

# REGULATION

## WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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### R 6471 SCHOOL DISTRICT TRAVEL

#### A. Definitions (N.J.S.A. 6A:23A-1.2)

1. For the purpose of this Policy, “travel expenditures” means those costs paid by the school district using local, State, or Federal funds, whether directly by the school district or by employee reimbursement, for travel by school district employees and district Board of Education members, to the following five types of travel events:
  - a. Training and seminars – means all regularly scheduled, formal residential or non-residential training functions conducted at a hotel, motel, convention center, residential facility, or at any educational institution or facility;
  - b. Conventions and conferences – means general programs, sponsored by professional associations on a regular basis, which address subjects of particular interest to a school district or are convened to conduct association business. The primary purpose of employee attendance at conferences and conventions is the development of new skills and knowledge or the reinforcement of those skills and knowledge in a particular field related to school district operations. These are distinct from formal staff training and seminars, although some training may take place at such events;
  - c. School district sponsored events – means conferences, conventions, receptions, or special meetings, where the school plans, develops, implements, and coordinates the event and is the event’s primary financial backer. School district employees are actively involved in working the event and other employees may attend as participants;
  - d. Regular school district business travel – means all regular official business travel, including attendance at meetings, conferences, and any other gatherings which are not covered by the definitions included in a., b., and c. above. Regular school district business travel also includes attendance at regularly scheduled in-State county meetings and Department-sponsored or association-sponsored events provided free of charge and regularly scheduled in-State professional development



activities with a registration fee that does not exceed \$150 per employee or district Board member. The \$150 limit per employee or district Board member may be adjusted by inflation; and

- e. Retreats – means meetings with school district employees and school Board members, held away from the normal work environment at which organizational goals and objectives are discussed. If available, school district facilities shall be utilized for this type of event.

B. Maximum Travel Budget (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3)

1. Annually in the prebudget year, the Board of Education shall establish by resolution a maximum travel expenditure amount for the budget year, which the school district shall not exceed. The resolution shall also include the maximum amount established for the prebudget year and the amount spent to date.
  - a. The maximum school district travel expenditure amount shall include all travel supported by local and State funds.
  - b. The Board may exclude travel expenditures supported by Federal funds from the maximum travel expenditure amount.
    - (1) If Federal funds are excluded from the established maximum amount, the Board shall include in the resolution the total amount of travel supported by Federal funds from the prior year, prebudget year, and projected for the budget year.
  - c. Exclusion of Federal funds from the annual maximum travel budget shall not exempt such travel from the requirements applicable to State and local funds.
2. The Board of Education may authorize an annual maximum amount per employee for regular business travel only for which Board of Education approval is not required.
  - a. The annual maximum shall not exceed \$1,500 and shall be subject to the approval requirements in N.J.S.A. 18A:19-1.
  - b. Regular school district business travel as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-1.2 and in this Regulation shall include attendance at regularly scheduled in-State county meetings and Department-sponsored or association-



sponsored events provided free of charge. It also shall include regularly scheduled in-State professional development activities for which the registration fee does not exceed \$150 per employee or Board member.

- c. Regular school district business travel shall require approval of the Superintendent prior to obligating the school district to pay related expenses and prior to attendance at the travel event.
  - (1) The Superintendent shall designate an alternate approval authority to approve travel requests in his or her absence when necessary to obtain timely district Board of Education approval.
  - (2) The Superintendent shall establish, in writing, the internal levels of approval required prior to his or her approval of the travel event, as applicable.

C. Travel Approval Procedures (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.4)

- 1. All travel requests for employees of the school district shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designee and approved in writing by the Superintendent and approved by a majority of the Board of Education's full voting membership, except if the Board of Education has excluded regular business travel from prior approval in Policy 6471 pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3(b), prior to obligating the school district to pay related expenses and prior to attendance at the travel event.
  - a. The Superintendent shall designate an alternate approval authority to approve travel requests in his or her absence when necessary to obtain timely Board approval.
  - b. The Superintendent shall establish, in writing, the internal levels of preliminary approval required prior to the Superintendent's approval of the travel event, as applicable.
    - (1) The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary or designee shall review all travel requests either before or after the Superintendent's approval and prior to submission of the Board for approval to determine if the expenses as outlined in the request are in compliance with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7, the current State travel payment guidelines established by the Department of the Treasury, and



the current guidelines established by the Federal Office of Management and Budget.

