

# SOUTH HARRISON TOWNSHIP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT



## EMPLOYEE TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

2016-2017

# District Travel Requirements

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*The following procedures have been developed to ensure compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, State of New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Office of Management and Budget (NJOMB) Circulars 08-19-OMB and 06-14-OMB (OMB Circulars), and the additional requirements set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.*

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## Definition

“Travel Expenditures” mean those costs paid by the school district, whether directly by the school district or by employee reimbursement, for travel by school district employees and district Board of Education members. School district travel expenditures include, but are not limited to, all costs for transportation, meals, lodging, and registration or conference fees directly related to participation in the event.

## Types of Travel Events

The district recognizes the following five types of travel events:

1. Training and Seminars – all regularly scheduled, formal residential or non-residential training functions conducted at a hotel, motel, convention center, residential facility, or at any educational institution or facility;
2. Conventions & Conferences – general programs, sponsored by professional associations on a regular basis, which address subjects of particular interest to a school district or are convened to conduct association business. The primary purpose of employee attendance at conferences and conventions is the development of new skills and knowledge or the reinforcement of those skills and knowledge in a particular field related to school district operations;
3. School District Sponsored Events – conferences, conventions, receptions, or special meetings where the school district plans, develops, implements, and coordinates the event and is the event’s primary financial backer;
4. Regular School District Business – all regular official business travel, including attendance at meetings, conferences, and any other gatherings which are not covered by the definitions included in 1, 2, and 3 above. Regular school district business travel also includes attendance at regularly scheduled in-State county meetings and Department of Education sponsored events provided free of charge, and regularly scheduled in-State professional development activities with a registration fee that does not exceed \$150 per employee or Board member; and
5. Retreats – meetings with school district employees and school Board members, at which organizational goals and objectives are discussed.

## Approval Process

All travel requests must be approved by the following, prior to the date of travel event:

1. Immediate Supervisor
2. Principal (Faculty only)
3. Chief Academic Officer (Faculty only)
4. Business Administrator
5. Superintendent of Schools
6. Board of Education

The Board of Education will not ratify or approve payments or reimbursements for travel after completion of the travel event.

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All employees requesting approval travel must complete and submit a “Request for Leave Form – PD” to their immediate supervisor.

### Supervisor Approval

The Supervisor will review each request and determine whether the travel is:

- Educationally necessary and fiscally prudent;
- Directly related to and within the scope of the employee’s current responsibilities and school district’s professional development plan; and
- Critical to the instructional needs of the school district or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and whether appropriate funds exist to pay for the travel event.

The Supervisor will return any unapproved requests to the submitter and forward all approved requests to the school Principal for review.

### Principal Approval

The Principal will review each request and determine whether the travel is:

- Critical to the instructional needs of the school district or furthers the efficient operation of the school district;
- The employee absence will not negatively impact the efficient operation of the school or district.

The Principal will return any unapproved requests to the submitter and forward all approved requests to the Chief Academic Officer for review.

### Chief Academic Officer Approval

The Chief Academic Officer will review each request and determine whether the travel is:

- Directly related to and within the scope of the employee’s current responsibilities, District and building professional development plan, and the employee’s individual professional development plan;
- The travel is critical to the instructional needs of the District and furthers its efficient operation.

The Chief Academic Officer will return any unapproved requests to the submitter and forward all approved requests to the Business Administrator for review.

### Business Administrator Approval

The School Business Administrator will review each request and determine whether the travel request is:

- In compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, State of New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Office of Management and Budget (NJOMB) Circulars 08-19-OMB and 06-14-OMB (OMB Circulars), the additional requirements set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7, and Board policy.

The School Business Administrator will then perform one of the following:

- Forward any deficient requests back to the submitter with a memo outlining any missing or incomplete areas of the form; or

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- If the Request for Leave Form for a school staff member is approved by the Business Administrator, the travel request will be submitted to the Superintendent and Board of Education for final review and approval.

All Request for Leave Forms are to be submitted at least **four (4) weeks prior to the date of the travel event**. This will allow sufficient time for administrative review, Board of Education approval, and Executive County Superintendent approval, if necessary.

### Additional Approval Requirements

1. Executive County Superintendent of Schools
  - When a travel event has a total cost that exceeds \$5,000, regardless of the number of attendees, or where more than five (5) individuals from the district are to attend a travel event out-of-State; and
  - All employee and Board member travel events out of the country, regardless of cost or number of attendees.

### **Preparing a Request for Leave – Professional Development Form**

1. Type your name in the space provided. Input the date(s) of the professional development event along with your job title and work location.
2. Check the appropriate box for substitute coverage and circle the corresponding timeframe.
3. In the next section, indicate the title of the program, address and professional development goal number from your PDP in the spaces provided.
4. Provide an estimate of all reimbursable costs associated with the travel event.

Allowable per diem reimbursement for lodging, meals and incidentals shall be actual reasonable costs, not to exceed the federal per diem rates for the event location. Registration and conference fees are not subject to the Federal per diem rate caps. If the event location is not listed, the maximum per diem allowance shall be \$31 for meal/incidental expenses and \$60 for lodging.

