

<p>North Providence School Department</p> <p>Travel Policy – Out of State</p>	<p>Approved: 11/20/2019</p>

Purpose

This policy provides guidance to North Providence School Department employees regarding requirements for out of state travel for business purposes.

Applicability

All personnel traveling under these procedures are expected to exercise prudent responsibility when committing school funds. Travel on business should be conducted at minimum cost for achieving the success of the mission. The traveler is expected to exercise the same care in incurring travel expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling at his/her own expense.

Procedures for Compliance

1. **General** - All out-of-state travel arrangements will be made utilizing the most economical means. The traveler is required to identify 3 of the most economical (lowest cost) options for the anticipated travel arrangements using the internet. The traveler must show that the cheapest method of travel was selected, or an approval from the Superintendent is required. North Providence School Department will only reimburse the traveler when proof of a less expensive travel arrangement has been made. The traveler must attach a copy of three proposals of the travel (cost) with an explanation on how the traveler made arrangements using a less expensive way of travel for the same itinerary. **Exception:** For conferences that offer **discounted group or block room rates**, in such cases, comparative quotes are not required for the hotel room.
2. **Out-of-State Travel Request Form** - Prior to making any travel arrangements the Travel Request Form, with supporting estimates of travel costs (estimates obtained from the internet are sufficient), must be approved by all appropriate supervisors, by the responsible Principal or designee, and the Director of Finance. A completed Travel Request Form should be sent to the Superintendent's Office as far in advance as possible to take advantage of the best prices available. The form must arrive in the Finance Director's Office no later than thirty (30) days prior to the date of travel, except in emergencies. The Finance Department will review the document before sending the document to the Superintendent for final approval. The Finance Department will contact the traveler when the request to travel has been approved. **Please note:** The "Travel Request" form or "Requisition to Pay Conference Fee/Seminar Fee" form is required for all out-of-state travel, even if there is no fee to attend a conference.
3. **Procedure for booking air/rail/bus and hotel arrangements** - Once the traveler has final approval, the Finance Office will contact the individual and provide a travel approval purchase order number to be used when seeking reimbursement for travel expenses. As it relates to the hotel charges, only room accommodations plus related taxes are covered. The traveler will need to pay all ancillary costs, including food, or any costs associated with any changes to the original arrangements, subject to later reimbursement.

4. **Fees/Charges Incurred to Change Booked Travel** - Once travel arrangements have been made, changes should only be made in emergency situations. There are usually significant additional fees, often \$100.00 or more, for any changes that are made to existing travel arrangements. See allowable expenses under definitions below. **Unauthorized travel will not be reimbursed by the North Providence School Department.**
 - The School Department **will** pay fees/charges assessed by carriers or the designated travel agent for a change in travel arrangements **if the reason for the change is business-related.**
 - The School Department **will** pay fees/charges assessed by airline carriers or the designated travel agent for cancellation and re-issuance of an airline ticket **if the reason for cancellation and re-issuance of the ticket is business related.**
5. **Airline fees will be paid by the School Department as follows:**
 - All taxes and fees included in the purchased fare
 - Agent fees incurred at original purchase and incurred for any changes/re-bookings allowed per section C.4. above
 - Mandatory fees charged by an airline at the time of booking
 - The School Department will not pay or reimburse for any optional convenience fees or upgrade fees, including early check-in fees or seat upgrade fees.
6. **Personally-owned automobiles** may be used for travel in lieu of common carriers when it is economically advantageous to the School Department. Example: when two (2) or more travelers are traveling to the same destination or when common carrier service is not available.
 - A detailed analysis is required showing the cost benefit of using a personally owned automobile.
 - Documentation must include the lowest available common carrier fare obtained from the internet or travel agent
 - Reimbursement will be made based on miles traveled at the current mileage reimbursement rate (available on the IRS website).
7. **Shuttle services** and other means of public transportation should be used whenever available and is prudent.
 - Lyft, Uber and taxi cabs should only be used when no other ground transportation is available and it is for a business purpose or necessary for meals.
 - Reimbursement for any of these means of transportation, if allowed, will be processed when supported by original detailed receipts.
 - Lyft, Uber and taxi cabs will not be reimbursed for personal trips while traveling.
 - The School Department will not pay for transportation to or from destination(s) that differ from the destination(s) approved for School related business on the Request to Travel form.
 - If Lyft, Uber or taxi cabs are necessary for meals because no dining options are available at the place of lodging or within walking distance, the additional cost of transportation should be taken into consideration prior to traveling and estimated on the Request to Travel form. Once the trip is complete, a justification for the additional travel costs for meals must be provided on the travel expense voucher.

