



**Texarkana**  
Independent School District

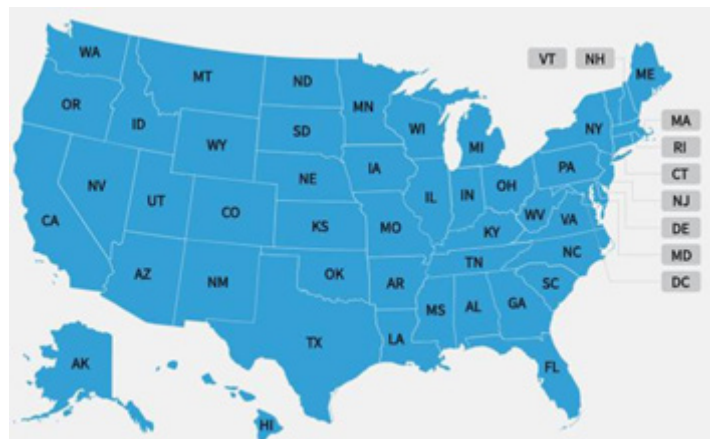
## **GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL**

### **TRAVEL GUIDELINES OVERVIEW**

TISD is committed to providing quality professional development through travel opportunities in a safe and efficient manner. These guidelines and procedures are developed in order to assist staff members with understanding professional travel expectations of the district. Because employees are traveling utilizing district budget monies paid for by tax dollars, we are held to a higher level of accountability for business travel and expenditures. The costs and time away from work for professional development will be used effectively and efficiently. If any employee has concerns regarding travel arrangements, it is very important that they notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible so that other arrangements may be considered. TISD is committed to the safety of our staff and want employees to feel confident in their travel arrangements.

### **TRAVEL RATES:**

The mileage, lodging, and meal reimbursement 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: <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/104711>



### **Important Reminders:**

1. Travel on or AFTER October 1, 2019 thru September 30, 2020 – Use the 2020 Per Diem Rates
2. The per diem rate schedule for the city of travel should be uploaded with the Skyward requisition and attached to all Travel Authorization forms. For lodging only, enter the rate for the month of travel on the Travel Authorization form under GSA Rate. The meal rates do not change based on the month of travel.

## FISCAL 2020 TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT RATES

### EMPLOYEES

<b>In-State or Out-of-State Meals and Lodging</b>	Refer to the GSA's federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates, effective Oct. 1, 2019.  If the city is not listed, but the county is listed, use the daily rate of the county.  For locations not listed (city or county), the daily rates are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lodging In-State/Out-of-State: up to \$96 (10/1/2019- 8/31/2020)</li><li>• Meals In-State/Out-of-State: not to exceed \$36</li></ul>
<b>In-State or Out-of-State Non-Overnight Meals</b>	Not to exceed \$36 daily
<b>Automobile Mileage</b>	57.50 cents per mile (Jan. 1 – Dec 31, 2020)

*Note:* Excerpt from Texas Comptroller website:  
<https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/texttravel/rates/current.php>

### **PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL REGULATIONS (REGULATION) DEE**

Each District employee who is authorized to travel assumes, with the acceptance of that authorization, a responsibility to limit travel expense claims to those actually incurred on travel that is clearly for the purpose of discharging essential official business of the District. Travel planning should take into consideration the most economical means of accomplishing the authorized task.

Administrators who are responsible for making travel assignments and for approving travel plans have the additional responsibility of limiting travel plans to those trips that are clearly in accordance with Board policy, the District and/or Campus Improvement Plans, or official Board action.

Employees must secure prior approval for professional development travel through the TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM and receive a TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM confirmation number. Reasonable departure and return times for overnight travel will be based on when the conference begins and ends with minimal work time lost.

