

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR EMPLOYEE TRAVEL
AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**
(Attachment for Policy No. 331)

When processing Employee Travel and Reimbursement requests use the appropriate procedure.

Employees of the School District of Philadelphia are expected to spend the District's funds prudently while traveling on District business and when purchasing articles or incidental services for appropriate work related purposes.

Helpful procedural information including forms can be found on the Accounts Payable website, <https://www.philasd.org/accountspayable/> the Accounts Payable Department is located at the following address:

The School District of Philadelphia
Accounts Payable Department
440 North Broad Street
Suite 324, Portal D
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Main Phone No. 215- 400-4530
Fax No. 215- 400-4531

Authorization and Approval of Employee Travel and Reimbursements

Administrators at the level of Director/Principal and above are considered agents of the Superintendent and they alone have the authority to approve expenditures for this purpose for their direct reports. It shall be their responsibility to see that their subordinates are familiar with these procedures and that their approval is obtained before such expenditures are incurred.

An administrator at the Director/Principal level or above may not authorize his /her own travel or approve expenditures; and therefore, must obtain the approval of his/her supervisor.

All out-of-town travel for educational personnel must approved by the applicable education officer or his/her designee; the applicable educational officer is the Chief of Schools (CSO).

Employees who anticipate the use of Grant funding for their travel and or reimbursement expenditures are required to follow the particular Grant requirements for those funds. In addition, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit requirements for federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) must also be followed for federal funds. Employees should

also obtain the approval of the Office of Grant Compliance and Fiscal Services prior to submitting the employee travel or reimbursement request form to the Accounts Payable Department for processing.

All requests for employee reimbursement and travel expenses are subject to review by the Office of the Comptroller/Accounts Payable Department to determine the official nature of the expenditure and the propriety and reasonableness of the charges. Expenditures not deemed necessary or reasonable will not be reimbursed. Reimbursements will be included in the employee's paycheck for a subsequent pay period.

Expense Reimbursements

Employees should submit all work related expenses for reimbursement to the Accounts Payable Department via an approved Employee Reimbursement Request ([SEH-195](#)) Form (hereinafter, referred to only as form SEH-195). All reimbursement requests for work related expenses require an original itemized receipt of the expenditure and explanation of the business purpose pertaining to the expense. Employee reimbursements will be processed within seven business days, reimbursements will be included in the employee's subsequent paycheck.

Essential work-related expenses, which cannot be processed using the District's standard Procurement and Accounts Payable processes, are reimbursable with the appropriate approval and documentation.

Expenditures falling outside the limitations established in this policy will be approved only if fully documented and review of the circumstances indicates that such expenditures are necessary and in the best interest of the School District. Approval of the appropriate Chief, Assistant Superintendent and the CFO in advance of incurring the expense is required; review and approval is accomplished with the Exception to the Policy form

Employee travel (routine-Inter/Intra-City and Out-of-Town) expenses are reimbursable expenditures when in compliance with the School District of Philadelphia's Employee Travel and Business-Related Expense Reimbursement Policy and Procedural Guidelines. While, employee travel is a reimbursable expense, expenditures relating to Intra-City travel should be limited to applicable public transit fares, taxis, ride sharing (services pertaining to ride sharing must be licensed and legally able to operate) at the lowest level rate. Employees must obtain the approval of the department head or designee for ride share services. Employees who use their privately owned vehicle for District business will be reimburse at the approved standard mileage rate and should not include costs for meals or any other non-travel expenses. Employees can request reimbursement for Inter and Intra City travel by submitting an approved SEH-195 form

to the Accounts Payable Department for processing. Documentation for expenditures relating to Intra or Inter-City travel via public transit fares, ride sharing requires a receipt for the expense.

Routine (Inter/Intra-City) Travel

Travel within the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, which does not include an overnight stay and is less than 150 miles (one-way), is considered routine travel.

An overnight stay is not permitted within the greater Philadelphia region unless the Superintendent or his/her designee grants an exception.

Inter-City travel permits employees to be reimbursed for limited circumstances, the School District will not pay for or otherwise reimburse employees for Inter-City travel costs and related expenses except in the following circumstances; and only if funds are available in the appropriate departmental budget and the costs and expenses have received the appropriate approval:

- (a) Travel incurred because of emergencies (e.g., major fire or water emergencies, natural disasters).
- (b) Travel to attend a work-related meeting or conference.
- (c) Travel specifically required by a grantor to maintain compliance with a grant agreement.
- (d) Travel to accompany student sports teams, forensics or for any purpose of school competition or student learning but only for the necessary and reasonable number of employees.
- (e) Travel required for safety training.
- (f) Travel to maintain direct work related professional certifications and licenses, provided such training is not available in the City or surrounding areas.
- (g) Travel required for participation in the legislative process in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania or in Washington, D.C.
- (h) Limited instances necessitated by business circumstances subject to the express written advance approval of the Chief Financial Officer for reason/s other than those set forth above; approval is accomplished with the Exception to the Policy form.