- (a) If any travel expenses requested are not in compliance with the guidelines outlined above, the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary or designee will return the request to be revised in accordance with the guidelines outlined above.
  - (b) The Superintendent may deny the request, approve the request conditioned upon the staff member assuming the financial responsibility for those travel expenses that are not in compliance with the guidelines, or may return the request to the school staff member to be revised in accordance with the guidelines outlined above.
2. All travel requests for Board members shall require prior approval by a majority of the Board's full voting membership, except where the Board has excluded regular business travel from prior approval pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3(b), and the travel shall be in compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24 and 24.1.
3. The Board of Education may approve, at any time prior to the event, travel for multiple months as long as the approval detailed in Board of Education minutes itemizes the approval by event, total cost, and number of employees and/or Board members attending the event. General or blanket pre-approval shall not be authorized.
4. All travel requests shall receive prior approval of the Board of Education except if the Board has excluded from the requirements prior Board approval of any travel caused by or subject to existing contractual provisions, including grants and donations, and other statutory requirements, or Federal regulatory requirements in Policy 6471 pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.4(d). For the exclusion of prior Board approval to apply, the required travel event shall be detailed, with number of employee(s), Board member(s), and total cost in the applicable contract, grant, donation, statute, or Federal regulation.
  - a. This shall not include general grant guidelines or regulations that are permissive, but do not require the travel event, unless the specific travel event, number of employee(s), Board member(s), and total cost is



detailed in the approved grant, donation, or other fund acceptance agreement.

- b. This shall not include general contractual provisions in employment contracts for continuing education or professional development, except if the Board has included in its policy a maximum amount per employee for regular business travel that does not require prior Board of Education approval pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3.
5. If occasional unforeseen situations arise wherein a travel request cannot obtain prior approval of the Board of Education, justification shall be included in the text of the travel request.
    - a. Such requests shall require prior written approval of the Superintendent or designee, and the Executive County Superintendent or designee.
    - b. The Board shall ratify the request at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
    - c. Travel to conferences, conventions, and symposiums shall not be considered emergencies and shall not be approved after the fact.
  6. Subsequent to pre-approval by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board of Education, reimbursement of prospective employee travel expense shall be pre-approved by the Executive County Superintendent.

D. Required Documentation for Travel (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.5)

1. The Board of Education requires the documentation listed in D.2. below to justify the number of employees attending an event and the benefits to be derived from their attendance;
2. Neither the Superintendent or designee, nor the Board of Education shall approve a travel request unless it includes, at a minimum, the following information:
  - a. The name and date(s) of the event;
  - b. A list of Board members and/or employees to attend, either by name and title;



- c. The estimated cost associated with travel;
  - d. A justification and brief statement that includes the primary purpose for the travel, the key issues that will be addressed at the event, and their relevance to improving instruction or the operation of the school district.
    - (1) For training events, the statement must include whether the training is for a certification required for continued employment, continuing education requirements, requirements of Federal or State law, or other purpose related to the programs and services currently being delivered or soon to be implemented in the school district; or related to school district operations;
  - e. The account number and funding source - Federal, State, private, or local; and
  - f. For annual events, the total attendance and cost for the previous year.
3. The school district shall maintain documentation on file that demonstrates compliance with the Board of Education's travel policy, including travel approvals, reports, and receipts for all school district funded expenditures, as appropriate.
- E. School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Responsibilities Regarding Accounting for Travel (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.6)
- 1. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary or designee shall prepare itemized travel budgets by function and object of expense for each cost center, department, or location maintained in the school district's accounting system, as applicable, as part of the preparation of and documentation for the annual school district budget.
    - a. The aggregate amount of all travel budgets shall not exceed the Board of Education approved maximum travel expenditure amount for the budget year as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3.
  - 2. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall maintain separate accounting for school district travel expenditures, as necessary, to ensure compliance with the school district's maximum travel expenditure amount. The separate accounting tracking system may include, but need not be limited to, a separate or offline accounting of such expenditures or expanding the school



district's accounting system. The tracking system shall be sufficient to demonstrate compliance with Policy and Regulation 6471 and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7, and shall be in a detailed format suitable for audit.

3. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary or designee shall review and approve the cost and supporting documentation required by N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 and submitted by the person(s) having incurred travel expense. The School Business Administrator shall not approve or issue payment of travel expenditures or reimbursement requests until all required documentation and information to support the payment has been submitted, and shall not approve any travel expenditure that, when added to already approved travel expenditures, would exceed the Board of Education approved maximum travel expenditure amount for the budget year.
  4. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall be responsible for the adequacy of documentation of transactions processed by his or her staff and the retention of the documentation to permit audits of the records.
  5. A Board of Education employee, a Board member, or an organization shall not receive partial or full payment for travel and travel-related expenses in advance of the travel, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:19-1 et seq. The payment of travel and travel-related expenses, including travel-related purchases for which a purchase order is not applicable, shall be made personally by a school district employee or Board member and reimbursed at the conclusion of the travel event. N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.6, Policy 6471, and this Regulation do not preclude the school district from paying the vendor directly with the proper use of a purchase order (for example, for registration, airline tickets, hotel).
- F. Sanctions for Violations of Travel Requirements (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.7)
1. A Board of Education that violates its established maximum travel expenditure, as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, or that otherwise is not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 travel limitations, may be subject to sanctions by the Commissioner as authorized pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-23 and 24, including reduction of State aid in an amount equal to any excess expenditure pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12 and 18A:7F-60.



2. The staff member designated as the final approval authority for travel who approves any travel request or reimbursement in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 and Policy and Regulation 6471 shall reimburse the school district in an amount equal to three times the cost associated with attending the event, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12.
3. An employee or Board member who violates the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 and Policy and Regulation 6471 shall be required to reimburse the school district in an amount equal to three times the cost associated with attending the event, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12.
4. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.7(d), there must be procedures to monitor compliance and application of the penalty, as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.7, upon determination a violation has occurred after Board of Education payment of the event.
  - a. In addition to the annual audit test procedures to ensure compliance as required in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.7(e) and F.5. below, the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary will designate a staff member to review travel payments that are being recommended to the Board for payment prior to Board approval and travel payments previously approved by the Board for payment and paid for any violations.
    - (1) In the event the annual audit test procedures or the review by the staff member designated by the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary determines a travel payment recommended to the Board for payment or a travel payment previously approved by the Board and was paid in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 and Policy and Regulation 6471, the school district auditor or the staff member designated by the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall inform the Superintendent of Schools of the violation in writing.
    - (2) The Superintendent shall determine if a violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 requires a penalty in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.7.
    - (3) If a violation is determined prior to payment or reimbursement of the travel event, the Superintendent may exclude application of any additional penalties.





5. The annual audit conducted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:23-1 shall include test procedures to ensure compliance with the Board of Education's policy and travel limitations set forth in this section and N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12.
- G. Prohibitive Travel Reimbursements (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.8)
1. The following types of expenditures are not eligible for reimbursement:
    - a. Subsistence reimbursement for one-day trips, except for meals expressly authorized by and in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.12;
    - b. Subsistence reimbursement for overnight travel within the State, except where authorized by the Commissioner in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.11;
    - c. Travel by Board members or employees whose duties are unrelated to the purpose of the travel event or who are not required to attend to meet continuing educations requirements or to comply with law or regulation;
    - d. Travel by spouses, civil union partners, domestic partners, immediate family members, and other relatives;
    - e. Costs for employee attendance for coordinating other attendees' accommodations at the travel event;
    - f. Lunch or refreshments for training sessions and retreats held within the school district, including in-service days and for employee participants traveling from other locations within the school district;
    - g. Training to maintain a certification that is not required as a condition of employment (For example: CPE credits to maintain a CPA license if the employee is not required to be a CPA for continued school district employment);
    - h. Charges for laundry, valet service, and entertainment;
    - i. Limousine services and chauffeuring costs to, or during, the event;
    - j. Car rentals, either utilized for airport transportation or transportation at a conference, convention, etc., unless absolutely necessary for the conduct



