



# St. Louis Board of Education Travel Policy

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## PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY:

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for authorization of travel by St. Louis Board of Education employees, and Board Members who may be required to travel in fulfilling their official duties or in attending trainings, seminars, conferences, or other professional or educational activities benefiting the District.

When an individual has occasion to travel on behalf and for the benefit of the District, the employee is expected to exercise good judgement in managing travel costs and make every effort to ensure that the cost of travel arrangements is the most economical available. The district is tax exempt and will not pay Missouri sales or use tax to any vendor or reimburse an employee or Board member for Missouri sales or use tax.

The following rules will apply to district employees unless the Superintendent or designee determines that unusual circumstances justify an exception. Board members will follow this policy as well unless the Board or the Board president determines that unusual circumstances justify an exception. All exceptions will be documented in writing for auditing purposes.

## GENERAL POLICY INFORMATION:

It is the general intent of the St. Louis Board of Education (District) to fund or reimburse employees, officials, or agents for actual travel expenses which are approved through the District travel request process. Travel expenses related to allocated and budgeted allowances will be reimbursed up to the amount of the budget allotment. Reimbursements enumerated in this policy are intended to pay for job-related employee, official, or Board Member expenses only.

### THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

- Conferences, conventions, and District business events which charge registration fees and are held within the District, Region, State, and the 48 contiguous United States.
  - If a conference is held outside of the 48 contiguous United States, approval from the Superintendent is necessary to travel.
- All employees and Board members to conferences, conventions, and travel undertaken for execution of District business. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Travel requiring an overnight stay
  - Conventions and conferences when no overnight stay is required; and
  - Events held within the District boundaries which are conducted by a person or entity other than the District.

When grant funds are used for travel, this district must be able to justify the necessity of the travel to the granting program and demonstrate that the costs incurred were reasonable and consistent with the district's travel policy. Therefore, district staff or Board members using grant funds for travel must provide sufficient documentation to the Superintendent or designee who oversees the applicable federal program.

## TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION:

All levels of approval signatures, except for the superintendent, shall be secured by employees for professional out-of-town, overnight meetings, and conferences on the Authorization for Travel Form prior to the trip being made and prior to a request for an advance being submitted. Once completed, the form and supporting documentation should be scanned to [travel@slps.org](mailto:travel@slps.org) at least 30 days BEFORE the first day of travel. For travel funded by grant funds, you will need to follow the above travel process and submit all supporting documentation at least 45 days BEFORE the first day of travel.

Backup Documentation includes:

1. Authorization for Travel (IN-90)
2. Leave of Absence (IN-34)
3. Budget Sheet from SAP indicating enough funds on are on the travel line (634301 – Out of Town, 634305 – In Town)
4. Advance Request
5. Voucher for Flight (if applicable)
  - a. Flight Itinerary with pricing information
6. Voucher for Advance of Hotel and Per Diem
  - a. Must include Hotel Room rate confirmation
7. Voucher for Registration that includes:
  - a. Completed registration form along with Conference information and itinerary of conference sessions
8. If traveling by car, a copy of the MapQuest routes, showing mileage distance from:
  - a. Home residence to destination
  - b. From your location to the travel destination. If your home residence is closer in proximity to the travel destination, then only the additional miles will be reimbursable.
9. Approved Rental Car Request

It is the responsibility of the individuals approving the Authorization for Travel and Vouchers to determine that the expenses submitted for advance/reimbursement are appropriate, allowable, and necessary.

The Accounts Payable Office upon receipt of the complete Travel Packet will verify that it has been signed by the traveler and the traveler's supervisor, Network/Deputy Superintendent, Grants Management Office (if applicable), and Superintendent (if applicable). The Accounts Payable office reserves the right to seek additional information when deemed warranted and there are post audit procedures to assist in evaluating transaction data.

For all grant related travel expenditures, verification that charges within the Travel Packet are in compliance with both the grantor and District policies, will be conducted by the Grants

Management Office. If the Travel Packet contains an unallowable charge, the Travel Packet will be returned to the traveler for revision.

## SPECIFIC TRAVEL RULES

Travelers must review reimbursement guidelines prior to expending personal funds for business travel to determine if such expenditures are allowable and reimbursable.

