

PAMPA

PAMPA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

EMPLOYEE TRAVEL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Note: PISD Board Policy DEE (LOCAL) is incorporated herein by reference.

The district recognizes that employees who travel to represent the District's business interests sacrifice the comforts of home and some of their personal time. In return, the District makes an effort to provide comfortable and secure accommodation for lodging, meals, and travel for employees. However, these items are not intended to be prerequisite and the District reserves the right to deny reimbursement for expenses that are considered lavish, extravagant or inappropriate. The District shall ensure that each travel arrangement is the most cost-effective considering all relevant circumstances. The District Travel Clerk will make all arrangements with assistance from campus/department secretaries.

A. REQUESTS

1. Staff and Student travel requests should be completed on the Staff Travel Form at least 30 calendar days prior to departure. This will allow time for arrangements to be made and any prepayments to be processed and mailed.
2. A request to travel must first be submitted to the employee's principal or supervisor and then, if required, to the appropriate program director for approval and to verify budget availability. The supervisor or program director will then send the request to the Superintendent for final approval.
3. An EduLog request should be submitted to use a school vehicle. You will receive an approval for the school vehicle use. Staff should confirm vehicle with transportation department three days before travel date.
4. The Superintendent's approval is required **before** any travel arrangements or reservations are made. The travel office will proceed with arranging travel and reservations with the Superintendents' signature.
5. The travel request should include all information at the top of the Travel Request Form, the completed Estimated Costs column, as well as a **copy of a conference or workshop brochure, preferred way of travel, lodging preference and all documentation**. The request will be returned to the campus or department if these items are not included.
6. The employee will receive an approved copy of the Staff Travel Form along with an itinerary from the travel clerk after completion of arrangements.

B. Allowable Expenses

Advances for meals, mileage and airport parking will be allowed. The district will prepay transportation costs, lodging costs, car rental, fees and tuition, thus eliminating the need to carry large amounts of cash for these items.

C. Transportation

1. School Vehicle - It is preferred that a school vehicle be used if one is available. If a school vehicle is available and is not used, there will be no reimbursement without Superintendent approval. Request for school vehicles are done through EduLog and the confirmation email must be forwarded to the district travel clerk. Confirm vehicle availability with transportation department three days prior to travel. School vehicle usage will be charged back to a campus/department. Charges for usage: \$25.00 trip charge plus \$.22 per mile.
2. Airline - Airline travel reservations will be made by the district travel clerk. All travel will be paid as leaving from and returning to Amarillo International Airport. Employees that need alternate routes for personal reasons will reimburse the district for any extra cost. **Changes in flight reservations while traveling, for the employee's convenience, will be reimbursed to the district by the employee or should be paid by the employee at the time of the change.**

If reservations are not used, the employee is responsible for calling the travel coordinator to cancel reservations or directly to the airline if not during regular office hours. The district will not be responsible for an employee failing to cancel any reservations not used.

Pampa ISD has a direct billing arrangement with **Airport Valet Parking**, 10800 Airport Blvd., Amarillo, Texas. Employees must present a valid school identification badge. The receipt for parking should be submitted with travel receipts.

3. Personal Vehicle - Employees using a privately owned vehicle shall be reimbursed at the current state rate per mile. An electronic mapping source, i.e. MapQuest, or an odometer reading will be used to determine the distance between points of departure and arrival. An electronic map will be required for a travel advance, and the odometer reading will be reimbursed after travel. Reimbursement will not be authorized for mileage deemed to be excessive. If an employee desires to drive to a destination rather than fly, the district will advance or reimburse based upon the least expensive travel.
4. Multiple Travelers - If more than one employee from the district is traveling to the same event by personal conveyance, reimbursement for mileage at the rate specified shall be limited to one vehicle for every four employees attending the event. Employees desiring to take their own vehicle will not automatically be reimbursed

5. Ground Transportation - Employees will be allowed reasonable cost of local transportation by taxi, subway, street car or other public carrier from an airport and from lodging accommodations to business appointments and return. A receipt will be necessary. Expenses for non-business travel will be at the employee's expense.
6. Rental Vehicle - When it is more economical for an employee or group to use a rental vehicle, Pampa ISD has a direct bill agreement with Enterprise Car Rental, The travel clerk will make reservations. Mileage in Texas is unlimited and the vehicle must be returned with a full tank of gas. District vehicle insurance will cover the vehicle. Employees adding insurance coverage, an extra driver – not an employee of the district, extra time for non-business use, or electing to purchase gas from the rental company will be required to reimburse the district for those costs.

If reservations are not used, the employee is responsible for calling the travel coordinator to cancel reservations. The district will not be responsible for an employee failing to cancel any reservations not used.

7. Toll Roads - From time to time an employee traveling may encounter a toll road. If there is an actual toll-booth, please pay and make sure you get a receipt. Turn this in to your secretary upon your return and you will be reimbursed. There are also toll roads that just take a picture of your car tag and a billing is automatically generated. If you are in a rental vehicle, the billing will be sent to your home address. Please send us your billing and proof of payment and you will be reimbursed. Please note on your travel form if you expect a toll bill.

D. Hotel

Lodging for employees will be reimbursed when they stay at a “commercial lodging establishment”*. State Rate should always be requested. The state travel card and a Pampa ISD ID badge might be necessary when checking in.

The reimbursement rate should not exceed the lodging rate based on federal travel regulations issued by The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Sharing accommodations to stay at a conference hotel is encouraged. Employees requesting a single room when traveling with a group, should find a less expensive hotel, or reimburse the district for the extra cost. When traveling alone, special accommodations must be approved by the superintendent and the travel office using the Request to Increase Maximum Lodging Rate Form and paid from local funds only.