of school district business. Justification shall accompany any request for car rentals. If approved, the most economical car rental is to be used, including the use of subcompacts and discounted and special rates. An example of the justified use of a car rental is when an employee is out of State, making inspections at various locations, and the use of public transportation is impracticable. When car rental is authorized, the employee shall not be issued an advance payment for the anticipated expense associated with the rental;

- k. Alcoholic beverages;
- l. Entertainment costs, including amusement, diversion, social activities, and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities);
- m. Gratuities or tips in excess of those permitted by Federal per diem rates;
- n. Reverse telephone charges or third party calls;
- o. Hospitality rooms;
- p. Souvenirs, memorabilia, promotional items, or gifts;
- q. Air fare without documentation of quotes from at least three airlines and/or on-line services; and
- r. Other travel expenditures that are unnecessary and/or excessive.

#### H. Travel Methods (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.9)

1. For the purpose of section H. of this Regulation and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.9, "transportation" means necessary official travel on railroads, airlines, shuttles, buses, taxicabs, rideshares, school district-owned or leased vehicles, and personal vehicles.
2. The purchase or payment of related transportation expenses shall be made by purchase order or personally by a school district employee or Board member and reimbursed at the conclusion of the travel event. An actual invoice or



receipt for each purchase or expense shall be submitted with a claim for reimbursement.

3. Pursuant to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Travel Circulars and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq., the following travel methods requirements shall apply:
  - a. Air and rail tickets shall be purchased via the Internet, if possible, using airline or online travel services such as Travelocity, Expedia, or Hotwire.
  - b. Air travel shall be authorized only when determined that it is necessary and advantageous to conduct school district business.
    - (1) The most economical air travel should be used, including the use of discounted and special rates.
    - (2) The following options should be considered when booking tickets:
      - (a) Connecting versus nonstop flights;
      - (b) Departing earlier or later compared to the preferred departure time;
      - (c) Utilizing alternative airports within a city, for example, Chicago, Illinois-Midway Airport versus O'Hare Airport;
      - (d) Utilizing alternative cities, for example, Newark versus Philadelphia;
      - (e) Utilizing "low cost" airlines; and
      - (f) Exploring alternate arrival and/or departure days.
    - (3) No employee or Board member can earn benefits as a result of school district funded travel. Employees and Board members shall be prohibited from receiving "frequent flyer" or other benefits accruing from school district funded travel.



- (4) Airfare other than economy (that is, business or first class) shall not be fully reimbursed by the school district except when travel in such classes:
    - (a) Is less expensive than economy;
    - (b) Avoids circuitous routings or excessive flight duration; or
    - (c) Would result in overall transportation cost savings.
  - (5) All airfare other than economy and not covered by the above exceptions purchased by an employee or Board member shall be reimbursed only at the economy rate for the approved destination.
  - (6) Cost estimates on travel requests and associated authorizations shall be consistent with current airline tariffs, with consideration of available special fares or discounts, for the requested destination.
  - (7) Airline tickets shall not be booked until all necessary approvals have been obtained.
  - (8) Additional expenses over and above the authorized travel request shall be considered only for factors outside the purchaser's control. The burden of proof shall be placed upon the purchaser and any additional expenses incurred without sufficient justification and documentation, as determined by the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, shall not be reimbursed.
  - (9) Justification shall accompany requests for airline ticket reimbursement when purchased by employees or Board members contrary to H.3.b.(1) through (8) above. Sufficient justification shall be considered only for factors outside the purchaser's control. Noncompliant purchases without sufficient justification shall not be reimbursed.
- c. Rail travel shall be authorized only when determined that it is necessary and advantageous to conduct school district business.