8. **Car rentals** should only be approved when no other ground transportation is available, it is economically advantageous to the School Department, or it is necessary to accomplish the travel mission.
 - Car rentals must be preapproved.
 - A memo from the traveler must be attached to the Out-of-State Travel Request Form explaining why the rental car is necessary or economical.
 - Whenever possible, one of the preferred car rental companies must be chosen to ensure that the school department has the necessary liability and collision coverages. If a preferred car rental company is not chosen, it is the traveler's responsibility to ensure they have the proper coverages in place as to limit the School Department from liability.
9. The following are **obligations of the traveler when renting a vehicle** to conduct school department business:
 - Possess a proper license to operate the vehicle being rented.
 - Wear seat belts in accordance with all state laws.
 - Obey all traffic laws.
 - Transporting hitchhikers is prohibited.
 - Consuming drugs or alcohol before or while operating the vehicle is prohibited.
 - Complete a report of any vehicle damage and advise the school department immediately.
 - Fill the fuel tank prior to returning the rental vehicle to the rental car company.
 - Obtain a receipt for any gasoline purchased to request reimbursement.
 - The School Department will not pay or reimburse any costs, fine penalties, or assessments incurred by a traveler that resulted from violation of any federal or state law or local ordinances while operating a vehicle on official school business.
10. **Toll expenses** incurred while traveling will be reimbursed as follows:
 - Dated original receipts are required for all toll expenses.
 - Receipt dates and locations must correspond with the traveler's itinerary.
 - For any toll bill received after the traveler has returned home (either from a rental car company or directly from a state, turnpike or bridge authority), the traveler must pay directly and seek reimbursement.
 - Toll bill late fees will be the sole responsibility of the traveler.
11. Travelers who use their **personally-owned vehicles to travel to/from a common carrier terminal** will be reimbursed as follows:
 - Mileage reimbursement will be equal to the mileage from their work station to/from the terminal when they travel from their work station to and from the terminal.
 - Mileage reimbursement will be equal to the mileage from their home to/from the terminal less the employee's normal commute when they travel from their home to/from the terminal.
 - Mileage reimbursement will be made based on the current mileage reimbursement rate (available on the IRS website).

- Travelers are only allowed reimbursement for miles driven while they are in the vehicle. For example, if a spouse or family member drives the traveler's vehicle to/from the terminal to drop off/pick up the traveler, they are not entitled to mileage for two (2) round trips.

12. Travelers who **park at a common carrier terminal** will be reimbursed as follows:

- Dated original receipts are required for all parking expenses.
- Receipt dates must correspond with the departure and arrival dates on the traveler's itinerary.
- Reimbursement will be based on the most economical parking rates available on-site. At PVD airport, **Garage C and Lot E** are the allowed parking sites. If a traveler chooses a garage or lot that exceeds the rate in the allowed parking sites, only the maximum rate allowed for the period charged will be reimbursed. An exception will be made if the traveler has a medical problem that requires parking closer to the airport. Documentation may be required for the exception.

13. **Meal Allowance** - Meal reimbursement will be based on a flat rate. The rate is based on departure and arrival times. No meal reimbursement is allowed unless the travel involves an overnight stay. Meal reimbursement is not affected by any meals provided by common carriers, seminars, etc. The meal allowance covers meals and incidental expenses, such as tips and gratuities. Alcoholic beverages are not allowable expenses.

- Departure before noon: traveler will receive \$50 for the first day
- Departure at noon or later: traveler will receive \$25 for the first day
- Day of return: Traveler will receive \$25 if arrival time is before noon
- Day of return: Traveler will receive \$50 if arrival time is noon or later
- All other days the traveler will receive \$50

14. **Combination of Personal Travel with Business Travel** - Occasionally an employee may take a trip that includes both personal and business travel. When this occurs, the traveler must provide a written quote/comparison prior to travel. Only lodging, meal allowance and ground transportation directly related to the business purpose will be reimbursed.

