

TRAVEL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

APPROVAL FOR TRAVEL

- 1) Employees should check with the Superintendent's Office (Rosalind Washington) for the availability of a district-owned vehicle before using their own personal vehicles to travel for official school business. If a Snook ISD vehicle is not available, an employee may use his/her personal vehicle and submit a MapQuest or Google mileage report for reimbursement provided that there are available budget funds.
- 2) Prior approval for all overnight travel, including the scheduling of substitutes while the employee is traveling, and pre-registration fees shall be obtained from the employee's direct supervisor before any expenses are incurred and before any purchase orders, commitments, etc. can be made; without prior approval, no payments/reimbursements will be issued.
- 3) The Principal/Director must ensure sufficient funds are available in the travel budget account before travel is approved.
- 4) Expenses that may be approved are lodging, meals, transportation, parking, and registration. Purchase orders must be issued in advance for all travel expenses, including hotel costs, to avoid duplicate payments since costs may be significant.
- 5) Expenses **NOT** allowed include banquets, charitable/conference tournaments, sales tax, personal hotel expenses (such as dry cleaning) and hospitality related expenses.
- 6) If the conference includes a breakfast or working lunch that is provided as part of the conference fee, do not include a meal allowance reimbursement on the purchase order.
- 7) Overnight hotel stays are generally not allowable for towns or cities within a 50-mile radius of Snook unless there are extenuating circumstances that should be considered.
- 8) Out-of-State travel requires Superintendent approval prior to departure.

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

- 1) The District may pay for employee travel expenses that are reasonable and necessary when the travel clearly involves official District business including authorized staff development.
- 2) Travel expenses will be reimbursed **ONLY** when submitted on the Travel Report forms which are located on the Snook ISD website and in the Business Office, and approved and signed by the Principal/Director. It shall be the responsibility of the employee requesting reimbursement and the employee approving the travel to insure that the travel is in accordance with the preceding guidelines.

- 3) An employee's travel expense reimbursement shall not exceed the amount of funds available in the current budget for such travel.
- 4) The maximum reimbursement for travel expenses is the amount indicated on the Request/Approval for Travel form.
- 5) If there are funds available in a local travel account, up to a 15% restaurant gratuity is reimbursable. If a large group of employees are traveling together, a gratuity may be required by a restaurant which is in excess of the 15% guideline. If the gratuity is automatically added by the restaurant, the gratuity will be allowed.
- 6) Request for reimbursements will be processed along with all other purchase orders on a first come first served basis. As with other payments that are processed, travel reimbursements may take 1 to 2 weeks to complete. Please note that the entire budget account and all approval signatures must be on the expense report before the reimbursement process will begin.
- 7) As a general rule, the District will reimburse travel expenditures after the trip has occurred and the proper documentation has been submitted, however, advanced payment for travel is available when the proper documentation is submitted in a timely manner (at least one week before the employee is scheduled to leave).
- 8) Employees who are unable to attend a conference that has been paid for by the District must have proof of a medical emergency or similar unavoidable situation otherwise they will be required to reimburse the District for any fees that cannot be refunded. Employees are responsible for canceling registrations in advance and notifying their supervisor and the Business Office in a timely manner if they are unable to attend.
- 9) Any travel advances for which receipts are not received in the Business within 10 business days of the last day of the trip will be payroll deducted on the next payday. The employee's authorization for payroll deduction is in the travel documents.
- 10) ALL SUMMER TRAVEL FOR WHICH AN EMPLOYEE INTENDS TO BE REIMBURSED MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE BUSINESS OFFICE NO LATER THAN AUGUST 15TH TO ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME FOR THE EXPENSES TO BE POSTED BEFORE THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR WHICH OCCURS ON AUGUST 31ST. FAILURE TO SUBMIT THE PROPER DOCUMENTATION BY THIS DEADLINE WILL RESULT IN TRAVEL EXPENSES NOT BEING REIMBURSED.

Remember: Any trips taken without proper and prior approval will be at the employee's own expense.