- (1) The most economical scheduling of rail travel shall be utilized, including excursion and government discounts, whenever applicable.
  - (2) The use of high-speed rail services, such as Acela, shall not be authorized.
  - (3) All rail travel shall be processed in the same manner as prescribed for air travel in H.3.b. above.
- d. Use of a school district-owned or -leased vehicle shall be the first means of ground transportation. Use of a personally owned vehicle on a mileage basis shall not be permitted for official business where a school district-owned or -leased vehicle is available.
- (1) Mileage allowance in lieu of actual expenses of transportation shall be approved by the Board and allowed at the rate authorized by the annual State Appropriations Act, or a lesser rate at the Board's discretion for an employee or Board member traveling by his or her personally owned vehicle on official business.
    - (a) If any condition in an existing negotiated contract is in conflict with the OMB Travel Circulars, such as the mileage reimbursement rates, the provisions of the existing contract shall prevail.
  - (2) Parking and toll charges shall be allowed in addition to mileage allowance.
  - (3) Reimbursement for travel to points outside the State by automobile shall be permitted when such arrangements prove to be more efficient and economical than other means of public transportation.
  - (4) In determining the relative costs of private and public transportation, all associated costs (that is, tolls, taxicabs, airport or station transfers, etc.) shall be considered.



- (5) All employees and Board members using privately owned cars in the performance of their duties for the school district shall present a New Jersey Insurance Identification Card indicating that insurance coverage is in full force and effect with companies approved by the State Department of Banking and Insurance. The card shall be made available to the Superintendent or designee before authorization to use privately owned cars.
  - (6) Employees and district Board members who are out-of-State residents shall provide appropriate insurance identification in lieu of the New Jersey Insurance Identification Card.
  - e. School district-owned or -leased vehicles shall be utilized in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-6.12.
  - f. Necessary taxicab or rideshare charges shall be permitted. However, travel to and from airports, downtown areas, and between hotel and event site shall be confined to regularly scheduled shuttle service, whenever such service is complimentary or is less costly. If shuttle service is not available, taxicabs or rideshares may be used.
  - g. Cruises shall not be permitted for travel events or transportation.
- I. Routing of Travel (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.10)
- 1. Pursuant to State travel guidelines as established by the New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Office of Management and Budget, and presented in the OMB Travel Circulars:
    - a. All travel shall follow the most direct, economical, and usually traveled route. Travel by other routes as a result of official necessity shall be eligible for payment or reimbursement only if satisfactorily established in advance of such travel.
    - b. If a person travels by indirect route for personal convenience, the extra expense shall be borne by the individual.
    - c. Reimbursement for expenses shall be based only on charges that do not exceed what would have been incurred by using the most direct, economical, and usually traveled route.



- J. Subsistence Allowance – Overnight Travel (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.11)
1. Pursuant to the State travel guidelines as established by the New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Office of Management and Budget, and presented in the OMB Travel Circulars, one-day trips that do not involve overnight lodging shall not be eligible for subsistence reimbursement, except for meals expressly authorized by and in accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.12.
  2. Pursuant to the OMB Travel Circulars, generally, overnight travel shall not be eligible for subsistence reimbursement if travel is within the State. Overnight travel is permitted if it is authorized pursuant to 3. below, or is a required component by the entity issuing a grant, donation, or other funding agreement with the school district. The specific required overnight in-State travel event shall be detailed in the final grant, donation, or other fund acceptance agreement along with the number of authorized travelers and total cost. All reimbursements shall be subject to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 unless the funding acceptance agreement specifies otherwise.
  3. Pursuant to the State travel regulations as established by the New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Office of Management and Budget, and presented in the OMB Travel Circulars, the Commissioner shall be authorized to grant waivers for overnight travel for Board members and school district employees to attend in-State conferences.
    - a. Such waivers will be granted in only extremely limited circumstances when the sponsoring organization can demonstrate the conference is broad and multi-disciplinary in scope, incorporates content offerings from numerous specialty areas, and includes important professional development opportunities and/or required training.
    - b. The sponsoring organization shall demonstrate the conference's content, structure, scheduling, and anticipated attendance necessitate that it be held on multiple consecutive days with overnight lodging. When such waivers are granted, individual school districts or individuals shall not be required to submit waiver requests for attendance at these conferences.