- **Vehicle Use:** Vehicles are available to reserve through the TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM process. When 1-4 persons are traveling to the same conference, one school vehicle will be sent to that conference. Employees choosing to take their own vehicle rather than riding with others attending the conference will do so at their own expense. When a school vehicle is not available and/or rental car is not available, persons will be provided a gas card or reimbursed mileage at a rate approved by the District.
- **Hotel Expenses:** Hotel payment is made based on double occupancy. Employees who choose to stay by themselves or with spouse when traveling to the same conference as other employees will be responsible for the payment of their own room. 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.

- **Overnight Travel Meals:** Meal reimbursement will be according to District regulations for overnight travel. Upon return from travel, meals will be reimbursed up to the allowable daily amount documented with the applicable detailed or itemized receipts. Employees will be reimbursed for meals only (does not include snacks or drinks outside of meals). Detailed receipts must be submitted for reimbursement within 10 days from return of travel. If a meal is provided within the cost of the conference and an employee chooses to eat elsewhere, that expense would not be reimbursable (Meal Reimbursement Form for Overnight Travel).
- **Day Travel Meals:** Day travel per diem will be treated as taxable income per IRS Publication 463 and reimbursed to employees through payroll procedures (Day Travel Form)

*Any exception to the travel regulations within this document must be approved by the Deputy Superintendent or Executive Director of Business Operations*

## **OUT OF DISTRICT TRAVEL DEPARTURE AND RETURN GUIDELINES**

### **Conferences: Further than 3 hours from Texarkana**

- If the conference begins at 8:00 a.m., (and travel is further than 3 hours) departure will be approved for the prior day.

### **Conferences: 2-3 hours from Texarkana**

- Travel arrangements to Dallas or Little Rock will be made depending upon the time the workshop begins. For example – an 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. start time would possibly result in an overnight stay and travel the prior afternoon following normal work hours.
- If it is determined that an overnight stay is necessary, departure would be approximately 3:00-4:00 p.m. All staff members should make arrangements to work a full day.
- A 10:00 a.m. or later start time would not result in an overnight stay – departure would be between 6:00 a.m. – 7:00 a.m. for workshops in Dallas or Little Rock.

### **Conferences: Less than 2 hours from Texarkana**

- Other workshops/conferences less than two hours from Texarkana – would need to depart between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. depending upon the start time and distance from Texarkana and return the same day.
- No overnight travel will be approved for trips that are less than 2 hours from Texarkana unless there are extenuating circumstances that are approved in advance of completing the TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form (examples, Mt. Pleasant, Sulphur Springs, Gilmer, Pittsburg, Tyler, etc.).

### **Departure Times – Leaving the Day Before Conference/AESOP**

- Trips requiring 3-4 hours (Dallas/Ft Worth) of drive time: depart 3:00 pm or later.
- Trips requiring 5-6 hours (Houston or Austin) of drive time: depart 12:00 pm (noon) or later. (Staff members should work in their normal positions for at least one half day according to their work schedule and enter one half day of professional leave in AESOP). **Employees who choose to leave before this allowed departure time will be required to take personal leave.**
- Trips requiring 7 or more hours (San Antonio, Corpus Christi) of drive time: Depart 10:00 am or later. (Staff members should enter a full day of professional leave in AESOP)

**NOTE:** If you have any concerns about the departure times for any professional development travel, please contact your immediate supervisor as soon as possible.

### **Final Day of the Conference**

- If you are not going to attend sessions on the final day – travel arrangements should be made to return home on the previous evening. (This should be determined prior to arranging travel by looking through the conference session catalog).
- If arrangements are not made to return home the previous evening before the final conference day, staff members should attend sessions that are offered prior to departure for home on the final conference day.
- All staff should return the same day the conference ends when driving within 6 hours or less when the conference ends on or before 4:00 p.m.
- Overnight stays for travel that are further than 6 hours and/or out of state travel that requires airline accommodations will be considered on an individual basis dependent upon flight times, conference ending time, and/or driving distance.
- Approval for overnight stays on the last day of the conference must be requested prior to entering the TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form.

