

Silsbee I.S.D. – Travel Procedures

2021-2022

Travel Guidelines Overview:

School Board Policy DEE Local:

An employee shall be reimbursed for reasonable, allowable expenses incurred in carrying out District business only with the prior approval of the employee's immediate supervisor. Reimbursement for authorized travel shall be in accordance with legal requirements. Accounting records shall accurately reflect that no state or federal funds were used to reimburse travel expenses beyond those authorized for state employees. For any authorized expense incurred, the employee shall submit a statement, with receipts to the extent feasible, documenting actual expenses and in accordance with administrative procedures.

All travel expenses shall comply with federal, state and local guidelines. The District shall apply the same travel guidelines and rates for all travel expenses regardless of funding sources, except for the following:

- Excess lodging above the GSA schedule, as applicable only with local funds (Fund 199)

Federal Guidelines (IRS):

- All travel shall be paid under an Accountable Plan: 1) travel must have a business connection; 2) the traveler shall account for all expenses; 3) excess advances, if any, shall be reimbursed to the district; and 4) meal expense shall be in conjunction with overnight travel only.
- The meal expenses for the day of departure and return shall be adjusted based on the time of departure and return as noted in the District travel guidelines.
- Travel advances will not be provided to a traveler more than 30 days prior to the travel event.
- If any travel expenses fail to meet the accountable plan guidelines, the payment to (or on behalf of the traveler shall be taxed through the normal payroll cycle.

Federal Guidelines (EDGAR):

- All travel expenses paid with federal grant funds (typically funds 2XX) shall meet the new EDGAR requirements (200.474) such as: 1) all travel costs must be reasonable and necessary; 2) all travel costs must be consistent with the district's travel policy; 3) all travel costs must be directly related to the grant award; and 4) all travel costs must meet the obligation of expenses rule.
- In addition, all federal-funded travel expenses must meet the TEA's Current Travel & Mileage Reimbursement Rates (as published in the most recent TEA Correspondence).

State Guidelines (TEA):

- All mileage, lodging and meal reimbursement rates published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts apply to all grants (federal and state, typically funds 2XX, 3XX and 4XX) funded by TEA for individuals on travel status. Refer to GSA rates for the current fiscal year at: <https://fmx.cpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php>
- All travel expenses paid with federal and state grant funds shall meet the allowable travel expense as specified in the TexTravel Guidelines, subject to limits imposed by District travel guidelines.

Silsbee I.S.D. – Travel Procedures

2021-2022

Local District Guidelines:

The local District guidelines shall apply to all travel expense regardless of funding source for in-state and out-of-state travel. All anticipated travel costs shall be submitted on an **Overnight Trip Request Form**, approved by the immediate supervisor **and** by the Superintendent. This form should include all anticipated expenses of the trip, name of conference/seminar, dates and location of travel.

(Please note: The Overnight Trip Request Form only provides approval of travel. It does not generate payment of any travel expenses. **)**

Once the Overnight Trip Request Form is approved, a purchase order will be issued for the total estimated amount of the travel. The sole purpose of this purchase order is to ensure that the funds are available at the time of travel. An employee must complete a **Payment Request Form** with a copy of the approved Trip Request and purchase order attached. **One form must be completed for each check needed (i.e. hotel, registration fees), as separate checks are to be issued for each item. Payments for Hotel Expenses and Registration Fees must be made directly to the Hotel or Conference.** These payments are not made directly to the employee unless it is a reimbursement for expenses.

Meal reimbursement and per diem advancement will be based on times of departure and return. We do not reimburse for meals in Silsbee.

The mileage and lodging rates published by the comptroller apply to all travel reimbursement rates. The link below to the Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates should be used to determine the appropriate rates for in-state and out-of-state travel: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>

Note: General fund account shall be used to pay lodging costs in excess of the Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates. Silsbee ISD does NOT pay for any meals for day trips. A day trip is defined as a trip that does not require an overnight stay.

District Allowable Travel Expenses:

Meals:

- Overnight Meals: Reimbursed, based on **ACTUAL** receipts submitted, up to a maximum of **\$55** per day with a breakdown as follows: **\$15 for breakfast, \$15 for lunch & \$25 for dinner**. Meals will not be reimbursed without valid **detailed** receipts – credit card charge slips will **not** be reimbursed. Tax and gratuity will **not** be reimbursed. Meals in Silsbee are **NOT** allowed. Meal reimbursement and per diem advancement will be based on times of departure and return. We do not reimburse for meals in Silsbee. The district will reimburse breakfast expenses from approximately 6:00-10:30 a.m., lunch expenses from 11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., and dinner expenses from 5 – 11 p.m.
- **Non-Overnight Meals: Not an allowable expense for the District.**
- Student and Sponsor meals: Attach a list of the students and sponsors to support the number of meals requested for co-curricular or extra-curricular events to a Payment request form. Sponsor meals are only provided if the sponsor does not receive a break in duty to consume the meal. Meals are advanced at \$10 per meal. Meals for state level competition/performance are advanced at \$15 per meal. Check is

Silsbee I.S.D. – Travel Procedures

2021-2022

issued to the sponsor the Wednesday prior to travel. If a student/sponsor does not attend, the sponsor must reimburse the unspent funds to the district within 10 days of the travel event. Meals in Silsbee are **NOT** allowed.