- c. Sponsors of in-State conferences may submit to the Commissioner a request for a waiver of this prohibition by providing information regarding the conference as follows:
- (1) The name and dates of the event;
  - (2) Justification for the length of the conference and the necessity to hold events for each day beyond the first day of the conference;
  - (3) Identification of all other conferences sponsored or co-sponsored by the organization (whether single or multi-day) in the previous year;
  - (4) A description of the target audience by position title and/or educational certificate and endorsement;
  - (5) Justification of the importance of the target audience attending the event;
  - (6) The cost of registration;
  - (7) A detailed list and description of any activities to be charged to the participants by the sponsor separate from the registration fee, such as luncheons, workshops, entertainment, etc., including:
    - (a) The cost of the activity;
    - (b) Whether participation is mandatory or voluntary; and
    - (c) The purpose such as social, guest speaker, working session, etc.
  - (8) A copy of agenda or program for the event;
  - (9) A brief statement that includes the primary purpose of the event, the key issues that will be addressed at the event, and their relevance to improving instruction or the operation of a school or school district;





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- (10) For training events, whether the training is needed for a certification required for continued employment, continuing education requirements, or requirements of Federal or State law; and
  - (11) For annual events, total attendance, and registration cost for the previous year.
4. If a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel is granted pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.11, it shall permit reimbursement for travel expenses only for individuals whose home-to-convention commute exceeds fifty miles.
5. Overnight travel within the State shall not be eligible for subsistence reimbursement if travel is on the day prior to the start of the conference. Reimbursement shall be prohibited for lodging prior to check-in time for the first day of the event or after check-out time on the last day of the event.
6. The United States General Services Administration publishes a schedule of Federal per diem rates in the Federal Register for approved overnight travel by the event location. The latest Federal per diem rates schedule for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses by location can be found at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov). The following restrictions apply to allowable per diem reimbursements:
  - a. Allowable per diem reimbursement for lodging, meals, and incidentals shall be actual reasonable costs, not to exceed the Federal per diem rates for the event location. Registration and conference fees are not subject to the Federal per diem rate caps. If the event location is not listed, the maximum per diem allowance shall be equal to the standard Continental United States (CONUS) per diem rates published by the General Services Administration for meals, incidental expenses, and lodging.
  - b. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12.o., reimbursement for lodging expenses for overnight travel, out-of-State or in-State as authorized by the Commissioner, may exceed the Federal per diem rates if the hotel is the site of the convention, conference, seminar, or meeting and the going rate of the hotel is in excess of Federal per diem rates.
    - (1) If the hotel at the site of the current travel event is not available, lodging may be paid for similar accommodations at a rate not to exceed the hotel rate at the site of the current event.



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- (2) If there is no hotel at the site of the current travel event (for example, Atlantic City Convention Center), then reimbursement for lodging shall not exceed the Federal per diem rate.
- c. If the meal is not part of a one-sum fee for a travel event, reimbursement may be approved for the full cost of an official convention meal that the employee or Board member attends, when such meal is scheduled as an integral part of the convention or conference proceedings. Receipts shall be submitted to obtain reimbursement in such situations. The amount of the Federal per diem rate for the corresponding meal shall be deducted from that day's subsistence allowance.
  - d. The allowance for a meal(s) or incidentals shall not be eligible for reimbursement when included and paid in the registration fee, the cost of lodging, or transportation charge.
  - e. Receipts shall be required for all hotel and incidental expenses. Meal expenses under the Federal per diem allowance limits shall not require receipts pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12.o.(3), unless required by the Board of Education.
  - f. If the total per diem reimbursement is greater than the Federal per diem rates, the costs shall be considered excessive in the absence of substantial justification accompanying the travel voucher submitted by the employee or district Board member. In such cases, receipts shall be submitted for all costs, including meals.
  - g. Employees and Board members shall patronize hotels and motels that offer special rates to government employees unless alternative lodging offers greater cost benefits or is more advantageous to the conduct of school district business.
  - h. Actual subsistence expenses shall not be reimbursable if paid by the traveler to a member of his or her family, to another school district employee, or to a family member of another school district employee.