**NOTE:** If you have any concerns about the Return times for any staff development travel, please contact your immediate supervisor as soon as possible.

### **TRANSPORTATION-FLIGHTS**

- Air travel will be paid at actual cost when the air travel is required by the District and/or air travel is less expensive than traveling by other means. Air Travel for personal convenience will not be allowed.
- 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 their destination location by the most economical means, i.e. either flight or mileage; however, travelers may opt to travel to their 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 their travel preferences to their respective supervisor for approval – the campus or department shall forward the preferences to the Business Office with approved travel information (LOAS) including agenda.
- For all flights, luggage charges shall be reimbursed for 1 bag, not to exceed the weight limit for the airline.
- A rental car at the event location shall be allowable if it is the most economical method to access the event location and if the estimated cost is less than a taxi or shuttle.
- All flight costs associated with deviations from the required travel plans, such as pre or post personal days or canceled travel plans due to personal reasons shall be paid and/or reimbursed 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.

## **HOTEL RESERVATIONS PROCESS**

1. Enter TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form with all areas completed.
2. Notification will be sent via email once the TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form is approved and a number is assigned.
3. To make hotel reservations, you can reserve your room on your personal credit card **OR** use a district credit card.
  - A. To reserve a hotel room on a personal credit card:
    - a. When reserving a hotel with your personal credit card, ask what the tax rate is without the state tax included. Print your confirmation and detailed (itemized) quote (must show taxes charged). Make a note of the tax rate not including state tax. Include hotel parking. Check for conference parking rate.
    - b. Submit a check request in Skyward for Citibank for the amount of the quote with the tax rate not including the state tax. You must have an approved TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form before submitting check request.
    - c. Be aware that the credit card number that is given to hotel is NOT the credit card you will use to pay for the room at the hotel.
  - B. To reserve hotel using a district credit card:
    - a. Designated district personnel will make all professional travel hotel reservations.
    - b. Designated personnel will call hotel or use the links provided by the conference hotel system to set up the reservations.
    - c. If the hotel charges for parking, check for the conference rate and be sure to include that price on the TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form.
    - d. Designated personnel approved to secure hotel reservations will utilize the district credit card number provided by the Business Office.
    - e. Be aware that the credit card number given to the hotel at the time of booking is NOT the credit card that will be used to pay for the rooms at the hotel.
    - f. Print confirmation of hotel and detailed (itemized) hotel quote (must show taxes charged).
    - g. Submit a check request in Skyward for Citibank for the amount of the hotel quote. You must have approved TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form before submitting check request.
4. **Business Office: BEFORE TRIP:** As soon as all information is gather, but at least 7 days before trip. Place information in Business Office mailbox in copy room at Central Office. DO NOT PLACE IN SCHOOL MAIL
  - A. Approved check request to Citibank
  - B. Approved TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form
  - C. Conference/Event information with location and dates (AGENDA)
  - D. Hotel reservation confirmation with pricing information (NO TEXAS STATE TAX)
5. **To Accounting Clerk BEFORE TRIP (Day before or day of leaving for trip)**
  - A. Pick up credit card and Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax form from the Accounting Clerk.
  - B. You must see the **Accounting Clerk** personally to get credit card
  - C. The **Accounting Clerk** will give you an envelope with the credit card and a *Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate (You will need this for the hotel not to charge you Texas state tax)*
  - D. If the **Accounting Clerk** is out for the day, the Chief Accountant will have the envelope.

6. **At Hotel day of arrival**
  - A. Give hotel copy of the *Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate*. You will need to sign and date the Certificate.
  - B. Give hotel the new credit card and tell them to use it instead of the one the reservation was made with.
  - C. You will need to supply your own credit card for incidentals. *If hotel attempts to put the incidental charge on the district credit card it will decline the entire transaction.*
  - D. Very important to remind them you do not pay Texas state tax.
  