### RECEIPTS:

The District's reimbursement policy is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenditures, supported by original itemized receipts. Original itemized receipts must be submitted for all travel expenses included airline, rail, hotels, parking, ground transportation, vehicle rental (if applicable), and incidentals. Receipts for meal are not required.

### REGISTRATION AND CONFERENCE FEES:

Employees and Board members should register for seminars and conferences in advance so that the district can pay for the registration. Registration and Conference fees should be paid for with a District Check or via the District Payment Card. In unusual situations where an employee or Board Member must pay directly for such expenses, the district will reimburse at the lowest rate available if an adequate reason is provided. Registration fees paid directly by the traveler will not be reimbursed until the conference is completed and proof of attendance is submitted. The district will only pay for late registration fees when there is a valid reason the Board member or employee did not register earlier.

### AIRLINE:

Reimbursable airfares are based on standard coach seating. Coach airfares should not exceed \$500.00. Exceptions must be pre-approved by the Accounts Payable Supervisor and/or the Director of Grants and Compliance if on grant funds. All air travel should be booked through the District Travel Agency.

### AIRLINE EXPENDITURES THAT WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED:

- First Class Airfares
- Airline Clubs
- Airline Upgrades
- Additional or over-weight luggage charges
- Convenience fees such as priority check-in or preferred seat assignment
- Unauthorized airline charge fees
- Excess airline baggage fees beyond one bag
- Additional Travel Insurance

### AIRPORT PARKING:

- Parking arrangements for personal vehicles must be made at commercial parking lots at the St. Louis airport, not at private homes. In no event shall reimbursement for parking fees exceed the number of approved travel days.

### BAGGAGE FEES:

- Airlines permit one carry-on bag per traveler. For airlines that charge a checked baggage fee, fees will be reimbursed to pay for one (1) checked bag up to \$35. Any additional bags or fees for oversized/overweight bags are not reimbursable under this policy and those charges will be the sole responsibility of the traveler.

The District acknowledges that discount or rewards programs, such as frequent flyer miles or hotel rewards points are not things of value belonging to the District. The administrative burden to track the individual reward programs of employees would be administratively impractical and therefore this the district has determined that the employees may retain the value, if any, that they receive personally due to business related travel.

### GROUND TRANSPORTATION:

Ground transportation includes cab/shuttle/Uber/Lyft services to and from the airport; and cab/shuttle/Uber/Lyft services to and from the conference site only. Cab/shuttle/Uber/Lyft services to and from restaurants or other places will not be reimbursed. The service of the least cost should be used. Receipts are required for reimbursement by the District.

### LODGING:

The reimbursable room per night rate including taxes and fees should not exceed \$350.00, the number of nights charged must not exceed the number of approved travel dates, and should coincide with the conference dates. If plans change, the traveler must cancel the hotel room and provide written justification. Any justification, not deemed acceptable, will be at the expense of the traveler.

If a 'conference package' room rate at the same location of the conference is available that exceeds the \$350 per night limit, an exception may be granted in order to eliminate back and forth transportation charges between the hotel and the conference location.

Please Note: In circumstances where the only available return flight will not arrive at the St. Louis Lambert-International (STL) before 9:00pm and the traveler departs on the first available flight back to St. Louis the next day, then one additional overnight lodging charge will be permitted.

### MEALS:

Approved meal reimbursement rates for employees or board members, including service tips, will not exceed:

Daily meal reimbursement amount: \$50/day

Partial Day reimbursement amount:	Breakfast	\$10.00
	Lunch	\$15.00
	Dinner	\$25.00

When a meal is included in the registration of an event or is paid by another source, reimbursement for that meal is not permitted. Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages are not allowed.

#### PER DIEM ON FIRST & LAST DAYS OF OVERNIGHT TRIP

The daily per diem amount to be reimbursed on trips with overnight travel will be determined by the number of hours in travel status for the day, as follows:

Hours in Travel Status	Eligible Amount
Less than 8 hours	Breakfast Per Diem
At least 8 hours but less than 12	Breakfast and Lunch Per Diem
12 hours or more	100% of per diem

#### PERSONAL VEHICLE USE AND MILEAGE RATE:

The current mileage rate for transportation by car is fifty three and one half cents per mile (\$.53 ½) per mile for this year and is subject to Internal Revenue Service guidelines and requirements.