- If the stay at a business location is extended 1 day or more either prior to or after the business mission, the traveler is required to document the cost comparison of air travel for just the business trip vs. cost of the actual travel with the extended time. If there is no additional cost, the entire ticket will be reimbursed.
- If any other destination is included on the ticket that does not pertain to the business purpose or an extended layover for personal trip (other than normal connecting airports to get to the business destination), the amount reimbursed will be the fare directly related to the point(s) of business based on the economy/coach fare.

The detailed instructions to request travel are available at the end of this policy.

1. **Reimbursement** - A travel expense voucher must be completed as soon as the traveler returns, but no later than the end of the following month.

Reimbursable Travel Expenses

- Conference/registration fees, if payment was not made by the School Department

- Meal Allowances
- Baggage Policy: Fee for first bag checked only, each way. An exception will be made if the traveler has to carry other items for the trip or has a medical problem that will require more than one bag. Prior approval is required for the exception. Original detailed receipts are required.
- Miscellaneous expenses: Bus, taxi, airport shuttle service, rental car gas refill, parking expenses, toll expenses, necessary business telephone calls, fax transmission, internet connection (receipts are required)
- Air/Bus/Rail and Lodging, if payment was not made by the School Department and supporting documentation provides approvals and backup as indicated in **Procedures** section above

Documentation that must be attached to the reimbursement request (receipts required)

- Airline ticket or Boarding Pass
- Hotel Detail Bill
- Car rental form (if applicable)
- Shuttle, taxi fare, parking fees, toll charges
- Itinerary from Travel Agent
- Copy of Conference Agenda
- Other supporting receipts

NOTE: Non-compliance with the above may cause future travel approval to be jeopardized.

Upon review and verification of travel costs, the Controller's Office will process the reimbursement payment to the employee.

DEFINITIONS:

Allowable Travel Expenses - Allowable transportation accommodations will include coach fares, utilizing the most economical fares possible. Most economical fares consist of the travel agency utilizing ALL available travel discounts including Saturday night stay-over where beneficial to the School Department. If the traveler utilizes the cost savings of a Saturday night stay-over, the traveler must submit written documentation as to the cost savings (i.e., the cost of a round trip ticket to destination without the Saturday night stay over, the cost of the hotel for an extra night and the cost of food for the extra day and the net savings to the School Department).

Lodging - Overnight accommodations will NOT be allowed within a 55 mile radius of the traveler's place of work. Distance from the traveler's residence cannot be used in calculating the 55 mile radius. **NOTE:** Depending on the traveler's home campus, the 55-mile limitation may include the City of Boston. While the school department will not pay for overnight accommodations within the 55 mile radius, if the traveler chooses to stay overnight, they can be reimbursed for food, parking/tolls, and mileage or train fare. However, a traveler may request an exception so that the School Department will pay for overnight accommodations within the 55-mile radius, if good cause is shown. For example, the traveler is planning on attending after hours business related networking events, which combined with a commute home, would be too burdensome. See **Exceptions**, below.

Lodging will be provided on a single room basis, or the lowest rate available, if a single room is not available. Documentation must be included explaining why the single room rate was not charged.

In the case of a non-employee sharing a room, reimbursement will be at the rate of three quarters (3/4) the double occupancy room rate. If the rates are the same for a single or double occupancy, reimbursement will be in full. If the room is shared with a School Department employee attending the same conference, documentation must include the name of the School Department employee sharing the room.

Traveler Responsibility -The traveler is responsible for the cancellation of room reservations if a trip is cancelled. North Providence School Department **is not** responsible for any charges or penalties resulting from the traveler's failure to give proper notice of cancellation. Travelers should remember that cancellation deadlines are based on local time at the destination hotel. Travelers should request and record a cancellation number in case of a billing dispute. North Providence School Department will pay for costs resulting from cancellations due to circumstances beyond the control of the traveler.

POLICY APPLIES TO:

1. All North Providence School Department full -time employees. For grant employees, in case of conflict, grant terms will prevail over this policy.
2. Contractors submitting travel expenses for reimbursement unless other contractual arrangements have been agreed upon.
3. Other non-employees, as designated by the Superintendent, engaged in authorized School Department business, e.g., job applicants on interview visits.

EXCEPTIONS:

All exceptions to this policy must be approved, in writing, by the Superintendent of Schools or the Finance Director.

POLICY MAINTENANCE

Developed by North Providence School Committee, to be reviewed annually and updated if required.

First Read: 9/25/19

Second Read: 10/23/19

Third Read/Approval: 11/20/19