

SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46 TRAVEL GUIDELINES

May 2, 2022

BOE Approved on May 2, 2022

Board Member Expenses: While District employee expenditures will be subject to the Guidelines set forth below, pursuant to Public Act 099-0604, all Board Member expenses for travel, meals and lodging must be approved by roll call vote at a properly convened open meeting of the Board of Education.

IN-DISTRICT / OUT-OF-DISTRICT

In-District Meetings

Meetings within the District boundaries that are conducted during the school day and require the staff member to be absent from their normal duties are not eligible for reimbursement. No expenses are involved in such meetings, other than the substitute costs. An online Request for Absence for such in-District activities must be submitted thru the District [Aesop](#) system. In addition, if it is anticipated that grant funds will be used to cover the cost of the substitute teacher, the request for grant approval must be submitted prior to the meeting with the respective grant coordinator. The request must be approved by the appropriate grant manager and the appropriate cabinet-level administrator prior to participation in the activity.

Out-of-District Travel Overview

It is the practice of School District U-46 to reimburse staff for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with approved travel on behalf of the District. School District U-46 strongly encourages use of travel discounts (or travel discount programs and websites) when making travel arrangements.

Travelers seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been, and will not be, received from other sources. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in these travel guidelines, then the most conservative course of action must be taken.

Business travel procedures are aligned with School District reimbursement rules. All business-related travel paid with School District funds must comply with District expenditure procedures as covered in this document and Board Policy.

Types of Acceptable Official Business

The District will reimburse employees for travel and expenses that are associated with professional development, meetings and conferences which are related to the employee's role or area of expertise. In addition, employees may seek reimbursement for expenses incurred chaperoning

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student travel that has been approved by the District. Expenses associated with providing entertainment and/or food for employees or guests of the District are strictly prohibited.

Authorization and Responsibility

Staff travel must be authorized by the responsible cabinet-level administrator. Any employee seeking to attend a local (in-state) or out-of-state conference or professional development must request online approval at least 30 calendar days prior to the date of the travel and/or conference and receive approval from their direct supervisor and the cabinet-level administrator responsible for the department or school where the requester works. Employees shall verify that planned travel is eligible for reimbursement before making travel arrangements. Within 30 days of completion of a trip, the employee must submit supporting documentation and receipts online thru [Munis Employee Self Service](#) to be eligible for travel reimbursement. See Reimbursement section for details.

An individual may not approve his or her own travel or reimbursement. The online travel reimbursement request must be approved by the administrator of the school or department and the cabinet-level administrator responsible for the school or department.

Travel and reimbursement for any employee must be pre-approved by their direct supervisor.

Administrators authorized to approve expenses must review expenditures and withhold reimbursement if there is reason to believe that the expenditures are inappropriate, extravagant or in violation of the Local Government Travel Expense Control Act (PA 099-0604).

Personal funds

Employees should review reimbursement guidelines before spending personal funds for business travel to determine if such expenses are reimbursable. See Travel Expenses/Procedures for details. School District U-46 reserves the right to deny reimbursement of travel-related expenses for failure to comply with policies and procedures.

Employees who use personal funds to facilitate travel arrangements will be reimbursed when proper documentation is submitted and the expenditures do not exceed the maximum allowable.

Vacation in conjunction with business travel

In cases in which vacation time is added to a business trip, any cost variance in airfare, car rental or lodging must be clearly identified on the online reimbursement form. School District U-46 will not prepay any personal expenses with the intention of being "repaid" at a later time, nor will any personal expenses be reimbursed.

Exceptions

Occasionally it may be necessary for employees to request exceptions to these travel guidelines. Requests for exceptions to the guidelines must be made in writing and approved by the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent or designee before travel plans can be booked or paid. Also, if the expenses incurred exceed the maximum allowed reimbursement amount due to an emergency or other extraordinary circumstances, all receipts must be submitted for approval to the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent. If the expenses incurred exceed the maximum allowed reimbursement

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amount and are not due to an emergency or other extraordinary circumstances, the School Board must approve the reimbursement. In the event that the expenditure is not deemed an emergency, is not an extraordinary circumstance and the Board does not grant reimbursement the employee will not be reimbursed if they incurred the expenditures directly. If the employee utilized a purchasing card, they will have 30 days to reimburse the District or the amount owed will be deducted from their next check unless alternative payment terms have been agreed upon between the employee and the District.

TRAVEL EXPENSES / PROCEDURES

General Information

Authorized business travel for staff that includes prepayments must be pre-approved by the direct supervisor and the cabinet-level administrator who oversees the school or the department.

Permissible Prepaid Travel Expenses

School District U-46 may issue prepayments for airfare, rail transportation, rental vehicles, and conference registration fees. There are no cash advances. Applicable policies and methods of payments for these prepayments follow. Employees must submit the completed online Estimated Travel Expense Request in [Munis Employee Self Service](#) at least 30 days in advance of the approved travel.

Airfare. Travelers are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare that reasonably meets business travel needs.

Travelers are encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium airfare pricing.

Coach class or economy tickets must be purchased for domestic (defined as flight time totaling less than five consecutive hours excluding layovers or international flights). A higher-priced coach ticket cannot be purchased for a subsequent upgrade in seating.

A less-than-first-class ticket (i.e., business class) may be purchased with prior approval from the employee's cabinet-level administrator and the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent or designee for domestic or international flights (defined as flight time exceeding five consecutive hours excluding layovers).

Airfare may be purchased with a District purchasing card or personal credit card after approval is granted through the appropriate cabinet-level administrator. If an employee purchases a ticket(s) before approval is granted he or she will be responsible for payment of the ticket(s) if the trip is denied.

Rail transportation. School District U-46 will prepay rail transportation provided that the cost does not exceed the cost of the least expensive airfare.

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Rental vehicles. School District U-46 will pay for approved use of a rental vehicle. See the section on Reimbursements below. If a group of employees are traveling only one rental car for every four people will be reimbursed.

Conference registration fees. Conference registration fees can be prepaid with a District purchasing card. Business-related banquets or meals that are considered part of the conference can be paid with the registration fees; however, such meals must be deducted from the traveler's per diem allowance. See Meals (per diem) for more detail.

Expenses associated with the travel must be reconciled and substantiated within thirty (30) days of the return date.

REIMBURSEMENTS

Requests for reimbursements of travel-related expenses must be submitted through Munis. All requests must be accompanied by supporting documentation. If the requested reimbursement exceeds the total pre-trip estimate and/or the maximum allowable reimbursement, the requester must provide their supervisor with a written explanation for the variance and if the request to increase the reimbursement exceeds the maximum allowable reimbursement, absent emergency or other extraordinary circumstances, School Board approval will be required before reimbursement can be granted. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent or designee will determine if the travel expenses exceeding the limits set forth in these guidelines are due to emergency or extraordinary circumstances on a case by case basis.

The online form and electronic copy of original receipts must be submitted to the payroll office within thirty days of the completed trip. Travel reimbursement not submitted within this time frame requires approval from the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent or designee.

Reimbursement of travel expenses is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenses supported by an electronic copy made from the original receipts. Reimbursements that may be paid by School District U-46 are detailed below.

Airfare. If the airfare was not prepaid, an original itemized airline receipt, an e-ticket receipt/statement or an Internet receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment, indicate that payment was made and the amount paid. Original receipts are used to create electronic copies used for reimbursement. The maximum allowable reimbursement for airline tickets will be \$500 round trip. Exceptions may be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent or designee prior to booking travel.

Baggage fees may be reimbursed up to \$50 per bag.

First or Business class tickets are not reimbursable.

Rail transportation. If rail transportation was not prepaid, an original itemized receipt, original e-ticket receipt/statement or Internet receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment, indicate that payment was made and the amount paid. Original receipts are used to create electronic copies used for reimbursement. The maximum allowable reimbursement for rail

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transportation will be \$300 round trip.

Automobile (personally owned—domestic travel). A valid driver's license issued within the United States and personal automobile insurance are required for expenses to be reimbursed. Drivers should be aware of the extent of coverage (if any) provided by his or her automobile insurance company for travel that is business or not personal in nature.

Reimbursement for use of a personal automobile is based on the School District U-46 mileage rate.

The electronic reimbursement form is required for reimbursement for all vehicle-related expenses, including gasoline, wear and tear, and personal auto insurance. In these instances, original, itemized receipts are required to create electronic copies to be used with the reimbursement form.

Employees who are required to use their personal vehicle for work-related travel must submit their mileage reimbursement within 90 days from the date of travel. The maximum allowable reimbursement for automobile travel will be \$250 round trip. Exceptions may be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent or designee prior to booking travel.

Automobile (rental—domestic travel). Reimbursement for a commercial rental vehicle as a primary mode of transportation is authorized only if the rental vehicle is more economical than any other type of public transportation, or if the destination is not otherwise accessible. Vehicle rental at a destination city is reimbursable. Original receipts are required to create an electronic copy.

School District U-46 authorizes reimbursement for the most economic vehicle available. In certain circumstances larger vehicles may be rented, with supervisor's approval. The rental agreement must clearly show the date and the points of departure/arrival, as well as the total cost. Drivers must adhere to the rental requirements, and restrictions must be followed. Original receipts are required to create an electronic copy.

When a vehicle rental is necessary, drivers should be aware of the extent of coverage (if any) provided by his or her automobile insurance company for travel that is business or not personal in nature. Generally, the District encourages the traveler to have the same insurance coverage that the traveler has on his or her own vehicle. This usually means that the purchase of collision damage waiver (CDW) and loss damage waiver (LDW) will not be covered by the District. The maximum allowable reimbursement for a car rental will be \$450 per trip.

Parking fees, tolls and other incidental costs associated with the vehicle use are not covered by the rental agreement. Receipts for all expenses are required for reimbursement.

Travelers are required to fill the gas tank before returning the vehicle to the rental agency to avoid service fees and more expensive fuel rates.

Conference registration fees. If the conference fee was not prepaid, School District U-46 will reimburse these fees, including business-related banquets or meals that are part of the conference registration. Original receipts to support the payment are required.

A prorated amount for the meals provided must be deducted from the traveler's per diem. See Meals (per diem) for details. Entertainment activities such as golf outings and sightseeing tours or activities defined in Public Act 099-0604 will not be reimbursed.

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Lodging (commercial). The cost of overnight lodging (room rate and tax only) will be reimbursed to the traveler if the authorized travel is 100 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite.

Exceptions to this restriction must be approved in writing by the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent or designee.

School District U-46 will reimburse lodging expenses at reasonable, single occupancy or standard business room rates. **When the hotel or motel is the conference or convention site, reimbursement will be limited to the conference rate. If the employee is not able to reserve a room at the conference-designated hotel, the attendee may seek lodging at another site, however; reimbursement will be limited to the rate established by the hotel or motel hosting the conference.**

Only single room rates are authorized for payment or reimbursement unless the second party is representing the District in an authorized capacity. If the lodging receipt shows more than a single occupancy, the single room rate must be noted. If reimbursement for more than the single room rate is requested, the name of the second person must be included. The maximum allowable reimbursement for lodging will be \$300 per night.

Meals (per diem). Per diem allowances are reimbursable for in-state overnight travel that is 100 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite.

Per diem allowances are applicable for all out-of-state travel that is 100 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite.

School District U-46 per diem rates: \$10 for breakfast, \$15 for lunch and \$25 for dinner. Incidental expenses such as laundry, dry cleaning and service tips (e.g., housekeeping or porter tips) unless specifically cited in these guidelines, will not be reimbursed. Expenses for alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

Per diem reimbursements are based on departure and return times over the entire 24-hour day and are prorated accordingly.

If a free meal is served on the plane, included in a conference registration fee, built in to the standard, single hotel room rate or replaced by a legitimate business meal, the per diem allowance for that meal may not be claimed.

Receipts are not required for per diem allowances. Per diem allowances are reimbursed after the trip is completed.

Business meals (Board Members and Cabinet Only). Board Members and Cabinet members are required to follow School District U-46 expenditure policies when requesting reimbursement for business meals. Original itemized receipts are required. They are to be scanned and the electronic copy included with the on-line reimbursement form. The maximum allowable reimbursement for business meals will be \$100 per meal. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

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Business expenses. Business expenses, including faxes, photocopies, Internet charges, data ports and business telephone calls incurred while on travel status, can be reimbursed. Original itemized receipts are required and they are to be scanned and the electronic copy included with the on-line reimbursement form.

Parking. Electronic copies of the original receipts are required for parking fees (including airport parking). The lodging bill can be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of the overnight stay.

Telephone calls. The costs of personal telephone calls are the responsibility of the individual.

Tolls. For rental cars an electronic copy of the original receipt is required for all tolls. For personal cars, toll allowance is included with the mileage rate.

Miscellaneous transportation. Electronic copies of original receipts are required for taxi, bus, subway, metro, ferry and other modes of transportation if costs are \$25 or more for each occurrence. The maximum allowable reimbursement for miscellaneous transportation will be \$250 per trip.

Visa, passport fees and immunizations. If these items are required for international travel, it will be the responsibility of the employee to pay the necessary fees.

Non-reimbursable travel expenses.

The following items that may be associated with business travel will not be reimbursed by School District U-46:

- Airline club memberships.
- Airline upgrades.
- Business class for domestic flights or first class for all flights.
- Child care, babysitting, house-sitting, or pet-sitting/kennel charges.
- Commuting between home and the primary work location.
- Costs incurred by traveler's failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations in a timely fashion.
- Early Boarding
- Evening or formal wear expenses.
- Haircuts and personal grooming.
- Laundry and dry cleaning.
- Passports, vaccinations and visas.
- Personal entertainment expenses, including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theater movies, social activities and related incidental costs.
- Seat Selection
- Travel accident insurance premiums or purchase of additional travel insurance.
- Other expenses not directly related to the business travel.

Travel for non-employees

Additional costs for travel, lodging, meals or other travel expenses for spouses or other family members will not be reimbursed. Travel requests for District-related business by non-U-46

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employees must be pre-approved by the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent or designee.

Board approval of expenses will be required when: Any officer, employee or Board member exceeds the reimbursement limits set in these guidelines absent emergency or unforeseen circumstances.

These types of reimbursements may only be approved by roll call vote at a Board of Education meeting.

Employees who have given notice of intent to resign or retire will not be eligible for reimbursement for any out of state travel.

Any questions about all or any portion of these guidelines should be directed to Diane Belton, Payroll Coordinator, dianebelton@u-46.org, ext. 4298, or Dale Burnidge, Director of Financial Operations, daleburnidge@u-46.org, ext. 5804.