The latest Federal per diem rates schedule for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses by location can be found at [gsa.gov](https://www.gsa.gov).

- a. Registration – Input the registration fee for the event. Input \$0 if there are no registration fees associated with the event.
- b. Transportation – Input all costs associated with the event as follows:
  - i. Mileage – Total miles (minus commute) x Rate
  - ii. Tolls/Parking – Estimate toll and parking charges
  - iii. Airfare – Attach a minimum of three quotes
  - iv. Other – Taxi, shuttle, etc.
- c. Lodging – Input the number of nights and per night charge including all taxes and any associated fees. Verify the maximum allowable rates at [gsa.gov](https://www.gsa.gov). Please note that lodging expenses may exceed the Federal per diem rates if the hotel is the site of the convention, conference, seminar or meeting.

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- d. Meals/Incidentals – Check [gsa.gov](http://gsa.gov) for current allowable rates. Please note that the first and last days of the travel event are calculated at 75% of the daily allowance.
5. The budget expense account number will be identified and input by the Supervisor.
6. Attach a copy of the completed registration form
7. Attach a brief justification to the form that states the primary purpose for the travel and the key issues that will be addressed at the event and their relevance to improving instruction or the operation of the district.
8. Sign the form and forward to your Supervisor for review at least four (4) weeks in advance of the travel event.

### Required Attachments to Request for Leave – Professional Development Form

All Request for Leave forms must be accompanied by the following attachments:

- Registration Form
- Copy of Agenda/Itinerary for the travel event;
- A justification and brief statement that includes the primary purpose for the travel, the key issues that will be addressed at the event and their relevance to improving instruction or the operation of the school district. For training events, please include whether the training is needed for a certification required for continued employment, continuing education requirements, requirements for Federal or State law, or other purpose related to the programs and services currently being delivered or soon to be implemented in the school district, or related to school district operations,
- Copy of Insurance Identification Card – if using privately-owned vehicle in the performance of their duties for the school district. (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A:7.9(c-4v))

### **Routing of Travel**

All travel shall be by the most direct, economical, and usually-traveled route. Travel by other routes as a result of official necessity shall only be eligible for payment or reimbursement if satisfactorily established in advance of such travel.

In any case where a person travels by indirect route for personal convenience, the extra expense will be borne by the individual.

Reimbursement for expenses shall be based only on charges that do not exceed what would have been incurred by using the most direct, economical, and usually traveled route.

### Travel Methods

Transportation means necessary official travel on railroads, airlines, shuttles, buses, taxicabs, school district-owned or leased vehicles, and personal vehicles.

The purchase or payment of related transportation expenses shall be made by purchase order or personally by a school district employee or Board member and reimbursed at the conclusion of the travel event. An actual invoice or receipt for each purchase or expense shall be submitted with a claim for reimbursement.

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## Travel Method Requirements

Air and rail tickets shall be purchased via the Internet, if possible, using airline or online travel services such as Travelocity, Expedia, or Hotwire.

The following travel method requirements apply:

### Air Travel

Quotation Requirement - Reimbursement for air fare without documented quotes from at least three (3) airlines and/or services is prohibited per *N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.8(a-17.)*

Air travel will only be authorized when determined that it is necessary and advantageous to conduct school district business and is consistent with the following:

1. The most economical air travel shall be used, including the use of discounted and special rates;
2. The following options have been considered:
  - a. Connecting versus nonstop flights;
  - b. Departing earlier or later compared to the preferred departure time;
  - c. Utilizing alternative airports within a city, i.e. Chicago, Illinois – Midway Airport vs. O'Hare Airport;
  - d. Utilizing alternative cities, i.e. Newark vs. Philadelphia;
  - e. Utilizing "low cost" airlines; and
  - f. Exploring alternative arrival and/or departure days
3. No employee or Board member can earn benefits as a result of school district funded travel. Employees and Board members are prohibited from receiving frequent flyer benefits accruing from school district funded travel;
4. Airfare other than economy (i.e., Business or First Class) shall not be fully reimbursed by the school district except when travel in such classes:
  - a. Is less expensive than economy;
  - b. Avoids circuitous routings or excessive flight duration; or
  - c. Would result in overall transportation cost savings.
5. All airfare other than economy and not covered by the above exceptions purchased by an employee or Board member will only be reimbursed at the economy rate for the approved destination;
6. Airline tickets will not be booked until all necessary approvals have been obtained;
7. Justification will be required when actions by a traveler result in additional expenses over and above the authorized travel request. Sufficient justification will be considered only for factors outside the control of the purchaser. Noncompliant purchases without sufficient justification will not be reimbursed.

### Rail Travel

Rail travel will only be authorized when determined that it is necessary and advantageous to conduct school district business and is consistent with the following:

1. The most economical scheduling of rail travel shall be utilized, including excursion and government discounts, whenever applicable;

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2. When one employee or Board member is traveling within the Northeast Corridor, NJ Transit shall be used as the rail option. Use of Amtrak will not be authorized unless it is the only means of travel available;
3. The use of high speed rail services, such as Acela, will not be authorized;
4. When two or more employees and/or Board member are traveling to the same event in the Northeast Corridor (between Boston, MA and Washington, DC) rail travel will not be authorized. In those cases, the travelers must use a school district vehicle or, if not available, a personally-owned vehicle must be used; and
5. All rail travel, including rail travel in the Northeast Corridor, must be processed in the same manner as prescribed for air travel above.

