

# Homewood City Schools

## Travel Approval & Reimbursement Procedures

Travel by school personnel to a conference or meeting for professional learning should be driven by the needs of school district and school personnel. Approval to travel should be first discussed with the appropriate school-based and district administration. The following procedures should be followed for travel out of Jefferson County or out of state. It is important to remember that taxpayer money funds school travel, so more careful documentation is required than for travel with private funds. These procedures help to clarify the *Conference & Travel Approval Form* and the *Employee Travel Reimbursement Form*.

1. All travel (defined as conferences or meetings which requires you to be away from the classroom/job site) should be pre-approved by the principal or his/her designee, the director of instructional support, and the fund manager. The organizer of the trip should complete a **Conference & Travel Approval Form** on behalf of all participants.
2. **The Conference & Travel Approval Form** is designed to assist with the planning, prioritizing, and budgeting of overnight conferences and meetings. All sections of the form which are applicable should be completed. Travel costs noted should reflect accurate estimates of all anticipated travel expenses. A schedule or agenda of the conference should be attached when approval is submitted.
3. **Fund Source:** As a part of estimating travel expenses, the organizer of the trip should include the “fund source” (Title I, local money, at-risk, SPED, etc.) for which the trip will be paid. The manager of the fund source should sign and approve the conference. Multiple district or school-based funds may be used to pay for travel.
4. **Approval:** As a part of the approval process, the supervisor and fund manager may agree to approve only partial reimbursement for travel. Conference costs may also be split between the district and a school(s). A participant may be asked to cover a portion of the travel expense. This decision may depend on the prioritization of the travel and conference, the needs of the district, and the availability of funds.
5. **Registration:** Registration fees for conferences will be paid by the school or district after the submission of *Conference & Travel Approval Form*. Every effort should be made to submit a request for participation in a conference as early as possible in order to receive the best registration rate. It should also be clearly noted if any or all participants wish to participate in a pre-conference session with an additional fee. A purchase order should be opened when the *Conference & Travel Approval Form* is submitted.
6. **Airfare:** Plane tickets will likely be purchased by the school or district for participants. In order for tickets to be purchased, participants will need to supply their full name as it appears on their IDs, their date of birth, the cell phone number, and an emergency contact number. If a participant is unable to attend the conference, he/she will owe the district the funds to cover the unused plane ticket. Since the unused plane ticket is in the name of the participant, he or she will likely have a certain amount of time to reapply the ticket to a new location for a personal trip. Thorough documentation for air travel expenses is required. If a participant will seek reimbursement on a plane ticket, a purchase order should be opened when the *Conference & Travel Approval Form* is submitted.
7. **Hotel:** Whenever possible, hotel arrangements will be made by the school or district. Some hotels require partial payment up front. A purchase order and requisition should be established after the *Conference & Travel Approval Form* is submitted. Payment may be completed by the district with the requisition at the conclusion of the conference. If reimbursement will be sought, a purchase order should still be set up in advance of the

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trip after the *Conference & Travel Approval Form* is submitted. Multiple participants are expected to share rooms whenever possible. If reimbursement is being sought, one person in each room should handle the payment and hotel reimbursement and should list his/her roommates on the *Employee Travel Reimbursement Form*. A hotel receipt should be included with the *Employee Travel Reimbursement Form*. Incidental charges (room service, movies, etc.) on a hotel receipt will not be reimbursed.

- 8. Automobile Mileage:** Depending on the number of participants, a certain number of cars may be approved for mileage reimbursements at the standard-approved rate. Participants who choose to drive outside of the approved number of vehicles will be subject to receiving no mileage reimbursement. Participants should include a MapQuest document (or something similar) documenting the mileage. Participants will be reimbursed round-trip from either their home or work (whichever is the shortest difference) to the conference location. No other mileage will be reimbursed, except for taxi/shuttle to-and-from the airport. On the *Employee Travel & Reimbursement Form*, drivers should list other participants who rode in their vehicles. A purchase order should be opened for the driver when the *Conference & Travel Approval Form* is submitted. No receipts for gas will need to be saved or submitted.
- 9. Meals:** Meals are reimbursed to participants at an established per diem rate. No receipts need to be turned in for meals. The per diem rate may be claimed for a full day's amount per overnight stay or individually for each meal of the day based on departure and return. Reimbursement may not be claimed whenever a meal is part of a required registration fee or is included in the cost of a breakfast/luncheon ticket, which is required for a participant to attend the required meeting. If participants are out of town for a full day and pay for all 3 meals, they may claim the full per diem rate. On travel days (the first day or last day of a trip), participants are only allowed to claim a 75% maximum of the per diem rate. Reimbursement will not be allowed for breakfast or dinner, unless individuals depart their home or official school prior to 6:30 a.m. and return after 7:30 p.m. Generally, the cost of meals without overnight travel will not be reimbursed, unless the lunch is an integral part of a scheduled meeting. In order to be an integral part of a scheduled meeting, the luncheon would include a program such as, but not limited to, a speaker, a panel discussion, or other similar presentation. A purchase order should be opened for participants seeking meal reimbursement when the *Conference and Travel Approval Form* is submitted.
- 10. Other Expenses:** Other specific expenses may be requested for reimbursement, including: baggage fees, parking at a hotel and/or conference center, transportation to-and-from the airport, and Wi-Fi in the conference hotel (if charged) in order to maintain communication with the school district while out of the office.
- 11. Conference Agenda & Schedule:** A copy of the conference agenda or schedule should be submitted with both the *Conference & Travel Approval Form* and the *Employee Travel Reimbursement Form*.
- 12. Reimbursements:** An administrative supervisor and/or fund manager may reserve the right to adjust the amount requested on the *Employee Travel Reimbursement Form* if it differs from the amount approved on the *Conference & Travel Approval Form*.