Lodging:

- Lodging costs shall be allowable for travel events that require an overnight stay away from the traveler's home.
- The maximum nights of lodging shall be based on the start and end times of the travel event and the distance of the travel location. Lodging costs that exceed the required minimum shall not be deemed necessary or allowable travel costs. For example, if an event in Houston has a 10am or later start, lodging costs would not be reasonable, necessary or allowable travel costs.
- The traveler shall estimate the lodging expense per night (including all taxes, surcharges, etc). A conference or event hotel shall be first priority to minimize transportation costs at the event city.
- The federal per diem rates for lodging shall be used to determine the maximum amount that may be charged to a state or federal grant. The maximum lodging rate, for state and federal grants, shall be for the city of travel and the month of travel based on the GSA website. A copy of the lodging rates for the date(s) of travel shall be attached to the Overnight Trip Request for audit purposes.
- The traveler (or campus secretary on behalf of the traveler) shall make the hotel reservation and secure with his/her personal credit card, a district credit card, as appropriate. If the hotel requires a one (1) night's deposit, the deposit shall be paid with a district credit card, as appropriate.
- Hotel and travel websites such as Hotels.Com, Expedia, Travelocity, etc. shall not be used to make hotel reservations if the website requires pre-payment of the hotel stay.
- A payment request must be submitted to process a check for lodging. Confirmation of reservation and approved overnight trip request must be attached to payment requests. Lodging costs shall be paid with a district check on site at the time of arrival. Travelers shall not pay the hotel expense with personal funds and seek reimbursement after-the-fact unless some of the travel costs are for personal travel days. Under this scenario, the traveler must ensure that only district-authorized travel costs are paid with the district check.
- The traveler may, at his/her request, stay with a family member or friend instead of at a hotel. If the traveler selects this option, the traveler shall not receive any payment in lieu of lodging costs.
- The traveler may, at his/her request, choose to return to his/her home city each day of a multiple-day travel event if the distance from his/her home city to the event city is less than 125 miles each way. The traveler may receive mileage reimbursement for each trip in lieu of the lodging costs.
- When at least two (2) travelers (district employees) are traveling to the same event, they may share the lodging. Each traveler shall submit an Overnight Trip Request for his/her portion of the lodging costs. District employees shall not be required to share a room with another employee, but may be encouraged to share a room to minimize the lodging costs.
- When a traveler shares lodging with a non-district employee or district employee not in travel status, the maximum lodging costs shall be the appropriate GSA schedule rate for single occupancy.

Silsbee I.S.D. – Travel Procedures

2021-2022

- Internet charges at a lodging facility shall be allowable only for Cabinet members to support email or other work-related access. Internet charges for other staff members shall be subject to pre-approval on the Travel Authorization on a case-by-case basis.
- Lodging costs such as movies, gym facility, spa or other non-essential costs are not allowable for reimbursement or payment with any district funds.
- Lodging tips may be paid at the traveler's discretion, but will not be allowable travel costs for reimbursement or payment with any district funds.

Transportation – Flights:

- Flight costs shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home (typically, Beaumont).
- The departure and return dates of the flight shall be based on the start and end times of the travel event and the distance of the travel location.
- The actual cost of commercial air transportation (lowest coach fare) to accommodate the required travel dates of the travel event shall be allowable costs.
- Travelers should travel to his/her destination location by the most economical means, i.e. either flight or mileage; however, travelers may opt to travel to his/her event destination via district/personal vehicle in lieu of flying to the event for medical or personal comfort reasons. If the traveler opts to travel to an out-of-state destination, the costs/reimbursement for transportation shall be limited to the lesser of the mileage or estimated flight cost.
- All flights shall be purchased by the Business Office for the most economical route and schedule to meet the travel plans. Travelers shall submit his/her travel preferences to his/her respective supervisor for approval – the campus or department shall forward the preferences to the Business Office.
- All flights shall be purchased through Southwest Airlines (SWA) unless there is no flight service to the destination. Travelers on a SWA flight are allowed to check up to two (2) bags, limited to no more than 50 pounds each at no additional charge. Luggage charges for a third (3rd) bag shall not be allowable with district funds.
- For all flights, other than SWA, luggage charges, if any, shall be limited the fees for two (2) bags, up to 50 pounds per bag.
- A rental car at the event location shall be allowable if it is the most economical method to access the event location.
- All flight costs associated with deviations from the required travel plans, such as pre or post personal days shall be paid by the traveler. For example, if the required travel dates are Sunday through Wednesday, but the traveler opts to depart on Friday to spend personal days at the travel destination, the additional cost, if any, to fly on Friday shall be paid by the traveler.