### Personally Owned Vehicles

When determining the relative costs of private and public transportation, all associated costs (i.e., tolls, taxicabs, airport, or station transfers, etc.) shall be considered.

1. All employees and Board members using privately-owned vehicles in the performance of their duties for the school district shall present a New Jersey Insurance Identification Card indicating that insurance is in full force and effect with companies approved by the State Department of Banking and Insurance. Employees who are out-of-State residents must provide appropriate insurance identification in lieu of the New Jersey Insurance Identification Card;
2. Reimbursement for travel to points outside the State by automobile shall be permitted when such arrangements prove to be more efficient and economical than other means of public transportation;
3. Parking and toll charges shall be allowed in addition to mileage allowance
4. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the rate authorized by the annual State Appropriations Act (\$0.31), unless a lower rate has been established in an employee's collective bargaining agreement.

### **Prohibited Travel Reimbursements**

The following types of expenditures are not eligible for reimbursement:

1. Subsistence reimbursement (lodging, meals, incidentals) for one-day trips, except for meals expressly authorized by and in accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.12;
2. Subsistence reimbursement for overnight travel within the State, except where authorized by the Commissioner through the issuance of a waiver, or is a required component by an entity issuing a grant, donation, or other funding agreement with the district. If a waiver is granted by the Commissioner, it shall permit reimbursement for travel expenses for only those individuals whose home to the convention commute exceeds fifty (50) miles.
3. Travel by spouses, civil union partners, domestic partners, immediate family members, and other relatives;
4. Training to maintain a certification that is not required as a condition of employment;
5. Charges for laundry, valet service, or entertainment;
6. Limousine services and chauffeuring costs to or during the event;



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7. Car rentals, either utilized for airport transportation or transportation at a conference, convention, etc., unless absolutely necessary for the conduct of school district business;
8. Alcoholic beverages;
9. Gratuities or tips in excess of those permitted by Federal per diem rates; and
10. Air fare without documentation of quotes from at least three (3) airlines and/or online services.
11. Other travel expenditures that are unnecessary and/or excessive

### **Regular School District Business Travel**

Regular school district business travel includes attendance at regularly scheduled in-State county meetings and Department of Education sponsored or association sponsored events free of charge. It also includes regularly scheduled in-State professional development activities for which the registration fee does not exceed \$150 per employee or Board member.

The Board of Education, pursuant to the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3(b), authorizes an annual maximum amount per employee not to exceed \$1,500 for regular business travel only for which prior Board approval is not required.

Regular school district business travel requires Superintendent, or designee approval prior to obligating the district to pay related expenses and prior to attendance at the travel event.

### **Reimbursement of Travel Expenditures**

#### Memorandum of Expenditures

All persons authorized to travel on business should keep a memorandum of expenditures chargeable to the District, noting each item together with the date incurred.

#### Travel Reimbursement Voucher

A travel reimbursement voucher shall be completed by the employee or Board member to document the details of the travel event. The travel voucher must be signed by the employee or Board member to certify the validity of the charges for which reimbursement is sought. A travel voucher form is posted on our website under District forms.

#### Documentation Required - Expenditures

Original receipts shall be required for all reimbursable expenses, except for meals that qualify for per diem allowances and for parking meters. Actual vendor receipts for personal credit card charges shall be attached to all reimbursement requests. Credit card statements will not be accepted as documentation of expenses.

1. Lodging – Attach a copy of the hotel invoice with all personal charges deducted. When lodging is shared jointly, the fact must be stated on the travel reimbursement voucher.
2. Transportation – Personal vehicle - Actual miles traveled minus your daily commute to and from school. Attach original receipts for all toll and parking charges. E-Z pass statements are acceptable with the applicable charges outlined. Attach a copy of your valid insurance identification card to the travel reimbursement voucher.
3. Transportation – Other – Evidence of three (3) quotations for air travel.
4. Ground Travel – Original receipts for taxi and/or shuttles, etc.

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### Documentation Required – Other

1. Purchase requisition – Please complete a purchase requisition (Add BOE approval date in requisition item description) for all approved expenditures and forward a copy of the approved travel request form with the following:
  - a. Receipts – Place original receipts in an envelope and forward to the business office with the purchase requisition number clearly written on the outside of the envelope.
  - b. Brief report that includes the primary purpose for the travel, key issues addressed at the event and their relevance to improving instruction or the operations of the District.

### Field Trip Chaperone Expense Reimbursement

Field trip chaperone travel expenses will be governed by the same regulations that pertain to employee business travel as detailed in this manual.

### Deadline to Submit Requests for Reimbursement

All outstanding travel vouchers for the school year ending June 30 must be submitted as soon as possible after June 30 regardless of amount.

Travel mileage reimbursement requests of the just completed school year that are not submitted by July 30 for the just completed school year will not be approved for payment.