Expense at Work Headquarters

While employee travel is a reimbursable expense, commuting to work and home is not a reimbursable expense. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) defines commuting as travel from your home to your workplace (headquarters). As a condition of employment, employees should

expect to incur commuting expenses between their residence and work headquarters. Consequently, the first trip of the day (to work headquarters or temporary work site) and the last trip of the day (return trip home from work headquarters or temporary work site) are considered commuting expenses as defined by the IRS and therefore are not reimbursable expenses.

Expenses associated with District business in excess of commuting expenses are reimbursable at headquarters. An employee whose travel during a given day does not include travel through headquarters shall be reimbursed for all mileage traveled that day in excess of the employee's ordinary commuting mileage. An employee whose travel does include travel through headquarters shall be reimbursed for all mileage in excess of commuting mileage. All travel must be by the most direct route.

Use of Privately Owned Vehicles (POV) for Travel

A POV is defined as any vehicle (such as an automobile) operated by an employee that is not a District owned vehicle and is not commercially leased or rented by an employee for use in connection with official District business. Employees may use POVs for official District business when such use is advantageous to the District and authorized by their supervisor, in compliance with the procedures in this Policy Statement. The standard mileage rate for reimbursement is based on the standard on an Annual Study of the Fixed and Variable costs of operating an automobile according to the IRS.

Tolls are reimbursable expenses, with a receipt.

Parking fees are reimbursable when parking at commercial parking areas is necessary. Parking fees are not reimbursable with respect to Headquarters

All privately owned vehicles authorized for District Business shall be properly registered and insured in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pursuant to Pennsylvania financial responsibility laws.

All Employees are encouraged to review personal vehicle insurance limitations that may limit or restrict coverage or use of a POV for official District business purposes. Employees must properly safeguard all belongings (personal and Government) in their POV.

The use of cell phones or other devices to email, text message or for internet browsing while driving a POV in performance of official District business is strictly prohibited. The use of cell phones for placing or receiving voice calls while driving a POV on official District business is generally prohibited based on applicable jurisdictions. However, employees with POVs and/or

cell phones that have built in hands-free capabilities may use this feature for voice calls while driving. In all other cases, employees must pull over and stop driving to initiate or receive any voice call.

Fines imposed on an employee for traffic offenses committed in a POV while conducting official District business are the responsibility of the employee. This includes parking violations.

Employees can request reimbursement of miles traveled. This approval is accomplished using the SEH-195 form. All approved SEH-195 forms should be submitted to the Accounts Payable Department for processing. Documentation of miles traveled (e.g. a Map Quest or Google Maps route) must accompany the SEH-195s noting the miles traveled. Mileage reimbursement will not be granted for the first stop of each workday or the trip home from the last work location of the day. These two trips are considered commuting expenses that are equivalent to going to work and returning home after work and therefore are not reimbursable according to the IRS rules.

The Standard Mileage rate can be found on the Accounts Payable Department Website under the Travel section and are based on rates published by the IRS.

Out-of-Town Travel

Travel Arrangements: Employees traveling out-of-town on official School District business are required to make their travel arrangements through the School District of Philadelphia's official Travel Agencies for transportation. For airfare reservations, (excluding groups of six or more) contact AAA Corporate Travel Services 1(800) 280-9177. For rail reservations and air reservations for group travelers of 6 or more contact, Au Revoir (215) 848-2220. Airline reservations will be booked by the official travel agency at the lowest available coach rate requiring as few transfers as possible.

Employees must obtain a quote of the estimated transportation and/or lodging cost after obtaining a travel quote the employee must complete a "Travel Authorization Request" Form ([SEH-194](#)), hereinafter referred to as Form SEH-194. The completed SEH-194 form should be submitted to appropriate personnel for approval within 24 hours of receiving the estimated cost from the travel agent in order to preserve the lowest available airfare.

All out-of-town travel must be approved in advance of travel. Upon receipt of approval on the SEH-194, the employee should forward the approved SEH-194 form to the Accounts Payable Department who will contact the official travel agents who will book the travel arrangements.

Many airlines offer substantially reduced fares when a Saturday evening stay-over is booked. Approval for early arrivals and extended stay at the expense of the District will be granted if the employee with the travel agency can demonstrate that the additional cost for lodging and meals is more than by the offset by the reduced airfares.

If an employee books a fare that is not the recommended fare by the travel agent, the employee will be charged the difference between the approved fare and the accepted fare. If an employee makes an unapproved modification to their travel arrangements that result in additional charges, the additional cost will be the responsibility of the employee unless authorized by the appropriate District official authorized to approve out-of-town travel.