Transportation – Mileage:

- Mileage reimbursements shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home campus.
- Travelers should use a district-owned vehicle as the preferred method of transportation when at least two (2) travelers (district employees) are traveling to the same event. A request for a vehicle shall be submitted on an electronic Formspace (Eduphoria). The driver shall be listed on the Authorized Drivers of District-Owned Vehicles. If a district-owned vehicle is not available for the travel event, the traveler shall be authorized to use his/her personal vehicle or request a flight, as appropriate.

Silsbee I.S.D. – Travel Procedures

2021-2022

- Travelers who opt to drive his/her personal vehicle instead of a district-owned vehicle, shall be reimbursed at the current mileage rate established by the Texas Comptroller and/or TEA, i.e. the current rate is 58.5 cents per mile for travel after 01/01/2022.
- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if any, for travel in a district-owned vehicle. Travelers shall not be required to submit any fuel receipts for travel in a personal vehicle.
- The District has chosen the Mapquest mapping system to document mileage reimbursements. A Mapquest printout with the mileage from the point of origin [home campus] to the point of destination shall be printed and attached to the Overnight Trip request and after travel the Travel Expense Form.
- Mileage costs related to personal destinations before, during or after the travel event shall not be allowable costs. In addition, mileage costs due to the traveler's error in reaching the destination, such as getting lost shall not be allowable costs.
- When four or fewer employees travel on the same itinerary, it is recommended that every effort be made to travel in one vehicle to reduce travel costs.

Transportation – Rental Car:

- Rental car costs shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home via a flight if use of the rental car is the most economical mode of transportation.
- Rental car costs shall not be allowable if the traveler can reach the travel destination via taxi or shuttle at a lower cost.
- Rental car costs shall include all applicable taxes and mandatory charges. Costs may also include a charge for a collision damage waiver or a loss damage waiver if not already included in the contracted rate for the rental. [Note: The district auto insurance policy includes liability coverage for hired autos such as rental cars up to the policy limits.]
- Charges for liability insurance supplement, personal accident insurance, safe trip insurance or personal effects insurance are not allowable costs. .
- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if any, for travel in a rental car.
- Rental car costs associated with deviations from the required travel plans, such as pre or post personal days shall be paid by the traveler. For example, if the required travel dates are Sunday through Wednesday, but the traveler opts to depart on Friday to spend personal days at the travel destination, the additional cost, if any, for the additional days (Friday & Saturday) shall be paid by the traveler.
- Charges for additional drivers may only be reimbursed if incurred for a business reason such as both drivers are district employees on travel status.

Transportation – Parking Charges:

- Parking charges shall be allowable for all travel events if the traveler is traveling in a rental car, district-owned vehicle, or personal car while on travel status.
- Parking at the airport at the traveler's home location shall be allowable, as appropriate, for all required travel dates. Additional parking days, at the traveler's option due to pre or post travel days shall not be allowable costs with district funds.
- Parking receipts must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Expense Form.

Transportation – Toll Charges:

- Toll charges shall be allowable for all in-state travel events, as applicable, if the traveler is traveling in a rental car, district-owned vehicle, or personal car while on travel status.
- Toll receipts, as appropriate, must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Expense Form.

Silsbee I.S.D. – Travel Procedures

2021-2022

Registration Fees:

- Registration fees for a conference, workshop, or other training event as supported by a registration form are allowable costs. Fee-based optional events such as a speaker or awards luncheon shall be approved on a case-by-case basis if the event fee is reasonable and the traveler would derive a work-related benefit from attending the event. Fee-based optional events such as socials, excursions, tours, or other purely entertainment events are not allowable costs.
- The authorized travel expenses shall be supported by the registration form and Schedule of Events. The documentation shall include the start and end dates of the event, event location and registration fee.
- A copy of the registration form and Schedule of Events shall be submitted with the Overnight Trip Request Form.

District Non-Allowable Travel Expenses:

- Alcoholic drinks or beverages
- Entertainment expenses, such as in-room movies, fee-based hotel amenities such as gyms, spas, etc.
- Expenses for spouses or other non-district employees
- Expenses due to the traveler's failure to cancel a registration or travel arrangements (except for extenuating circumstances)
- Hotel Internet charges (unless expense is work-related and pre-approved on travel authorization)
- Non-substantiated or fraudulent travel reimbursement requests shall be non-allowable travel expenses. Travelers who submit fraudulent travel reimbursement requests shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.