estimated cost should include the rental fee and fueling costs.
- A check will be issued to the traveler for the approved, estimated rental car expense as reflected on the Travel Authorization form.
- Rental car costs shall be paid with an employee credit card at the time of arrival and/or departure based on the rental car company's charging policy. Travelers will be reimbursed for the amount charged at the rental company.
- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if any, for travel in a rental car.
- 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 reimbursed if incurred for a business reason such as both drivers are district employees on travel status.

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- Detailed rental car and fuel receipts must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Settlement Form within 5 days after the travel event.
- To avoid higher gas rates charged by the rental companies, the employee should fill the gas tank before returning the rental car. Also, be sure to examine the invoice for accuracy before leaving the rental office. Reimbursement for rental car expenses will occur when expenses are submitted with an itemized receipt.
- Do not sign for additional insurance.

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 with the Travel Settlement Form within 5 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.
- Toll receipts, as appropriate, must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Settlement Form within 5 days after the travel event. Toll charges while in a district-owned vehicle are forwarded to the district by the toll authority.

Transportation – Taxi, Shuttle, etc.

- Taxi and shuttle costs shall be allowable for all in-state and out-of-state travel events, as applicable, if the traveler is on travel status.
- Taxi and shuttle tips may be paid at the traveler's discretion, but will not be allowable travel costs for reimbursement or payment with any district funds.

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.
- The authorized travel expenses shall be supported by the registration form and Schedule of Events. The documentation shall include the start and end dates of the event, event location and registration fee.
- A copy of the registration form and Schedule of Events shall be submitted with the Travel Authorization Form.

Student Travel

Procedures for travel arrangements for student travel are the same as for FHISD employees, with the exception that a signed Medical Release Form for each student is required. Please note that the travel form for employees traveling with students is the same as that of those traveling without students. To make travel arrangements the following information is required: 1.) student name(s) (as it appears on student ID, driver's license, or passport),

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2.) Chaperone/sponsor name(s), 3.) Budget code to be used for expenses, 4.) Medical Release Forms, and 5.) approved Travel Request Form.

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)
- 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 subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.