Paper tickets will not be issued. All tickets will be electronic; requiring the employee to present a form of identification at the check-in; employees will receive a printed itinerary prior to traveling via e-mail from the travel agency.

An employee's frequent flier mileage account can be credited for the official travel. Employees cannot reject a booking if the lowest available fare is with an airline other than that of which they are a frequent flier member.

It is the expectation that out-of-town travel will be booked far enough in advance following these procedures to secure the lowest possible rates, particularly for airfare. Last minute bookings, or delays in the submission of approval forms, or delays in the approval process for those forms if not submitted timely by the traveler, may create an unreasonably high transportation or lodging cost. In cases where travel cost has increased because travel forms were not submitted timely and federal funds are involved, the difference between what the actual costs is and what the cost would have been if booked timely must be paid with state / local dollars.

For lodging, employees should consult the General Services Administration (GSA) <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> schedule for government rates at their destination. The employee should endeavor not to exceed the GSA rate unless conferences and meetings provide special rates for participants. If they cannot secure a GSA rate, the employee should book lodging through the conference or meeting housing bureau. All lodging costs must be paid by the employee who can request a travel advance and/or reimbursement.

Rental Car: Use of a rental car is not reimbursable unless it can be shown that it is essential in the conduct of official business and/ or in the best interest of the School District. Approval for the use of a rental car must be secured in advance of travel on form SEH-194.

Meals: The meal allowance rate for employees while traveling out-of-town for meals not included in the registration fee or as part of an official function (with receipt) and during allowable hours is based on the General Services Administration (GSA) Per Diem Rate, which is allowable by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Standard Meal Allowance. No receipt is necessary if using the IRS Standard Rate Allowance.

Meals allowance will be made for Out-of-Town travel of over four (4) hours. All meals while on travel status are reimbursable, without documentation, (taxes and tips included) at the rates shown on the Accounts Payable Department's website under Travel Policy.

<https://www.philasd.org/accountspayable/policies-procedures/travel/>

To qualify for meal allowances, an employee must be in a travel status during at least one half hour between the following time limits:

Breakfast: 7:30 am and 9:30am

Lunch: 11:30 am and 1:30 pm

Dinner: 5:30 pm and 7:00 pm

Meals that are included in the registration fee may not be included in the request for meal allowance.

Meals that are part of an official function (conventions, etc.) and direct paid by the employee will be reimbursed in the amount actually expended and should not be included in the meal allowance. A receipt must accompany the reimbursement request for such meals.

Ancillary Expenses while Traveling Out-of-Town

Employees are permitted incidental expenses while traveling out-of-town on official District business. This includes such items as phone calls (personal calls home are regarded as incidental expenses, calls are reimbursable up to \$5.00 per trip), porter tips and baggage fees (are reimbursable with a receipt).

Valet (dry cleaning/ laundry) expenses are personal incidentals and for that reason are not reimbursable expenses.

Travel Advance: Employees can request a travel advance to defray the expenses relating to traveling out-of-town. This approval must be obtained in advance of travel and is accomplished using the SEH-194. All approved SEH-194 forms should be submitted to the Accounts Payable Department at least two (2) weeks before the trip.

Upon conclusion of travel, and within ten (10) business days, an approved SEH-195 form must be submitted to the Accounts Payable department reconcile the advance travel request expenditures proposed on the SEH-194 form. After 60 days from the date of travel if a SEH-195 form is not submitted the travel advance money will be recouped from the Employee in a subsequent paycheck.

Vacation Preceding / Following Out-of-Town

When an official period of travel is preceded or followed by an approved employee vacation or other non-work day, only such expenses that are an integral part of the official travel may be charged to the District. Transportation costs will be reimbursed up to the approved value of the round trip cost to and from the point of destination of the official business travel.

Superintendent and School Board Expense Reimbursements

Superintendent Reimbursements: Request for payment of executive credit card expenses by the Superintendent must be submitted to the Accounts Payable Department via a payment voucher (PVQ). All requests for payments require the credit card statement, original itemized receipts(s) of charges and an explanation of the business purpose(s).

All requests for payment by the Superintendent should be reviewed and approved by the CFO prior to submitting to the Accounts Payable department for processing.

School Board Reimbursements: Request for reimbursement of expenses by a School Board member must be submitted to the Account Payable Department via a payment voucher (PVQ). All requests for reimbursement require the credit card statement, original itemized receipts(s) of charges and an explanation of the business purpose(s). Payments will be made directly to the School Board member who will be responsible for making payment to their personal credit card of choice.

Late fees will not be reimbursed by the School District, but will be the responsibility of the School Board member to pay using non-School District funds.

All requests for reimbursements by the School Board should be reviewed and approved by the School Board Chairperson and the Chief of Staff prior to submitting to the Accounts Payable Department for processing.