

Conference Attendance Process

Here are the steps necessary for completing the payment and reimbursement of expenses for the conference. Before any steps are taken with purchasing tickets, lodging, registration please ensure the request has been approved in MLP.

- Please note that in providing this professional learning opportunity, the district must be fiscally responsible with federal funds. Therefore, the district has specific guidelines about paying for actual and necessary expenses incurred by the employee while on official district business. There are specific guidelines outlined in this document should an employee choose to take family member(s).
- Plan at least 6 weeks in advance to ensure all travel arrangements, accommodations, and payments are completed successfully.
- Please avoid using Expedia or booking.com or other discount websites for securing hotels or flights due to their cancellation policies. Employees who choose to use these discount websites assume responsibility for any issues that may arise due to cancellations issues.
- Conference travel in June or July needs to be pre-approved by the Business Office to ensure reimbursements can be made in the correct fiscal year.

1. Frontline Education (Professional Growth) and securing a substitute (if needed)

- Enter the conference request into Frontline Education under the Professional Growth tab for approval. Entering the request in Frontline is to receive approval to attend; it does not automatically register you for the conference.
- The employee will need to enter the absence into AESOP under Prof. Dev. Training.
 - This will ensure a substitute is secured
 - This will document the absence and PD

2. Conference registration expenses

- The employee completes the conference registration form and gives it to the building secretary to process for payment.
 - The secretary completes the requisition process by attaching the conference registration form in Ivisions requesting payment to be mailed directly to the conference for the registration fees.
- If online registration is the only option, the employee will pay for it using a personal credit card and then submit the receipt to the secretary who will complete an *out of line* reimbursement in Ivisions. *Out of line process: If all documentation is received and approved in Ivisions by Wednesday of a given week, the out of line check will be cut by Friday of the same week and the direct deposit should be received by the employee in their bank by the following Monday.*

3. Securing and paying for hotel accommodations

- If an overnight stay is required, the employee will need to book a hotel. Overnight stays are allowable when the event is over 75 miles from the district.
- It is the expectation that employees traveling together will share hotel rooms with sensitivity being given to gender identities. The need for a separate hotel room due to medical issues or personal issues should be discussed and approved with the employee's direct supervisor in advance.

- There are two ways to secure and pay for a hotel.
 - The first option is the district can prepay for a hotel. However, the employee will need to book the hotel, which consists of reserving the room with a credit card. For most hotels, the credit card is NOT charged anything; it is just used to hold the reservation. Please read through all documentation about payment as some hotels will not accept payment via district check.
 - Once the room is booked, the hotel will send an email confirmation. The secretary enters the total hotel bill into Ivisions as a requisition requesting an *out of line* check to be mailed directly to the hotel. Be sure the confirmation indicates all costs including taxes.
 - If the hotel requires a one-night deposit or requires payment in full upon booking the room, the employee will pay for it using a personal credit card and then submit receipts to the secretary who will complete an *out of line* reimbursement in Ivisions.
 - The second option is to book the hotel, pay for it with a personal credit card and upon return from the trip, submit the documentation for reimbursement.
 - Upon checkout, employees need to obtain an invoice stating their balance is \$0. This will be entered with the remaining requests in iVisions.

4. Mileage reimbursement

- Employees traveling by car are expected to carpool. The driver will be able to claim mileage to and from the conference. The mileage is reimbursed at the current federal IRS rate.
- Mileage is calculated from the school building (not the home address) to the conference.
- Please note per Administrative Procedure 5.60-AP the least expensive mode of transportation shall be used (airfare vs. car). If you have questions about this, please contact the Business Office.

5. Meal reimbursement

- Full day travel will be paid at a daily per diem rate of \$60.00. Meal receipts are not required.
- Partial days will be reimbursed at the per meal rate listed below.
- *Per IRS guidelines, meals will be reimbursed for trips requiring overnight stay. Day trips will not be reimbursed for meals.*

<u>Meals</u>	<u>Depart Before</u>	<u>Return After</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Breakfast	6:00 AM	11:00 AM	\$10.00
Lunch	11:00 AM	2:00 PM	\$15.00
Dinner	5:00 PM	8:00 PM	\$35.00

6. Airfare expenses

- If airfare is necessary for the conference, the employee will need to book flights. There are two options available to employees.
 - The first option is to book the flight through the local Atlas travel agency (217-429-2929). They will assist with finding flights but will not secure the flight until proper authorization has been given by the District.
 - Once approved, Atlas will book the flight and submit an invoice to the District on the employee's behalf.
 - *In the event the employee is unable to attend the conference they may be responsible for reimbursing the District for the cost of the flight.*
 - *In the event the employee changes the flight departure or arrival time thus resulting in additional cost or fees, the employee may be responsible for those expenses.*

- The second option is the employee can book their own flight using a personal credit card. The employee will submit proper receipts to the building secretary who will complete an *out of line* reimbursement in Ivisions.
- *In the event the employee is unable to attend the conference they may be responsible for reimbursing the District for the cost of the flight.*
- *In the event the employee changes the flight departure or arrival time thus resulting in additional costs or fees, the employee may be responsible for those expenses.*
- Please note per Administrative Procedure 5.60-AP the least expensive mode of transportation (airfare vs. car) shall be used. If you have questions about this, please contact the Business Office.
- It is the expectation that if a flight is required, the employee will choose the most fiscally responsible option.

7. Miscellaneous expenses

- If there are miscellaneous expenses such as tolls, taxi/shuttle from airport to hotel and back, baggage fees, etc., the employee must obtain a receipt and submit it as documentation to be reimbursed.
- See the conference expense reimbursement form for a full list of allowable and non-allowable miscellaneous expenses.

8. Reimbursement process

- Within 10 days of returning from the conference, each employee must fill out a conference expense reimbursement form. Failure to submit the reimbursement request in a timely manner may result in a delayed or loss of reimbursement to the employee.
- Conference expense reimbursement forms can be found in the Employee Resources tab in Ivisions. It is the intention that employees fill out the form electronically as the spreadsheet contains formulas to auto-calculate all expenses. Upon completion, the employee should save the form to their desktop to be easily uploaded into Ivisions.
- Once the conference expense reimbursement form is completed, the employee must log in to Ivisions and complete an employee reimbursement request.
- Completed employee reimbursements that are submitted and receive final approval by the 20th of the month will be processed for payment that month and a direct deposit will be released after the first Board of Education meeting the following month. Employee reimbursements received after the 20th of the month become a monthly bill payable typically in 6-8 weeks.
- Link to Ivisions: <https://finance.dps61.org/ivisions/>

9. Traveling with family members

Please remember this is a professional learning opportunity the District is providing for the employee. It is not a vacation and as such, the District cannot cover excess or luxury expenses.

- Reimbursed items should represent actual and necessary monies expended and incurred by the *employee* while on District business.
- When accompanied by a spouse, significant other, or family members, *absolutely no expenses incurred by the family members are reimbursable.*

It is the expectation that employees traveling together share hotel rooms. In the event that an employee chooses to take their family and does not share a hotel room with their fellow colleague, the hotel room will not be pre-paid or reimbursed for the employee who is traveling with family