7. **Hotel day of departure**
  - A. Get receipt and **VERIFY BEFORE YOU LEAVE TEXAS SALES TAX WAS NOT CHARGED** and the **PROPER CREDIT CARD WAS CHARGED**. It will usually say Master Card and the last 4 digits of the card.
  - B. This step is **VERY IMPORTANT**.
  
8. **To the Accounting Clerk AFTER TRIP (First day of business after trip. No later than 5 business days after returning.)**
  - A. Return to the **Accounting Clerk** the **detailed (itemized)** hotel receipt (*sign your name on receipt*) and credit card.
  - B. Keep a copy of receipt for your records.
  - C. If the **Accounting Clerk** is out, see the **Chief Accountant**.
  
9. **Summary of documents and keep a copy for your records**
  - A. Approved TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form
  - B. Approved check request for Citibank (Designated Personnel)
  - C. Detailed (Itemized) Hotel Receipt signed by you
  - D. Hotel Information
  - E. Conference Information (AGENDA)
  - F. Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate

## **NOTES**

1. When filling out TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form enter all information for each area you will need for trip.
2. On TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form you must put in a budget number.

## **OVERNIGHT PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL MEALS**

1. **As soon as possible but within 10 business days after returning from out of district professional travel**
  - A. Employee will submit receipts to their campus secretary or Instructional Services personnel.
  - B. Designated personnel will enter a check request in Skyward for the total of meal receipts allowed. Please take into account the maximum reimbursement amounts.
  - C. Print copy of check request
  
2. **Submit to Business Office after the trip (Keep a copy for your records)**
  - A. Place information in Business Office mailbox.
  - B. Copy of check request for the total of meal receipts should be retained by staff member.
  - C. Original **detailed (itemized)** receipt of all meals should be sent to Business Office. Each receipt must have the employee's signature. Attach originals to a single sheet of paper in date order.
  - D. Include copy of approved TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form
  - E. Conference agenda or other information showing any meals provided/not provided (*this can be found on the conference website before the trip*).
  - F. Hotel information for any meals provided/not provided. Some hotels offer breakfast free.

## NOTES ON MEALS FOR OVERNIGHT TRAVEL

1. NO snacks or grocery store purchases will be reimbursed.
2. When purchasing from convenient stores (Buc-ee's, Czech Stop, Ice Cream parlors) Please be mindful that purchase will only be reimbursed for items that would constitute individual meal. Items requested to be reimbursed should be itemized and detailed.
3. ONLY qualifying breakfast, lunch and/or dinner will be reimbursed.
4. No room service fees will be paid.
5. Food delivery services (GrubHub, pizza, Waiter, etc) will be allowed within reimbursement, minus the delivery fee.
6. NO alcohol will be reimbursed. It is better to put on separate receipt completely.
7. Tips and gratuities maximum limits are 15% for single person or 18% for a group.
8. Tips and gratuities are not eligible for reimbursement from grant funds.
9. Meals will be reimbursed at the maximum of \$8 for breakfast, \$12 for lunch, \$16 dollars for dinner for a total allotment of \$36/day.
  - a. If you are allotted a meal and you do not spend it on one meal you CAN carry it over to the next meal on the same day. For example: Allotment for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner would be \$36 total. If you do not eat breakfast (and it is not provided by conference or hotel) or lunch (and it is not provided by conference) you will be allotted \$36 for dinner.
  - b. The maximum totals of meal include the amount of the tip. Example: If dinner meal was \$15.50 and you left 15% tip of \$2.33 totaling \$17.83, you would only be reimbursed \$16.
10. Detailed itemized receipt must show what you ordered not just a total cost of meal. Some restaurants do not automatically provide itemized receipts - you may have to request it.
11. DO NOT tape or highlight over the writing on the receipts. **This destroys the print.**
12. If you travel with family, only 1 meal on each receipt will be reimbursed. Please circle the meal that was for the TISD employee. Best practice would be to get your meal on a separate receipt.
13. On TISD TRAVEL SYSTEM form fill in all information relating to the trip and a budget number must be entered.