

GENEVA CITY SCHOOLS TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this document is to provide clear and consistent guidance for employees and board members of the Geneva City Board of Education on the process for requesting, documenting, and receiving reimbursement for travel-related expenses incurred during the performance of official duties.

Procedures:

All travel expenses submitted for reimbursement must be incurred in the performance of official duties for the Geneva City Board of Education. Any overpayments made for any reason must be refunded to the Board of Education. Travel requests shall be limited to those for which funds have been appropriated in the annual budget. School Board members will be limited to \$5,000 per fiscal year. If their individual allocation is exceeded, they may request additional funding from the Geneva City School Board; otherwise, they will be responsible for their own expenses.

A **Workshop/Request for Professional Leave Form** must be submitted at least 7 days prior to the travel date and must be approved prior to the actual travel. An agenda, brochure, or some other form of documentation to substantiate the need for travel must accompany the request form. The request form shall include estimates for the total costs of registration fees, transportation, lodging, meals, and any other allowable expenses. No third party sites (Expedia, Booking.com, Priceline, etc.) should be used when making reservations.

No pre-approval will be required for school board members or school board attorney participating in AASB training, however, all registration and booking of accommodations will be handled by the Superintendent's Secretary.

Any training/travel held outside the State of Alabama must receive approval of the Geneva City School Board.

Authorized Expenses: The Board of Education will reimburse the employee for meals, lodging, coach airline tickets, mileage for personal vehicle, parking and toll fees, baggage-handling fees, taxi fares between the airport and the hotel and/or the hotel and training site. There will be absolutely no reimbursement without an official receipt for approved expenses.

Unauthorized Expenses: The Board of Education **will not** reimburse the employee for limousine service, alcoholic beverages, snacks, personal supplies, entertainment, cash tips or any expense incurred as a result of the violation of any law, ordinance, regulation, policy, etc. In addition, no reimbursement will be made to an employee for damage to or liability arising from the use of any personal vehicle.

Employee Reimbursement Request: All Reimbursement Claim Forms should be submitted within 10 working days after the conclusion of travel. In cases where extenuating circumstances prevent timely submission – such as hospitalization, death in the immediate family, personal illness, or emergencies – exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis, with proper documentation. Travel expenses that are incurred during a given fiscal year (October 1-September 30) that are submitted after the specified year-end deadline **will not be reimbursed**. If on a continuous trip on the last day of the fiscal year-end (September 30), the expenses for October 1 forward must be on a separate Reimbursement Claim Form.

Reimbursement requests must be submitted using the official Employee Reimbursement Claim Form, and must include dated, itemized receipts for all claimed expenses. A Google Maps printout showing mileage and routing must accompany all mileage claims.

For school board members, all reimbursement requests must be reviewed and approved by the Board Chairman before payment is issued. If the Board Chairman is submitting a claim, approval must be obtained from two board members. For all other employees, the Superintendent is the approving authority. However, when the Superintendent submits a reimbursement request, approval may be obtained from the Chief School Financial Officer, or the Board Chairman.

Once approved with appropriate signatures obtained, the Reimbursement Claim Form will be routed to the Accounts Payable Clerk at the Board of Education office for payment. The reimbursement request will be included in the next scheduled check run. No reimbursements will be made without a Reimbursement Claim Form being submitted.

Prepayments: Registration, lodging, and airline tickets may be prepaid by the Board of Education office to secure reduced rates. Prepayment requests must be accompanied by a copy of the approved Workshop/Travel Request Form and submitted with a purchase order or check request at least two weeks before the registration deadline.

If an employee or board member is unable to attend approved training, cancellation costs will be the responsibility of the individual unless extenuating circumstances are present. Acceptable reasons for cancellation, to be considered on a case-by-case basis, may include personal illness, hospitalization, or a death in the immediate family.

Lodging: Lodging expenses will be prepaid/reimbursed only for conferences and events located beyond a 75-mile radius. Whether prepaid or employee paid, the lodging receipt must be attached to the Reimbursement Claim Form and must show a zero balance due reflecting the cost of the room has been paid in full.

