OKLAHOMA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION AND
REIMBURSEMENT REGULATION

SUMMARY AND RESPONSIBILITIES
This regulation shall govern all travel regardless of funding source. All travel expenses shall be properly authorized, documented, and reimbursed in accordance with this regulation, Oklahoma School Law, and any other applicable state, federal or IRS laws and/or regulations.

Oklahoma City Public Schools (District) Employees and Board Members (i.e. Travelers) may be authorized to travel in order to participate in meetings, conferences, seminars, and workshops that encourage professional growth. In addition, the employee’s job description may require in district travel between District sites or businesses. Authorization to travel will be based on the availability of funds, staffing requirements, and the employee’s role in the District or with the sponsoring organization.

Travelers can not authorize their own travel or approve their own travel reimbursement or other travel expenses (hotel, airfare or registrations, etc.).

Travel requests will be initiated at least 30 days in advance of any conference deadline or travel date to ensure cost efficiencies and to complete the approval processes.

When two or more employees travel on the same date(s), with the same itinerary, for the same or similar business purpose, coordination of travel must occur among the travelers to reduce costs.

**Purchase Orders for all travel expenses are required prior to travel.** When authorized, Travelers may be reimbursed for reasonable, necessary, and properly documented travel expenses. It is the responsibility of the Traveler to obtain a Purchase Order (PO) in accordance with Oklahoma School Law.

Any travel expense occurring prior to obtaining an approved PO will be an illegal purchase (IP). Any request for expense reimbursement will require the completion of the IP form with approval by the Traveler’s supervisor, appropriate cabinet member, Purchasing Director, and CFO before reimbursement is considered (reimbursement is NOT guaranteed).

Travelers are responsible to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise when traveling on personal business. Excess costs for first-class or business-class airfare, food, tips, materials, supplies, circuitous routes, luxury accommodations, lavish auto rentals, and/or such services are not permitted and will not be reimbursed.
TRAVEL APPROVAL
Travel and Professional Development (PD) approvals must be completed as designated on the District’s PD/Travel Request form. Board Member travel does not require any authorization.

The PD/Travel Request form must include:
1. Employee’s name, title, and employee ID Number
2. Projected travel dates,
3. Purpose of the travel and its benefit to the District,
4. Conference Agenda (for PD),
5. Projected expenditures for transportation, lodging, per diem, mileage, incidental expenses, conference registration fee, rental vehicle, etc.,
6. Funding source, and
7. Authorized Signatures - PD travel requires Cabinet level approval. Federally funded travel requires additional approval from the Federal Program Administrator.

The signature authorities are responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, verifying the PD/Travel Request form information, and insuring that the documentation is reasonable, complete, and accurate.

Authorization signatures are as follows:
- In District Area -- Employee’s supervisor/director
- Out of District Area -- Employee’s supervisor/director and the Cabinet Member
- Out of State -- Employee’s supervisor/director, cabinet member and Superintendent
- Out of Country (Students, Overnight Stay) -- Superintendent

PURCHASE ORDER
The Encumbrance Clerk and the Purchasing Officer are authorized by the OKCPS Board of Education (BOE) to issue POs to pay approved travel reimbursements.

Upon final travel approval, the PD/Travel Request Form and Conference Agenda must be uploaded as an attachment to the Purchase Requisition (PR) in SAP. Once the PR is approved via SAP release strategy(ies), the PR will be reviewed and converted to a Purchase Order (PO) by the Purchasing Department. POs are submitted to each regular BOE meeting as an agenda item requiring BOE approval. No reimbursement payments will be processed until the BOE has approved the PO.

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT
Travelers are to submit an Expense Reimbursement form, along with the appropriate documentation, ten (10) days after returning from the travel event. The Traveler is responsible for accurately and ethically reporting expenses in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
Reimbursement requests must be submitted on the *PD/Travel Expense* form with the required documentation and signed by the Traveler and the designated authorities. Board Members should sign and submit their reimbursement form with complete itemized receipts to the Board Clerk.

Mileage reimbursements at the applicable IRS rate can be made for traveling both in and outside the District, but no mileage shall be reimbursed for commuting (traveling between the regular work site and the residence of an employee or a Board Member).

School Activity Fund Accounts may be used for travel expenses for school activities, professional meetings, etc. School Activity Fund Accounts may not be used to pay for adults/teachers traveling without students.

**Authorized reimbursement expenses may include:**

If OKCPS is unable to issue POs directly to the providers/vendors for transportation, lodging, and conference registration, then a PO for reimbursement will be issued to the Traveler as follows:

A. Transportation Reimbursement:
   1. Airline flights shall be reimbursed on actual cost basis when supported by documentation verifying proof of payment. Airline flights shall be at coach rate and may also include baggage fees (1 bag), seat fees, or other fees associated with air travel.

   2. **Mileage reimbursement shall not exceed the cost of flying coach plus other business-related transportation costs.** Mileage reimbursement will be made only for the most direct route in travel and shall be supported by:
      a. Date of travel
      b. Business purpose of travel
      c. Allowable miles traveled
      d. Applicable IRS mileage reimbursement rates will be used
      e. Comparative cost calculations if choosing travel via personal automobile rather than air travel.

