

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

- Employees and board members will be reimbursed for travel expenses in the performance of official duties and while in attendance at meetings and conferences.
- Prudent judgment is expected when travel costs are incurred.
- All travel is subject to limitations that may be imposed by the superintendent.
- The superintendent may grant an exception to these procedures on a case by case basis.
- Employees should carefully review the travel reimbursements rules so they do not inadvertently incur costs that will not be reimbursed.
- These rules apply to all travel expense reimbursements charged to the General, ASB, and other funds and grants.

I. TRAVEL REQUESTS & TRAVEL STATUS

A. Travel within Washington, Portland Oregon, Northern Idaho, and Southwest British Columbia must be approved by an administrator with the appropriate budgetary authority.

B. Travel outside of Washington, Portland Oregon, Northern Idaho, and Southwest British Columbia:

1. Must be approved by the superintendent and the board of directors.
2. A written request approved by the administrator with the applicable budgetary and/or supervisory authority must be submitted to the superintendent and receive his/her approval in sufficient time to allow the board of directors to take action on the request prior to commencement of travel. The superintendent may approve travel in an emergency situation or under extraordinary circumstances.

C. Travel Status

An employee is in “travel status” when the employee is outside of the Manson School District area and the city of personal residence for an approved trip. Employees are not reimbursed for daily commuting costs to the district.

II. PERSONAL VEHICLE REIMBURSEMENT

Employees will receive reimbursement, if approved in advance, at the mileage rate approved by the Office of Financial Management for use of their vehicle while traveling in performance of their duties. (See Appendix A for current rate)

III. MEALS

A. Reimbursement for meals will be paid on a per diem or set per-meal amount. (See Appendix A for meal rates)

B. To qualify for meal reimbursement, an employee must be in “travel status” during the district’s established meal period of: Breakfast – 6:30 a.m.; Lunch – 12:00 p.m.; and Dinner 6:30 p.m. and actually incurred meal expenses.

EXAMPLE: if an employee has an 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. meeting at the North Central ESD, no meals would be reimbursed. In normal weather travel would have begun from the district at 7:00 a.m. and ended by 11:00 a.m. and travel would not have spanned over a mealtime.

EXAMPLE: if an employee has an 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. meeting in Moses Lake, leaves Manson at 6:00 a.m. and returns to Manson at 7:00 p.m., reimbursement would be granted for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

C. Employees may not claim reimbursement for meals provided through the conference fee itself.

D. Local (i.e. non-travel status) meal reimbursement or local meal direct billings to the district may be approved by an administrator with appropriate budgetary authority, only if official and necessary business is being conducted during the course of the meal.

E. Reimbursement for meals when no overnight stay is required will be subject to federal withholding tax and processed through the payroll office. Meal cost when overnight stay is required will not be taxed and processed through the accounts payable office.

IV. LODGING

- A. Lodging costs will be paid for by the district when an employee is in travel status later than 9:00 p.m. or when participation in the conference, or meeting would require travel to begin prior to 5:30 a.m.

EXAMPLE: An employee, who lives in Manson, is attending a two-day conference at the North Central ESD. The conference runs from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Lodging would not be paid for by the district because travel status would have begun at 7:00 a.m. and ended at 6:00 p.m.

EXAMPLE: The same employee attends a two-day conference at the North Central ESD. The conference runs from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. the first day and runs from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the second day. The district would pay for lodging costs the first day, but not for the second.

- B. Maximum lodging costs are computed according to the following hierarchy;

1. Maximum Benefit Rule

- a. If the employee is attending a convention, conference or training session away from both the district and residence, and in order to obtain the maximum benefit from attendance, the employee is authorized to stay at the commercial lodging facility where the convention, conference or training session is occurring or in other facilities reserved by the convention or conference.
- b. If the commercial lodging facility described in IV B.1.a is full, then the employee is authorized to stay at a hotel of similar cost in the vicinity of the full hotel.

2. Excessive Commuting Costs Rule

If transportation costs to commute to and from a less expensive lodging facility consume most or all of the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging, the lodging expenses published by the Office of Financial Management (examples listed in the appendix) may be exceeded. The employee will need to substantiate that the Office of Financial Management rate plus the commuting costs would be more than the higher cost hotel selected.