Meal Allowances: Meal allowances are available only for employees on approved travel outside of Geneva County. Employees may be reimbursed the actual costs of meals with the maximum limits established in these travel regulations. Guest(s) traveling with the employee should order meals separately so that non-reimbursable meals are not included on the employee's itemized receipt. The follow limits apply:

- With no overnight stay

The meal allowance will be \$10.00 for breakfast, \$20.00 for lunch and \$40.00 for dinner. These amounts include gratuity.

The eligibility of meals is as follows:

- a. An employee is eligible for the breakfast allowance if they are on travel status prior to 6:30 a.m.
- b. An employee is eligible for the lunch allowance if they are on travel status between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
- c. An employee is eligible for the dinner allowance if they are on travel status after 6:00 p.m.

An employee will be reimbursed for actual expenses up to the prescribed limit for each meal. A gratuity of up to 20% may be included; however, it must be included in the allowable cost of the meal. Unused meal allowances may not be applied to the other meals. *Expenses in excess of the prescribed limit will not be reimbursed.*

- With approved overnight stay:

The meal allowance will be \$70 per day (including gratuity).

An employee will be reimbursed for actual expenses up to the prescribed limit for each meal. A gratuity of up to 20% may be included; however, it must be included in the allowable cost of the meal. Unused meal allowances may not be applied to the other meals. *Expenses in excess of the prescribed limit will not be reimbursed.*

No meals will be reimbursed for scheduled meals provided by the conference and included in the registration fee.

Mileage: A system vehicle, when available, must be used for all travel. If a system vehicle is unavailable, a private vehicle may be used. The number of reimbursable miles for private vehicle usage will be determined by entering the starting location and ending location on Google Maps and selecting the shortest distance under advanced options. If traveling between several points it will be necessary to “map” each point of travel in order to determine the total number of miles to claim. Reimbursement should be claimed only for the number of miles driven in the performance of official duties for the Geneva City Board of Education. Commuting mileage and mileage incurred for personal reasons must be excluded from the total miles claimed. It is ultimately the employee’s responsibility to ensure that the total miles claimed for reimbursement are a true and accurate reflection of the miles driven while in performance of official Board duties.

Employees may be reimbursed for business miles traveled in a personal vehicle at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service. Reimbursement is based on the most DIRECT route provided by Google Maps, meaning the employee will be reimbursed from his/her home or work location, whichever is CLOSEST, to his/her destination. If possible, employees traveling to the same location for the same purpose should carpool.

Any request for mileage reimbursement that is older than 30 days may not be reimbursed.

Required Documentation: Reimbursement of authorized expenditures will be made only if substantiated. An agenda **must** be attached to the Reimbursement Claim Form. All receipts should be dated and itemized. Summary receipts are not accepted and **WILL NOT** be reimbursed.

- Registration Fee** – documented by publication or by invoice and dated receipt.
- Meals** – (including gratuity actually paid- not to exceed 20%) dated itemized receipts.
- Lodging** – original dated itemized receipt showing paid status.
- Coach Airline Tickets** – original dated itemized receipt.
- Mileage for Personal Vehicle** – substantiated by Google Maps, no incidental mileage will be paid.
- Parking and Toll Fees** – substantiated by dated receipt.

- g. **Baggage and Handling Fees** – substantiated by dated receipt.
- h. **Taxi Fees** – substantiated by dated receipt.
- i. **Other Expenses** – documented by dated itemized receipts. (Items purchased without a purchase order by an individual are subject to taxes. However, taxes WILL NOT be reimbursed to the individual for purchases made in this manner – even if reimbursement for the items is approved.)

Please Note: Cash register tapes, scraps of paper or other reimbursement claims that are not determinable as to the date, the place and the type of expenditure may be disallowed for reimbursement.

Employee Responsibilities: Employees are responsible for ensuring the most reasonable rates for all expenditures. Employees are also responsible for acquiring and submitting the appropriate documentation for reimbursement.