- K. Meal Allowance – Special Conditions – and Allowable Incidental Travel Expenditures (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.12)
1. Meals for in-State travel shall not be eligible for reimbursement except as expressly authorized within N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.
  2. A meal allowance may be provided to employees or Board members in relation to one-day, out-of-State trips required for school business purposes that do not require an overnight stay. The reimbursement for breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner shall not exceed the amounts authorized in State travel regulations as published by the New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Office of Management and Budget, and presented in the OMB Travel Circulars.
  3. Lunch for off-site training sessions may be authorized for an amount up to \$7 per person only when it is necessary that employees or Board members remain at a site other than their school district and there are no viable options for lunch at the off-site location.
    - a. Per N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12.a.(1)(d), employee and Board member retreats shall be held onsite unless there is no school district site available.
    - b. If lunch is included in a lump-sum registration fee for an off-site training session, the full amount is eligible for reimbursement, if reasonable. Providing lunch for on-site staff meetings and in-service days or for employees who come from other parts of the school district shall not be permitted. (See K.4. below.)
    - c. Refreshments for breaks may also be provided at training sessions held at a site other than the school district.
  4. Subsistence expenses for an employee or Board member shall not be allowed within the school district or within a radius of ten miles thereof, except for meals expressly authorized by and in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.12. Non-allowed expenses include, but are not limited to, meals and refreshments for on-site staff meetings and in-service days.
  5. Reimbursement may be approved for the cost of an official luncheon or dinner, up to \$10 and \$15, respectively, that an employee or Board member is authorized to attend, if the meal is scheduled as an integral part of an official



proceeding or program related to school district business and the employee's or Board member's responsibilities.

- a. School district business above refers to the management operations of the school district and does not refer to activities that benefit students and are part of the instructional program. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.8(b)4, all reasonable expenditures related to school district employees that are essential to the conduct of a student activity are permitted.
6. Regular meetings, special meetings, and work sessions of the Board of Education shall be limited to light meals and refreshments for all Board members.
    - a. The meals may be served to employees who are required to attend the event and if it is impractical for the employee to commute to and from his or her residence between the end of the work day and the beginning of the event, or if the employee is required to remain at the school district to prepare for the event.
    - b. The school district shall acquire the light meals and refreshments by the solicitation of quotes, if required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq.
    - c. If the school district's food service program can prepare comparable meals at a lower cost, the food service program shall be used.
    - d. The average cost per meal shall not exceed \$10.
    - e. The school district shall purchase or prepare food that is sufficient to provide each district Board member, dignitary, non-employee speaker, or allowable staff member one meal. Meals should be carefully ordered to avoid excess. Unintended left over food should be donated to a charitable shelter or similar facility, if at all possible.
  7. Reimbursement may be approved for allowable telephone and incidental travel expenses that are essential to transacting official business.
    - a. Charges for telephone calls on official business may be allowed. The voucher shall show the dates on which such calls were made, the points between which each call was made, and the cost per call.