MILEAGE

The mileage reimbursement rate shall be the same as the Texas State Comptroller's approved rate which can be found at <https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/texttravel/rates/current.php>

- 1) The mileage reimbursement rate listed at the Comptroller’s website is effective for all state and federal grants.
- 2) If commercial transportation is used, reimbursement shall be made for actual expenses and a receipt is **REQUIRED**. Do not sign up for additional insurance when renting a vehicle as the district’s insurance covers automobile rentals.
- 3) Mileage will not be paid for travel between the employee’s personal residence and Snook ISD. When traveling to places other than Snook ISD, mileage shall be computed from Snook ISD or from the employee’s residence (whichever is **less**) to the destination. Additionally, **mileage incurred for trips between a hotel and a convention or conference site, restaurant, etc. while at the destination will be excluded from reimbursement calculations; only city to city travel will be reimbursed.**
- 4) Coordination of travel must occur when two or more District employees travel on the same dates with the same itinerary to conduct the same official District business. **Be sure to carpool whenever possible.**
- 5) The Business Office may verify mileage and modify a Travel Expense Report form accordingly when mileage is deemed excessive, unreasonable, or inaccurate.

MEALS

Overnight

Meals for **OVERNIGHT** stays will be reimbursed at a maximum rate of \$55.00 per day per employee; itemized receipts are NOT required. The employee must have incurred the expense in order to be reimbursed. The current maximum meal allowances are:

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Breakfast | \$12.00 |
| Lunch | \$18.00 |
| Dinner | \$25.00 |

The allowance will be reduced for partial travel days. Please note the following demarcations that are in effect to determine for which meal(s) an employee is entitled to receive reimbursement based on the departure and arrival times for the overnight trip.

A general rule of thumb is as follows: **If it is reasonable and logical for an employee to eat a meal BEFORE leaving for or AFTER returning from a work-related trip, then the meal is NOT reimbursable.**

| DEPARTURE TIME (from home or District) | MEALS TO BE REIMBURSED |
|---|--------------------------|
| before 8:00 a.m. | breakfast, lunch, dinner |
| after 8:00 a.m. and before noon | lunch and dinner only |
| after noon | dinner only |

| ARRIVAL TIME (at home or District) | MEALS TO BE REIMBURSED |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| before 11:00 a.m. | breakfast only |
| after 11:00 a.m. and before 5:00 p.m. | breakfast and lunch only |
| after 5:00 p.m. | breakfast, lunch, dinner |

- 1) When a District employee requests cash for student meals in advance, he/she must provide a list of student names, dates of meals, and number of meals to be purchased before a check will be issued. Upon return from the trip, a student signature sheet showing that the student has received cash for his/her meals must be submitted. The signature sheet must have the dollar amount per student, the student's printed name, and the student's signature to acknowledging receipt of the funds.
- 2) Employees must indicate on the travel report form if there was an overnight stay. The reimbursement request must be consistent with the window of leave and return times stated on the travel report.
- 3) Gratuities are not allowed when using TEA grant funds (Funds 200-459). A local fund account code must be used if requesting reimbursement.
- 4) For cash meal allowances provided to students at UIL events or similar events, a log of student signatures indicating receipt of the cash allowance is sufficient for a "receipt". No other receipts are required. The student signature log must be sent to the Business Office within 10 calendar days and will be attached to the check and other supporting documentation.

Non-Overnight

- 1) Employees may make a claim for reimbursement of meals while away from the District on official school business even when an overnight stay is not necessary (one day only). To claim such a reimbursement, the employee must provide to the Business Office originals or legible copies of itemized restaurant receipts (a credit card receipt showing only a total charge is **NOT** an itemized receipt); *note that the District does not reimburse sales tax*. Additionally, the receipts submitted must have the date and time of the sale printed or

handwritten on them so that each meal can be identified as breakfast, lunch, or dinner. A different per meal maximum rate applies to non-overnight trips.

The following per meal maximum rates apply to non-overnight trips:

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Breakfast | \$8.00 |
| Lunch | \$12.00 |
| Dinner | \$16.00 |

2) In most cases, employees will not be reimbursed for breakfast nor dinner for a non-overnight trip; if there are extenuating circumstances, the employee’s supervisor will make a determination regarding reimbursement of breakfast and/or dinner on a non-overnight trip.

3) **IMPORTANT NOTE: All meal reimbursements made for non-overnight trips will be paid through the payroll system as supplemental pay on the employee’s regular monthly check.** This means that regular payroll taxes will be applied to the non-overnight reimbursement amount just as if the employee were being paid for working additional hours for extra pay (per IRS guidelines). Payment of non-overnight meal reimbursements will take place only twice per fiscal year. For non-overnight meal reimbursements incurred during the months of September through December, reimbursement will be paid on the January paycheck; for non-overnight meal reimbursements incurred during the months of January through May, reimbursement will be paid on the June paycheck.