3. If the above rules do not apply, payment for lodging is limited to the rates published by the Office of Financial Management. Costs

incurred in the excess of these rates will be the personal responsibility of the employee. (See Appendix A for allowable lodging amounts)

- C. The building secretary will prepare a "Travel Worksheet" for travel costs including registration, lodging, and meals and obtain signatures from the administrator with the applicable budgetary authority. If the lodging costs exceed the Office of Financial Management rate, the reason for the high cost will be explained in accordance with the Maximum Benefit Rule, the Excessive Commuting Cost Rule, or other unique circumstances for which the superintendent is being asked to allow an exception. The Travel Worksheet will be sent to the district office for processing.
- D. After the purchase order is approved by the district office, the employee will hand-carry a copy to the hotel and the original purchase order will be faxed or mailed to the hotel as well. The hotel will then bill the district.
- E. If a hotel will not accept a purchase order, the district will set up a direct bill to the district Visa card and the employee will check-out the visa card with an authorization letter for use. Only lodging is an allowable charge on the school credit card, unless otherwise authorized.
- F. Employees are personally responsible for any additional charges (such as food, movie fee, etc.) to a room.
- G. Standard practice would be to assign employees to share a room, if possible.
- H. Families are permitted to travel with an employee to the extent that the district incurs no additional cost or if it necessitates reserving an additional room. Additional room costs will be the employee's responsibility.

V. SUBMISSION OF TRAVEL EXPENSE VOUCHER

- A. Travel claims will not be reimbursed without a properly completed and signed Travel Expense Voucher which is given to the employee in the travel packet. (See Appendix B for a copy of the Travel Expense Voucher)
- B. Travel Expense Vouchers are due in the business office within 30 days of completion of a trip. If a travel Advance has been issued, the Travel Expense Voucher is due within 10 days of the completion of the trip. (See Travel Advance section).
- C. Receipts for sundry expenses (parking, transit fees, taxi fees, ferry and bridge tolls and telephone calls) in excess of \$10 must be attached to the Travel Expense Voucher when claiming reimbursements for these

expenditure's. All sundry expenses must be listed and explained in the "Detail of Other Expenses" section of the Travel Expense Voucher.

- D. For meals claimed at the per diem rate, receipts are not required. Any tips paid to the restaurant personnel are part of the per diem and are not subject to additional reimbursement.
- E. Meals and lodgings costs being billed directly to the district are not to be included on the Travel Expense voucher.
- F. The normal accounts payable cycle will provide for payment at the end of the month for Travel Expense Vouchers submitted to the business office by the 15th of the month. Vouchers received after the 15th will be paid at the end of the following month.
- G. Procedures for reimbursing board member are essentially the same as the procedures for staff members.
- H. See Section VII Credit Cards for additional information when district credit cards are used for travel expense.

VI. ADVANCE TRAVEL EXPENSE AND REGULATIONS

Employees and board members traveling on official business may request a travel advance to defray the anticipated reimbursable expense. Advances are not permitted for mileage costs related to a private vehicle. Since lodging costs are direct billed in most cases, advances will not typically be needed for lodging. **The Revised Code of Washington outlines strict requirements regarding travel advance:** advances will be based on reasonable estimates, a Travel Expense Voucher must be submitted to settle a travel advance within 10 days of returning from the trip, the district must charge 10% per annum interest on any advances outstanding for more than 30 days after returning from the trip, when signing an Advance Travel request the employee is granting to the district, authority to make a payroll deduction (plus the 10% per annum interest) for any travel advance that is outstanding for more than 60 days and no advance will be issued to an employee who has an outstanding advance or who has defaulted on a prior advance. **Travel advances for less than \$50 will not be issued.** If the Travel Expense Voucher exceeds the Travel Advance, a reimbursement for the excess will be issued. If the Travel Advance exceeds the Travel Expense Voucher, the employee must attach a personal check to repay the excess advance.

VII. CREDIT CARDS

- A. Manson School District Board of Directors Visa Card

1. The Manson School Board has been issued two VISA charge cards for use by board members and/or staff members traveling on official business of the district.
2. When not in use, the Board VISA's must be locked in the District safe. The card must be signed out by a staff/board member prior to use and signed back in upon completion of the trip.

B. Extra-Curricular Visa Card

1. Manson School district has been issued two VISA charge cards to be used for extra-curricular activities for staff and students travel expenses.
2. When not in use, charge cards will be kept locked in the district office safe.

- C. The revised Code of Washington outlines strict guidelines regarding district issued credit cards: credit cards are for official travel purposes only (i.e., no personal charges, no supplies/equipment purchase for the district, unless approved by the superintendent).

VIII. REPORT OF ACCIDENTS

Whenever an employee is involved in a traffic accident while representing the Manson School District, the employee must file a written report with the superintendent or business manager within 24 hours and report the accident with the appropriate enforcement agency.

IX. AIR TRAVEL

- A. Air travel will be arranged through the superintendent's administrative assistant with an approved "Travel Worksheet." All purchase orders for airfare will be submitted for approval to the superintendent.
- B. In the event of emergency travel and subject to superintendent approval, the district will reimburse employees for airfare in connection with official travel.