   3. District-owned vehicles -- valid itemized receipts or documentation for necessary gas, oil, toll fees, parking fees, and repairs are required if purchased from personal funds for business travel.

   4. Taxi fare, parking fees, and toll fees shall be reimbursed on actual cost basis and supported by documentation.

   5. Rental car/UBER shall be reimbursed on actual cost basis and supported by itemized documentation.

B. Lodging Reimbursement:
   1. Reimbursement shall be based on the actual cost incurred and supported by itemized documentation.
2. The maximum amount to be reimbursed shall not exceed the actual cost of a single room rate, or double room rate if two OKCPS employees occupy the same room.

3. Itemized receipts listing the guest’s name, the amounts charged, and showing printed name and address of service business must accompany all requests for reimbursement. Lodging receipts should indicate a zero balance or a charge to a credit card.

4. All lodging shall be secured at a reasonable rate.

5. Hotel peripheral charges such as bar, room service, or other costs not necessary for the conduct of District business activities will not be considered for reimbursement.

6. Hotel Resort Fees should be opted out when possible. If Resort Fees are mandatory, an itemized list of the fees benefits must be provided to ensure there are no alcoholic items. Resort Fees must be paid by the Traveler at the time of check out.

C. Per Diem Meal Reimbursement:
1. Per IRS regulations, per diem reimbursements can be paid if travel includes an overnight stay.

2. The OKCPS uses the current standard Per Diem rates by city as established by the General Services Administration (GSA).

3. The following per diem schedule will apply:
   Board Members receive 100% of GSA Per Diem on First and Last Day of Travel inconstant of Staff Reimbursement.
   • Date of Departure regardless of time – 50% of the GSA rate
   • Full day(s) out of state - 100% of the GSA rate
   • Day of Return regardless of time - 50% of GSA rate
   • Adjustments can be made to the per diem reimbursement if the conference/event provides breakfast, lunch or dinner above and beyond the typical continental breakfast/box lunch.

4. No purchase of alcohol will be reimbursed.

D. Other Travel Expenses – Other approved travel expenses, with itemized receipts and descriptions, could include, but not limited to:
1. Registration fees

2. Additional Baggage fees will be reimbursed when overnight travel is for five (5) or more days.

E. Travel Expenses of Persons with Disabilities – Reimbursement may be approved for extraordinary travel expenses incurred by an individual with a disability as defined by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Reimbursement requires that the expenses be approved and authorized by the Superintendent and identified on the Expense Reimbursement form as “Reasonable Accommodations for Claimant with Disability as Approved by the Superintendent.” Expenses allowed may include:
1. Transportation, lodging, and subsistence expenses incurred by an attendant approved and authorized to accompany the Traveler when assistance is necessary for travel.
2. Cost of specialized transportation to and from the points of travel.
3. Costs of specialized services provided by a commercial carrier necessary to accommodate the Traveler’s disability.
4. Costs incurred as a direct result of the Traveler’s disability for baggage handling in connection with public transportation or at lodging facilities.
5. Cost of renting and/or transporting a wheelchair.

F. Other Special Circumstances
   1. Employees are not authorized to pay the travel expenses of another employee without approval from the Superintendent or CFO prior to making travel arrangements.
   2. Emergency situations (flight cancellation, weather delay, etc.) which should be immediately communicated to the CHRO and CFO.

G. Board Members are responsible for approving their reimbursement.

The Traveler’s signature on the reimbursement claim form affirms that the travel was performed as stated and that the claim is a true and correct account of expenses. The signature also certifies that none of the expenses claimed have been previously reimbursed or otherwise provided by other sources. By signing the form, the Traveler is held liable under possible penalty of law for any falsified expenses or misstatement of claim, in addition to adverse employment actions that may be taken by the District against the Traveler including possible employment termination.

Claims for Reimbursement:
- Must be submitted within 10 days of completion of travel.
- Must be completed with the .pdf fillable Expense Reimbursement Form available on the District’s website under the Department>Financial Services>NEW Travel Process page or through the District Travel Process & Forms button under Staff Tools. Handwritten requests will not be processed.
- The completion of the GR (Goods Receipt) in SAP and approval signatures on the Expense Reimbursement Form signify that the reimbursement claim is accurate, complete, and in compliance with all BOE policies and regulations.
- In the event of an emergency (flight cancellation, weather delays), travel will be reimbursed when extended beyond the dates of the attended travel with approval by the designated authority. Travelers should make every attempt to notify their supervisor or other District staff of the emergency travel extension.
- Expenses of any family member or other non-District travelers attending conference/meeting will not be paid with District funds.
- Miscellaneous Expense on the reimbursement claim form:
  1. Miscellaneous expenses must be listed separately on the Expense Reimbursement form and must have a clear business purpose. Purchases and charges of a personal nature will not be reimbursed.
2. Original itemized receipts must be attached to Expense Reimbursement form when seeking reimbursement for any miscellaneous expense, including any sales tax associated with the purchase. By law, all receipts are to contain the following information:
   a. Date the expense was incurred,
   b. Quantity purchased and amount paid,
   c. Description of the goods or services purchased, and
   d. Name and address of the vendor.

Lost Receipts
Lost receipts will require the completion of the Lost Receipt Affidavit by the Traveler attached to the Expense Reimbursement Form.