4) **IMPORTANT NOTE: If an employee is claiming meal reimbursement from a grant fund, ALL RECEIPTS MUST BE SUBMITTED AND ONLY THE ACTUAL EXPENDITURES MAY BE REIMBURSED TO THE EMPLOYEE EVEN IF THE TRIP IS OVERNIGHT.**

LODGING

1) ***A PURCHASE ORDER WILL BE ISSUED FOR LODGING EXPENSES.*** An employee needing to reserve funds for lodging expenses should submit a written request to his/her direct supervisor and the Chief Financial Officer. Personal credit cards should not be used when reserving lodging that will be paid with district funds. District credit cards may only be checked out by an administrator (Assistant Principal, Principal, Coordinator, or Director); this will require administrator information and signature. Credit cards will be checked out from the Chief Financial Officer and returned to the Chief Financial Officer. Hotel reservations may be initially booked using a district credit card and “held,” however, the Business Office should issue a check for the amount required for the hotel stay. It is the responsibility of the employee to make accommodations in advance, such that the business office has enough time to process the request and issue a check to the hotel. The district is a tax-exempt entity and will not pay state sales tax for a hotel stay.

- 2) Itemized lodging receipts are required and must be submitted to Accounts Payable when the trip is complete. Additional documentation should be submitted that shows the reason for hotel stay; this may include a conference badge, professional development certificate, or agenda. Any refunds issued should be documented and submitted to the Business Office in the form of an attachment to the itemized lodging receipt.
- 3) Lodging reimbursement or direct payment by the District will be limited to rates established by the Texas State Comptroller. Maximum rates can be found at the following link:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120>

Lodging amounts that exceed the Comptroller’s allowance will not be reimbursed to the employee nor charged directly to the District’s credit card. In the case of grant funded lodging expenses, please note that if the costs exceeds \$85 per night per person, then the remaining cost, up to the maximum allowed by the Comptroller, must be charged to a non-grant fund (1XX) code that has budgeted funds available.

- 4) The employee must take a hotel occupancy tax exempt form to the hotel/motel to obtain credit for the state sales tax. The form is included on the District’s website and in the Business Office. The district will not directly pay or reimburse state sales tax at hotels.

FORMS

- 1) When claiming reimbursements for travel related expenses, there are three different forms that can be completed. If only mileage reimbursement is being requested, there is a form entitled “Snook ISD Travel Reimbursement Voucher” which should be completed. If, however, an employee needs to claim reimbursement for mileage in addition to any other type of travel expense, then either the “SNOOK ISD EMPLOYEE EXPENSE REPORT FOR OVERNIGHT TRAVEL” or the “SNOOK ISD EMPLOYEE EXPENSE REPORT FOR NON-OVERNIGHT TRAVEL” should be completed instead. A sample of each one-page form can be found on the District’s website, in the employee handbook, or obtained from the Business Office; please make copies to submit as necessary.
- 2) When claiming reimbursements other than mileage alone, please use one of the newly revised expense report forms; the newest revisions can be found on the Business & Finance webpage of the district’s website or in the Business Office.

PARKING/PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- 1) A receipt or itemized statement is required for parking and toll fees when available.
- 2) Public transportation is approved for use when feasible.
- 3) The district may reimburse an employee for the actual cost of transportation by bus or taxi as long as budgeted funds are available.

- 4) If two or more employees share a taxi, only the employee who pays the fare may be reimbursed for that expense. Receipts are required and must show the date, fare charge, the name of the transportation company and which employees shared the taxi.
- 5) Employees are expected to use the most economical means of transportation available.

RECONCILIATION OF TRAVEL ADVANCES OR REQUESTS

All travel requests for reimbursement of travel expenses will be reconciled by the Chief Financial Officer, so as to ensure consistent application of all administrative travel procedures, policies, or guidelines.

UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Unallowable expenses, regardless of whether they are incurred while conducting official District business or not, include:

- Any expense incurred by family members or other non-district employees (The non-employee is required to pay Snook ISD, in advance, for their proportionate share of the cost of the expenses).
- Personal expenses
- Dry cleaning and/or laundry
- Alcoholic beverage charges
- Movie charges
- Personal entertainment
- Tips and gratuities when using TEA grant funds (Funds 200-459)
- State sales tax

****A DISTRICT EMPLOYEE SHALL ENSURE THAT HIS OR HER TRAVEL COMPLIES WITH THESE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES. FAILURE TO ADHERE TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES WILL RESULT IN DELAYED REIMBURSEMENT OR REJECTION OF THE EMPLOYEE'S REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST.***