- b. Employees and Board members using their personally owned telephone for business may request reimbursement, less Federal Communications Tax. Calls for business are tax exempt and the telephone company will make allowances for the tax if the employee or Board member certifies to the telephone company when paying bills for personally owned phones that said calls were business calls.
  - c. Incidental expenses, defined as "non-meal tips" by the State travel regulations, when necessarily incurred by the traveler in connection with the transaction of official business, may be submitted for reimbursement only when the necessity and nature of the expense are clearly and fully explained on the travel voucher and the voucher is approved. Travel vouchers shall be supported by receipts showing the quantity and unit price.
- L. Records and Supporting Documents (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.13)
- 1. All persons authorized to travel on business shall keep a memorandum of expenditures chargeable to the school district, noting each item at the time and date the expense is incurred.
  - 2. The travel voucher shall be completed by the employee or Board member to document the details of the travel event. The travel voucher shall be signed by the employee or Board member to certify the validity of the charges for which reimbursement is sought. The form also shall bear the signatures of approval officials for processing.
  - 3. Sufficient documentation shall be maintained centrally by the school district to support payment and approval of the travel voucher.
  - 4. In addition to the documentation required for reimbursement, each person authorized to travel shall submit a brief report that includes the primary purpose for the travel, the key issues addressed at the event, and their relevance to improving instruction or the operations of the school district. This report shall be submitted prior to receiving reimbursement.
  - 5. Documentation for requests for travel reimbursement shall show:
    - a. The date(s) and individual points of travel, number of miles traveled between such points, and kind of conveyance used;



- b. If the distance traveled between individual points is greater than the usual route between the points, the reason for the greater distance shall be stated;
- c. The hours of the normal work day and actual hours worked shall be shown when requesting meal reimbursement for non-overnight travel;
- d. Original receipts shall be required for all reimbursable expenses, except for meals that qualify for per diem allowances and for parking meters;
- e. Actual vendor receipts for personal credit card charges shall be attached to reimbursement requests. Credit card statements shall not be accepted as documentation of expenses;
- f. Personal charges on a hotel bill shall be deducted and shown on the bill;
- g. When lodging is shared jointly, the fact shall be stated on the travel voucher;
- h. Where travel is not by the most economical, usually traveled route, the employee or Board member reimbursement request shall set forth the details of the route, the expenses actually incurred, the hour of departure, the hour of arrival, and an explanation for the use of costlier travel arrangements;
- i. When travel is authorized for the employee's or Board member's own automobile on a mileage basis, the points between which travel was made, and the distance traveled between each place shall be shown. A statement as to ownership of the auto or other conveyance used, as well as a certification that liability insurance is in effect, shall be documented;
- j. Reimbursement requests shall be supported by other receipts as required;
- k. The voucher shall be itemized; and
- l. Reimbursement requests shall be rendered monthly when in excess of \$25. Travel for a single travel event shall be reported as soon as possible after the trip.



# REGULATION

## WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

FINANCES  
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School District Travel

6. All outstanding travel vouchers for the school year ending June 30 shall be submitted as soon as possible after June 30 regardless of amount, notwithstanding 5.l. above.
  7. Travel mileage reimbursement requests of the just-completed school year that are not submitted by July 30 or the date approved by the school district for the closing of books, whichever is earlier, for the just-completed school year shall not be approved or paid.
- M. Out-of-State and High-Cost Travel Events (N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.9)
1. Reimbursement for all in-State and out-of-State travel shall be made pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12.
  2. Out-of-State travel events shall be limited to the fewest number of Board members or affected employees needed to acquire and present the content offered to all Board members or staff, as applicable, at the conclusion of the event. Lodging may be provided only if the event occurs on two or more consecutive days and if home-to-event commute exceeds fifty miles.
  3. When a travel event has a total cost that exceeds \$5,000, regardless of the number of attendees, or when more than five individuals from the school district are to attend a travel event out-of-State, the school district shall obtain prior written approval of the Executive County Superintendent.
    - a. The Executive County Superintendent shall promptly review the request and render a written decision within ten business days.
  4. For all employee and Board member travel events out of the country, regardless of cost or number of attendees, the school district shall obtain prior written approval of the Executive County Superintendent.
    - a. Such requests shall be supported by detailed justification.
    - b. The Executive County Superintendent shall promptly review the request and render a written decision within ten business days.
    - c. It is expected that approvals will be rare.

Adopted: 07 June 2010  
Modified: 30 June 2021

