

## **Policy Code: 7650 Employee Travel And Other Expense Reimbursement**

The board may reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary travel and other expenses incurred while performing school system business. All employee requests for reimbursement for travel or other expenses are subject to this policy. The superintendent and finance officer are responsible for developing and disseminating forms for requesting travel and other expense reimbursement, for maintaining and disseminating current information concerning applicable reimbursement rates, and for establishing any procedures or regulations necessary to implement this policy.

### **A. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTROLLING TRAVEL EXPENSES**

The board intends that its employees who are required to travel do so in reasonable comfort. All employees traveling on school system business are expected to exercise good judgment in distinguishing between reasonable comfort and extravagance and to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Reimbursement will not be approved for excess costs or additional expenses that are for the convenience or personal preference of the employee. Unless specifically approved by the superintendent, unauthorized expenses include, but are not limited to, alcohol or tobacco, entertainment activities (e.g., sporting events, pay TV, movies), personal services (e.g., spa, laundry), personal items (e.g., toiletries, magazines, souvenirs), supplemental insurance on rental cars, fines for traffic violations, travel upgrades (e.g., preferred seating, room upgrades), and meals, lodging, or other expenses for spouses, children, guests, or pets. Employees are responsible for being aware of applicable reimbursement rates and any other limitations established by the superintendent or finance officer prior to travel.

### **B. APPROVAL FOR TRAVEL**

All out-of-county travel must receive the prior approval of the employee's supervisor and when applicable, be submitted in advance on the designated travel authorization form. Out-of-state travel by any employee except the superintendent must receive prior written approval of the employee's supervisor and the superintendent or superintendent's designee on the designated travel authorization form. The superintendent's out-of-state travel must receive prior approval from the board chair on the designated travel authorization form. The request for approval must include an estimate of the anticipated cost of the travel and related expenses and the appropriate budget code. Travel requests that exceed the amount budgeted for such purposes may be denied.

### **C. REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES**

Employees may request reimbursement of actual expenses for mileage, meals, lodging, and other business-related expenses, such as conference registration fees and parking fees, incurred on approved trips for official school system business. Travel that does not directly benefit the school system is not reimbursable.

The reimbursement rates for mileage, meals, lodging, and other travel expenses will be in accordance with those established for state employees. Reimbursements will not exceed the annual budget allocated to the respective employee or department. All reimbursements are contingent upon funds available.

All claims for reimbursement of travel expenses must (1) include a copy of the approved travel request form; (2) be in writing, itemized, and supported with original receipts, except that no receipt is required for meals that will be reimbursed at the state-approved flat rates; (3) document the official school business purpose for which the expenses were incurred; (4) include

a copy of the agenda if the travel was to a conference, meeting, or similar event; (5) be signed by the employee; and (6) be approved by the employee's supervisor, or in the case of the superintendent, by the board chair. If reimbursement is to be paid from federal funds, documentation of the business purpose must include the reason the claimant's travel is necessary to the federal program. All claims must be submitted in accordance with any additional requirements, procedures, or deadlines established by the superintendent or finance officer.

In extenuating circumstances, such as when lodging is not reasonably available at the state-approved rate, authorization for reasonable costs in excess of the state-approved rates may be approved by the employee's supervisor and the superintendent or designee, or in the case of the superintendent, by the board chair.

#### D. ADVANCEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

The board discourages providing an advance travel allowance to employees. The Board will make advance direct payment of travel expenses (e.g., conference registration fees, airline fees, hotel reservations) in accordance with the district's financial procedures manual.

#### E. CANCELLED TRIPS

If an employee cancels a trip for which (1) a travel advance has been extended, (2) trip-related expenses have been prepaid by the school system, or (3) a penalty or charge resulting from the cancellation is incurred, the employee is responsible for reimbursing the school system for all funds advanced or expended by the school system as a result of the cancellation unless otherwise approved by the superintendent or designee. Failure to reimburse the school system as required may result in disciplinary action and/or actions to recover the amounts owed.

#### F. MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT FOR USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLE

Employees who use their personal vehicle to travel in the performance of their official job duties will be reimbursed at the rate for state employees for mileage incurred when traveling for job-related activities, subject to budgetary limitations. The superintendent may establish criteria for determining which employees are eligible for this mileage reimbursement. Reimbursement will not be authorized for travel between the employees' residence and the first or last scheduled stop of the day.

Mileage reimbursement requests for all employees except the superintendent must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and submitted as directed by the finance officer or superintendent. The superintendent's mileage reimbursement requests must be approved by the board chair and submitted to the finance officer at least quarterly.

#### G. REIMBURSEMENT OF OTHER BUSINESS EXPENSES

Employees purchasing merchandise or other items on behalf of the school system with personal funds must have prior written approval of their supervisor and may be reimbursed for reasonable costs, up to a limit of \$50. Expenses of greater than \$50 must be approved in advance by the superintendent or designee, or in the case of the superintendent, by the board chair. Requests for reimbursement must follow the procedures established by the finance officer. All requests for reimbursement must be accompanied by a statement of the business purpose for the expense and a detailed receipt. Employees who are authorized to use school system procurement cards will not be reimbursed for purchases made using personal funds without prior approval of the superintendent or designee.

## H. RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

The superintendent is responsible for monitoring employee compliance with this policy. The board chair is responsible for monitoring the superintendent's expenditures for travel and other expenses.

Legal References: [G.S. 115C-36](#), [-47\(21\)](#), [138-6](#); [2 C.F.R. 200.474](#)

Cross References: Board Member Compensation and Expenses (policy 2130)

Other References: *North Carolina Budget Manual*, Section 5 (Office of State Budget and Management), available at <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/library>

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**Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools**