**Millsap ISD Travel Policies and Procedures for Employees**

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Millsap ISD Travel Policies and Procedures

* Every Millsap Independent School District employee given authorization by their supervisor to travel assumes a responsibility to the taxpayers of Millsap ISD to keep the cost of travel to a minimum.
* All travel for the District must have advance approval by the employee’s immediate supervisor and Business Office.
* Prior approval for all travel shall be obtained before any expenses, including prepaid expenses, are incurred.
* A **Travel Expense Estimate Form** is used to indicate approval from the appropriate supervising administrator and to provide an estimate of expenses.
* No travel reservations will be made until an approved **Travel Expense Estimate Form** has been submitted.

# Limitations on Out-of-State Travel

* Superintendent out-of-state travel must be approved by Board of Trustees.
* All requests for out-of-state employee travel must be approved by the Superintendent.

# Pre-Trip Procedures

* Complete a **Travel Expense Estimate Form** prior to travel and get necessary approvals. The form should include estimates of all categories that may be incurred. The dates on the form should match the dates for which charges will be remitted. **Any supplemental Federal funds to be used for travel must have prior approval from the Assistant Superintendent.**
* Overnight lodging (and parking) will not be approved unless the event is **more than 75 miles from Millsap without special approval by Superintendent** **for extenuating circumstances.**
* If airline tickets/rental car are needed, please note, there is usually a significant discount for tickets purchased 60 or more days in advance, so please obtain approval for the purchase of airline tickets/rental car as early as possible.
* Registration and hotel reservations must be arranged prior to travel. If there is a conference registration fee, a separate purchase order from the travel estimate needs to be created.
* Prior to checking in at the hotel, complete the **Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate**. The district will not allow state sales tax for travel within Texas. County and municipal hotel occupancy taxes may occur and will be accepted. You may need proof of employment such as a pay stub or an identification badge.

# Meals

* Meal expenses will not be allowed unless the overnight lodging mileage stipulation is met and the estimated costs were approved on the **Travel Expense Estimate Form**.
* Meals are allowed at the **actual costs** for meals ***not to exceed the daily allotment per day for employees (some destinations have a higher meal rate-excluding incidental expenses: see*** <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>***)*** for in-state travel (includes meal, gratuity & sales tax).
* **Original itemized receipts** must be submitted. If one is not provided, it is the responsibility of the employee to request an appropriate itemized bill. Credit card receipts without detail are not sufficient for documentation. Daily meal receipts exceeding the limits will only be paid if approved by the Superintendent (only extenuating circumstance).

The Comptroller website lists per diem thresholds for certain areas in the State. For those areas listed, the maximum rates are reported accordingly. However, the rate only applies to the days in between the first and last day of the trip.

* An employee will receive reimbursement for meals when receipts are attached only to the maximum amounts established below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Meal Type | Rate | Percentage | Depart Before | Return After |
| Breakfast | $13 | 22% | 7:00 am |  |
| Lunch | $20 | 34% | 11:00 am | 1:00pm |
| Dinner | $26 | 44% | 4:00 pm | 6:00pm |
| Total | $59 |  |  |  |

* Meals are allowed up to daily limits – not meal type rate. Also, the limit will be on a daily basis (not on the aggregate maximum trip allowance). For areas listed on the Comptroller website, the percentage noted above shall be used (i.e. if the State rate for Austin is $60 per day, lunch would be up to $20).
* See table above for the % of meals covered based on the time the travel commences. Gratuities will **only** be reimbursed with local funds (not federal) up to 18% of meal charge or 20% for groups (3 or more). Any daily amounts charged above the limits will be paid by employee within 1 week after the return of the trip.
* **If a meal is provided in the conference registration/or hotel breakfast is provided that meal will not be eligible.** For example, if the conference registration includes a banquet dinner with a charge of $25, the banquet fee will be paid as part of the registration and the traveler may submit receipts up to $33 (breakfast and lunch) for the remainder of the meals for that day. The amounts outlined above for breakfast, lunch, and dinner are to be used to calculate **limits** when not all meals are allowable as in the previous example. These amounts are not per diems. The same meal limits are to be used for federal funds (in state).

**Hotel/Motel Expenses**

* Overnight lodging (and parking) will not be approved unless the event is **more than 75 miles from Millsap without special approval by Superintendent** **for extenuating circumstances.**
* Hotel rates vary, and every effort should be made to obtain the lowest rate available.

The government/ state rate (GSA) may be available and will require school district identification. GSA rates should be explored prior to making any reservations. Admin staff have access to getting this information. Always check to make sure that the GSA rate is actually lower than other special or discount rates that are being offered. If a conference hotel is preferred over a hotel found at a cheaper GSA rate then approval would be required.

* A travel card shall be issued to the traveler for the approved, estimated lodging expense as reflected on the **Travel Expense Estimate Form.**
* In Texas, a Hotel Tax Exemption Certificate must accompany payment to the hotel to avoid paying state taxes. These certificates can be obtained on our website: <https://www.millsapisd.net/Page/691> or from the Accounts Payable Clerk. When checking into the hotel, provide the desk clerk with the Hotel Tax Exemption Certificate. Some hotels require proof of employment such as a pay stub or identification badge. Upon check out, review the bill to ensure that state tax was not charged. MISD will not pay for Texas state sales tax. County and Independent hotel occupancy taxes are allowed.
* Accommodations can be guaranteed for late arrival with district credit card after **Travel Expense Estimate Form** is approved. To avoid cancellation fees, the traveler is responsible for notifying the hotel prior to the cancellation deadline. If the hotel is not notified by the required deadline, the traveler may be required to pay the cancellation fee or a night’s accommodation.
* Other lodging types (such as AIR BNB) are permissible up to the allowable daily rate.