Travel within the State of Texas is exempt from state sales tax upon the presentation of a valid **Hotel Occupancy Sales Tax Exemption** form. (The travel packet will include this form.) Local, City and Federal fees and taxes will be reimbursed. These are not considered part of the lodging rate. If your hotel charges for parking, you will need to give the **Sales Tax Exemption Form** to the hotel, so no sales tax will be charged on the parking. (The travel packet will include this form.)

If reservations are not used, the employee is responsible for calling the travel coordinator to cancel reservations or directly to the hotel if not during regular office hours. The district will not be responsible for an employee failing to cancel any reservations not used.

* **COMMERCIAL LODGING ESTABLISHMENT** means: (1) a motel, hotel, inn, apartment, house, or similar establishment that provides lodging to the public for pay; or (2) a person or establishment that provides lodging for pay that the comptroller determines to have a sufficient number of the characteristics of a commercial lodging establishment for the purposes of the Travel Regulations Act. The term includes lodging provided by (1) a governmental entity on property controlled by that entity; or (2) a religious organization on property controlled by that organization; or (3) a private educational institution on property controlled by that institution.

E. Meals

Employees will be advanced meal money according to the following chart only when overnight travel is required for school business. No taxes, tips or gratuities may be paid by the district. Meals may be paid by one of two methods:

- (1) Request a cash advance for meal allowance. When using this method, fill in the amount required for meals in the Request column and in the Travel Advance column. A Certification that advance meal money was spent on allowable expenses or itemized receipts are required as documentation.
- (2) Charge meals to the district on the Travel Card. When using this method, fill in the amount required for meals in the request column and write "Travel Card" in the travel advance column. **Itemized detailed receipts** are required as documentation.

The following allowance is available on the day of departure and/or return.

<u>Leave at or Before</u>	<u>Meal Allowance</u>
7:00 a.m.	All Meals (\$36.00)
11:00 a.m.	Lunch & Dinner (\$28.00)
5:00 p.m.	Dinner (\$18.00)
<u>Return at or After</u>	
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast (\$8.00)
1:00 p.m.	Breakfast & Lunch (\$18.00)
6:00 p.m.	All Meals (\$36.00)

The Internal Revenue Service treats any meals paid, when overnight travel is not required, as taxable compensation to the employee.

Employees should not use their travel card to pay for meals for another person. Others traveling with them should use their advance meal money or their own travel card.

F. Incidentals

Telephone Calls and Internet Connection Fees - Employees will be allowed expenses incurred for telephone calls and internet connection fees made in connection with official school district business. These costs must be supported by documentation

identifying the purpose of the calls. Most hotels offering internet connections base this on a 24 hour billing. Employees should try to use the internet with this in mind and use it at the beginning and again before the end of the 24 hour billing period. Many hotels have the wireless connection available in the lobby area once you have set up your service. This would then allow other employees traveling together to share in the one connection and fee.

G. Unallowable Expenses

In general, non-reimbursable expenses are those that are:

1. Not allowed by state or federal laws.
2. Not directly related to the purpose of the trip.
3. Not ordinary and necessary.

Examples of some non-reimbursable expenses are listed below:

1. State sales tax. School districts are exempt from this tax. All employees or sponsors should obtain an exemption certificate and present when purchasing products or services.
2. Tips and gratuities
3. Entertainment expenses such as movies, play tickets, tour fee, etc.
4. Alcoholic beverages
5. Personal items
6. Personal telephone calls
7. Room Service, Valet Parking or Service to Car
8. Fuel or insurance purchased from Car Rental Agency
9. Meals when **included** with the conference or workshop

H . Traveler's Responsibility

If reservations (airline, rail, lodging, or car rental) are not used, the employee is responsible for calling the travel coordinator to cancel reservations or directly to the airline and/or hotel if not during regular office hours. The district will not be responsible for any employee failing to cancel any reservations not used.

Employees traveling on school business, accompanied by family members, are required to pay any extra cost incurred. Separate rooms, double occupancy, extended stay, or the cost of upgraded vehicles to accommodate family will be reimbursed to the district, also. Please consult with the Travel Clerk before these costs are incurred.

H. DOCUMENTATION:

Itemized receipts along with the completed Staff Travel Form - Actual Cost column must be turned in to the campus/department secretary within (5) five business days after the trip. Itemized detailed receipts are required for all travel expenses, except certified meal expenses. If no meal receipts are returned, the employee's signature is required to certify that meal money advanced was spent on allowable expenses. The employee is responsible for proving to the IRS that the compensation is a reimbursement of expenses.

This form will be returned to the employee if any discrepancy or unsupported or unreasonable costs are identified. Employees will be required to refund any allowance without an itemized detailed receipt, except for meals.

The business office will issue a reimbursement check to the employee for their out-of-pocket expenses within 14 business days, or less, after receipt of reimbursement request. Reimbursement to employee will not be made until all documentation is submitted.

If an employee receives a cash advance for a trip, and actual expenses are less than the amount advanced, the employee shall turn in the excess to the campus/department secretary within (5) five business days upon return along with the completed Staff Travel Form – Actual Cost column.

**SUMMARY OF RATES--Refer to the Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates (for hotel rates) ⁽¹⁾. For cities not listed, apply the rate of the county in which the city is located ⁽²⁾. If the county is not listed, the rates are as follows:

- Lodging in-state: Up to \$85/night
- Meals in-state: Up to \$36/day

Out-of-State Lodging: Refer to the Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates. For areas not listed, use the rate for the nearest city. When locating the nearest city, it is permissible to cross state lines.

(1) http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_BASIC&contentId=17943
(Domestic Per Diem rates)

(2) www.naco.org (national association of counties)

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