

# Santa Barbara Unified School District

## Administrative Regulation

**Business and Instructional Operations**

**AR 3350**

### **TRAVEL EXPENSES**

The purpose of this regulation is to establish guidelines to reimburse Santa Barbara Unified School District officials and employees for travel expenses incurred as a result of their official duties at rates established by the Governing Board and in accordance with the specific provisions.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for the administration of this administrative regulation.

#### **General Information**

District employees are representing the Santa Barbara Unified School District while traveling and should present themselves in a professional manner at all times. If at any time during travel an employee's behavior is deemed to be inappropriate, as determined by current Board Policy 4119.21, "Professional Standards," the employee shall be reprimanded and may lose all future travel privileges.

All out-of-state travel must be approved in advance by the Board. All travel arrangements will then be made by the Purchasing Department once Board approval is granted.

Charges for personal goods and services, entertainment and travel not related to District business are not reimbursable. Unallowable expenditures include: personal long-distance phone calls, laundry, room service fees, alcohol and tobacco, auto rental for personal use, in-room movies, non-itemized receipts, copies of receipts, costs for non-employees such as spouses and children.

Any travel arrangement made by a District employee and not the Purchasing Department for travel greater than \$400 will not be reimbursed.

All itemized, original receipts must be saved for any single expenditure over \$25, including airline baggage fees, rental car, lodging, taxi, miscellaneous expenses, registration etc. This excludes per diem meals. If the original receipt is unavailable, a Missing Receipts memo should be completed and submitted with the Travel Expense Claim Voucher (TECV) to Accounting.

#### **Request to be Absent (RTBA)**

A Request to be Absent form must be completed for all travel by each employee and contain the full legal name of the employee and full budget coding. Every RTBA form must be signed by the employee and the Principal/Department head. If the travel is over \$400, the RTBA requires additional approval by the Superintendent or designee no later than 30 days prior to travel. Failure to adhere to these deadlines may result in the denial of the travel request. Any expenses not listed on the approved RTBA will not be reimbursed. The Governing Board must approve a RTBA for all out-of-state travel and any travel greater than \$3,000 either by person or by group. In no case shall arrangements be made by an employee or the Purchasing Department prior to full approval of the RTBA form. Arrangements will only be made for the approved duration per the RTBA form.

#### **Registration**

Conference registrations less than \$400 and for events in-state can be made by the employee and then submitted for reimbursement upon completion of the travel. Any registration over \$400 is to be made by the Purchasing

Department. Registration requests must be submitted as soon as possible to take advantage of all available discounts on hotels, registration and transportation.

### **Transportation**

All airfare travel is to be made by the Purchasing Department and only coach/economy seats will be purchased. Upgrades made to an economy fare are not reimbursable for either plane or train fares. Travelers can be reimbursed for the cost of one checked bag roundtrip with an original receipt. Any change fees made by the employee are considered to be a personal expense and will not be reimbursed.

Hotel shuttles should be utilized whenever possible. Employees should make every effort to minimize the cost of ground transportation, including ride-sharing. All taxis, shuttle services, etc should be included on the RTBA.

If a rental car is needed and authorized on the RTBA, the Purchasing Department will make the reservation prior to travel. Employees are not permitted to make rental car reservations. Liability insurance should not be accepted when renting a car; it is covered through the District's insurance when the Purchasing Department makes a reservation. Purchase of additional liability insurance cannot be reimbursed.

Parking charges will be reimbursed at actual cost, with the submission of original itemized receipts. No valet parking costs will be reimbursed unless self-parking is not available.

### **Mileage**

Mileage will be paid at the current per mile rate established by the Internal Revenue Service to those officials and employees required to use their own privately-owned vehicle.

When two or more people are departing from the same area and will be traveling to the same activity, carpooling with a minimum of two people per car is highly recommended to prevent a possible gift of public funds.. Carpooling must be notated on the TECV, along with a listing of carpooling attendees.

All mileage shall be computed from the normal work location to the destination point and return using the most direct route, unless mileage between the employee's residence and the destination is less. In that case, the lesser mileage amount will be used. The employee must submit proof of mileage (i.e., MapQuest) to the Accounting Department when submitting the TECV for reimbursement.

### **Meals**

An employee is eligible for meals reimbursement at the per diem rate set by the Internal Revenue Service while attending any meeting, convention, conference, or seminar on District business, **unless** meals are provided by the conference/event. The per diem rate for all meals includes incidentals, is defined by the IRS to include fees and tips for porters, baggage carriers, bell staff and housecleaning staff. If the employee is unable to eat the provided meals due to dietary restrictions, a note should be made on the conference agenda next to the meal and submitted with the Travel Expense Claim Voucher. Employees should only pay for their own meals; they will not be reimbursed for paying for another employee's meal.

If requesting meal reimbursement for a one-day trip, per IRS regulations, the reimbursement is treated as taxable wages.

### **Accommodations**

The Purchasing Department is to make **all** reservations for overnight accommodations, in accordance with the approved RTBA. Any reservations made by a District employee will not be reimbursed.

Accommodations can be reserved for the night prior to the beginning of a conference when the time or travel schedules require travel at unreasonable hours, or could potentially cause the traveler to arrive late on the first day of the event. Accommodations will not be booked for or reimbursed for the night following the event except due to unforeseen consequences, such as the cancellation of a flight.

**Reimbursement Procedure**

Upon completion of the travel, the employee must complete the TECV, attach a copy of the approved RTBA form with budget coding, conference agenda and original itemized receipts and submit to the administrator of their site or department. Once approved, the admin office will then forward the claim and supporting documentation to the Accounting department for processing. Reimbursement requests must be submitted to the Accounting Department within 60 days of the completion of the travel and within the same fiscal year.

SANTA BARBARA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Santa Barbara, California

April 26, 2011; January 10, 2012, March 15, 2019