Total district funds will only pay up to the allowable daily rate.

* MISD will not pay hotel charges for any telephone calls or internet connection fees unless the traveler receives prior approval from the supervising administrator on the **Travel Expense Estimate Form**. Charges for movies and other personal charges are not allowed.
* A maximum room rate of $98 per person (excludes fees, taxes and parking) per day for in-state accommodations per: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. Room rates for certain listed destinations may be higher and are acceptable.
* When at least two (2) travelers (district employees) are traveling to the same event, they may share the lodging and each receive the maximum lodging rate on the GSA schedule. District employees shall not be required to share a room with another employee, but may be encouraged to share a room to minimize the lodging costs.
* The traveler may, at his/her request, stay with a family member or friend instead of at a hotel. If the traveler selects this option, the traveler shall not receive any payment in lieu of lodging costs.
* The traveler may, at his/her request, choose to return to their home city each day of a multiple-day travel event if the distance from their home city to the event city is more than 75 miles or more each way. The traveler may receive mileage reimbursement for each trip in lieu of the lodging costs. Meals may be reimbursed as per the time of arrival and departure schedule.

# Vehicle

* A request for a vehicle will submitted thru School Dude accessed on the

Millsap ISD/Transportation page. If a district-owned vehicle is not available, the traveler may be authorized to use their personal vehicle or request a flight, as appropriate and reimbursed at the state mileage rate on the Comptroller website.

* + In no case should this expense exceed the cost of a rental car unless extenuating circumstances and prior approval.
	+ Employees should carpool in one vehicle when possible.
	+ The district does not reimburse for fuel charges for personal vehicles.
	+ When using a personal vehicle, total mileage calculation from a website such as www.mapquest.com or [www.googlemaps.com](http://www.googlemaps.com) must be provided in order to be reimbursed. Mileage should be based on the shortest route between points. The current auto mileage reimbursement rate is 65.5 cents (year 2023).
* Parking – the district will reimburse appropriate fees for parking. Original receipts are required. The district will reimburse for valet parking **only** if on-site self-parking is not available. Sales tax for parking in not exempt.
* Toll charges – shall be allowable for all in-state travel events, as applicable, if the traveler is traveling in a rental car, district-owned vehicle, or personal car.

# Air Travel

* Advance planning is crucial when requisitioning air travel. An approved **Travel**

**Expense Estimated Form** is required - along with justification that air travel (and car rental) is cost efficient compared to travel by car - before air travel requests will be processed.

* All tickets for air travel must be on a **Travel Expense Estimate Form**.
* An increase in a fare, due to an employee changing travel plans without supervisor approval, could result in the employee absorbing any additional fees charged to the district account.
* All travelers must use the lowest fare available. Whenever possible, business travel should be planned to take advantage of advance purchase discounts and group fares. The lowest fare routing must be used when available—not more than one stop each way and layover time not to exceed two hours. Once the flight is actually ticketed, any changes to the travel itinerary will require additional funds. This expense will be charged to the traveler unless approved by the district supervisor and the business office.

# Car Rental/Local Travel

* Since car rentals are very costly, travelers should not request car rentals unless necessary for business purposesdue to limitations on availability of local transportation. Employees must have a current driver’s license and a personal credit card in order to rent a car.
* When renting a vehicle, please purchase the additional coverage offered by the rental company. If liability insurance is not arranged, employees will not be covered by the district’s insurance should an accident occur.
* To avoid higher gas rates charged by the rental companies, fill the gas tank **before** returning the rental car. Also, be sure to examine the invoice for accuracy before leaving the rental office. Rental car expenses must be approved on the **Travel Expense Estimate Form**.
* Ridesharing services (such as Uber/Lyft) expenses are allowable for reimbursement if the costs are reasonable and required during the travel event. Receipts shall be required.

# Non-Staff Accompanying Traveler

* In cases where non-staff, who are not on official school business, accompany the school official or employee, no expenses for non-staff shall be included.
* While employees are on official school business, the District pays for employees travel only, no additional costs will be incurred.
* All receipts should be for employees only.

# Miscellaneous

* MISD will onlyapprove travel expenses requested or incurred by an employee using an account with sufficient funds.
* MISD shall not approve any travel expenses due to the traveler’s failure to cancel a registration or travel arrangements (except for extenuating circumstances).
* MISD will **not pay** for alcoholic drinks or beverages. Absolutely no alcoholic drinks or beverages shall be consumed when traveling with students or on a receipt.
* Movies, conference shirts, entertainment, valet parking services (unless self-parking is not available), personal telephone calls, internet service connection fees, or other unauthorized expenses are not allowable or reimbursable.
* **Federal funds will not provide reimbursement for tips or gratuities of any kind. Local funds need to be available for these expenses.**

# Post-Trip Procedures

* Within 5 business days after returning from a trip, prepare a **Detail Travel Expenditure Form** listing dates and times of trip and expenses for each day.
* Include original **itemized** receipts for all expenses (meals, airline tickets, hotel, car rental, etc.). Any receipts submitted should be in the name of the employee.
* Return completed **Detail Travel Expenditure Form**and credit card into Accounts Payable Department. Reimbursement will not be made unless all supporting documentation is in order and all of the proper signatures are obtained.