According to IRS regulations (see IRS Publication 463); you cannot deduct the costs of taking a bus, trolley, subway, or taxi, or of driving a car between your home and your main or regular place of work. These costs are personal commuting expenses. You cannot deduct commuting expenses no matter how far your home is from your regular place of work. You cannot deduct commuting expenses even if you work during the commuting trip.

MapQuest documentation showing the actual route mileage is required for the distances between your home residence and travel destination(s) and between your work location and travel destination(s). If a traveler drives to a location versus utilizing an airline for travel, justification will be required for one way mileage exceeding 300 miles. If additional employees travel within the same car, only the employee/vehicle owner can claim mileage.

The mileage rate represents full compensation for the costs of operating the vehicle, including fuel costs. The district will not cover physical damage to the private vehicle or loss of its personal property contents. Employees and Board members who choose to drive in lieu of flying when flying is considered more economical shall be reimbursed up to the amount of the air travel. Likewise, employees and Board members who choose to fly when driving is more economical will only be reimbursed for the amount that would have been incurred if the employee or Board member had driven.

In addition, the employee or Board member must be appropriately licensed to drive the vehicle and insured as required by law. The vehicle must be licensed as required by law as well.

#### RENTAL CARS:

This District has negotiated terms with Enterprise Rent-A-Car. However, rental cars are only available via approval of the Director of Transportation and, if necessary, the Superintendent's Approval.

Advanced Rental agreement must be made via District Director of Transportation with appropriate documentation and the travel packet.

#### MISCELLANEOUS COSTS:

Any additional justifiable costs must be identified, requested and approved on the Travel Authorization form. (Please be advised: to avoid prolonged delays in researching and validating miscellaneous types of expenses, travelers are urged to avoid using this category when federal grant funding is involved.)

#### NON-REIMBURSABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES:

The following travel expenses are not reimbursable:

- Travel to participate in meetings of civic or social associations
- Travel to meetings of professional organizations unless approved by the District
- Costs associated with the travel of a spouse, child, or other person accompanying an employee or Board member
- Care of dependent of a Board member or employee during the course of the travel
- Tours and other entertainment while on business travel
- Ground transportation to places not associated with the conference
- Hotel room movie rentals, room service, alcoholic beverages and expenses incurred by an unapproved party
- Travel incurred during an employee's vacation period unless it occurs during a school related conference or workshop.
- Expenses incurred by non-employee traveling with the staff member or Board member, including room surcharges
- Unauthorized car rental and fuel
- Valet Parking fees
- Fine for parking or traffic violations
- Personal telephone calls
- Damages to personal vehicle
- Tips/gratuities
- Internet access fees
- Haircuts or personal grooming
- Shoeshine services
- Unapproved purchases or miscellaneous items
- Other expenditures not directly related to performance of the business travel



No personal charges due to last minute changes to travel accommodations and/or plans will be reimbursed unless the changes are deemed reasonable and/or necessary. (i.e. personal or family emergency) and proper documentation submitted and approved by District Administrator funding the travel.

### AFTER TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT:

To close travel expenditures on a timely basis, the District requires that business expenses be substantiated within ten (10) days of the completion of travel. The Expense Report must be completed even if the expenditures of the travel nets \$ 0.00.

To obtain reimbursement for any expense not advanced through the approval process, all expenses must be documented on the Actual Expense Account Report, including any advanced expenditures. Incomplete Expense Reports will be returned to the traveler. Expense reports lacking appropriate authorization will be returned to the traveler. If actual expenses are less than the advance, then a check must be written to the District within Ten (10) days of the completion of travel. The traveler is responsible for securing appropriate approval in advance of the trip for any grant funded travel. Compliance with the grantor or federal regulations is the responsibility of the traveler.

Accounts Payable is responsible for maintaining a District travel log which will be reviewed monthly by the Accounts Payable Supervisor and/or Fiscal Control Director. Should the traveler not complete the expense report within the noted timeline, further travel may be prohibited.

### CANCELLATIONS:

If a trip is cancelled, all travel advances, airline tickets and check for prepaid expenses must be returned or reimbursed no later than Ten (10) days of the original travel date. A written explanation should be attached.