



Elmore County Public Schools

Employee Professional Development/Travel Procedures

Effective 1/1/2025

OVERVIEW

ALL employees and all other persons using ECBOE funds must follow the procedures outlined below when requesting to attend professional development events within or outside of the school system. Failure to follow these procedures can result in the denied reimbursement claims.

Prior to any professional development/travel claim ALL employees must have completed the pre-approval process. Employees need to have approved professional development requests prior to any registration payment or attendance at a professional development session.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUESTS AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Professional Development Requests - (In-System, Out-Of-System, Online)

- Each employee must submit a “PD Request Form” in TalentEd and receive **approval before** registering for an in-system, out-of-system, or online professional development event:
<https://elmoreco.tedk12.com/sso/Account/Login>
- **Employees should not register and/or attend a professional development event unless their PD Request Form has been approved in TalentEd.**
- PD Request Forms should be submitted ***no later than 10 days prior*** to the professional development event. ***If a substitute teacher will be required, the employee must also submit a “Detached Duty Form - Professional Development” in TalentEd.***
- The professional development event must meet ESSA criteria and be evidence-based for federal funds to be used. The workshop topic or theme must have a direct link to the administrator’s/teacher’s PLP, the school’s Alabama Continuous Improvement Plan (ACIP), and/or the ECBOE Strategic Plan.
- Professional development required as part of a grant will be administered by the appropriate department head.
- The funding type and account number information will be completed by the Federal Programs Department staff or Finance staff.

Travel Reimbursement Procedures – (In-System, Out-of-System Travel)

- Travel expenses will be reimbursed **ONLY** for days listed on the approved PD Request Form.
- Every effort should be made to provide ***accurate estimations of expenditures*** on the request form. **If estimated costs are not included on the PD Request Form**, the employee will not be reimbursed for any expenses incurred. The employee will only be reimbursed up to the amount listed on the PD Request Form plus 10%; otherwise the reimbursement will require additional approvals are documented.
- **Failure to obtain approval prior to attending a professional development event/activity will result in the “Travel Reimbursement Request Form” being denied and no travel expenses reimbursed.**

- **If changes in travel arrangements are necessary after the PD Request Form has been approved, please contact the department that approved the PD request for further instructions.** Travel for a pre-approved professional development includes a maximum of one travel day at the beginning and/or one travel day at the end of the trip, if deemed necessary.
- Original, physically signed Travel Reimbursement Request Forms must be submitted by the employee to the department responsible for payment immediately upon completion of a pre-approved professional development event, but ***no later than 30 days after*** the event. Emails, copies or faxes of the signed Travel Reimbursement Request Form will not be accepted.
- Travel Reimbursement Request Forms submitted ***more than 30 days after*** the completion of the professional development event may not be paid. It is the employee's responsibility to fill out the "Travel Reimbursement Request Form" and to ensure that all required documentation is submitted for the request to be processed.
- The event agenda including the name and date of the event must be attached to all Travel Reimbursement Request Forms. If no formal agenda exists, a certificate of completion including the name and date of the event may be attached. Receipts smaller than 8 ½" x 11" should be affixed to a white sheet of paper.

RECEIVING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT (PLU/CPE Credits)

Attendance at in-system events is documented via sign-in sheets and credit is awarded in PowerSchool (PS) Professional Learning. For online professional development credit, follow procedures for entering out-of-system professional development in PowerSchool Professional Learning.

Entering Out-of-System PD Activities that you were not required to sign up for in PowerSchool Professional Learning:

- Login to **PowerSchool Professional Learning**
- Click on **External Credit Request** on the menu bar at the top of the page.
- Click on **My Requests** on the left side of the screen.
- Click on the blue **Create School Level External Credit Request** button on the upper right side of the screen.
- You will need to enter the following information:
 - Training Name
 - Training Number (e.g., course number for college course)
 - University/Location
 - Start Date
 - End Date
 - Description
 - Type (of training) – this is a drop-down list
 - Attachment to verify your completion of the training for which you are requesting credit
- When all information is entered, click on the blue **Submit for Credit Approval** button on the lower left of side of the screen.
- Your request will be reviewed and credit will appear on the **Approved** tab in My Requests after it has been approved.

ALLOWABLE/REIMBURSABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES

Registration Fees

- Registration fees may be paid in advance through the use of a purchase order. Purchase orders may be done for registration fees of \$125 or more.

- Purchase orders may be done for online professional development registration fees of \$125 or more once the employee completes an “Online PD Registration Fee Agreement Form”. A certificate of completion including the name and date of the event must be submitted to the department responsible for payment immediately upon completion of a pre-approved professional development event. ****A copy of this certificate of completion will need to be included in the reimbursement request packet.**
- The Elmore County Board of Education does not pay or reimburse personal membership fees or dues. (Exception: CLAS membership for all administrators including Central Office, Principals, Assistant Principals, Administrative Assistants, AASBO memberships)
- The employee is responsible for contacting the professional development event host if they are unable to attend the registered event. The employee should obtain proof of registration cancellation. ***Failure to obtain proof of registration cancellation will result in the employee being responsible for any charges incurred from the event host.***
- A detailed payment receipt must be submitted with the Travel Reimbursement Request Form if registration reimbursement is being requested for registration fees paid by the employee.

Mileage/Transportation

- Mileage to a professional development event in the employee’s city of residence will not be reimbursed. ***No reimbursement shall be authorized for travel between the employee’s residence and assigned workplace/work base (aka - commute mileage).***
- Mileage should be calculated from the employee’s work base/assigned workplace to the professional development event location for travel.
- There will be no reimbursement for vicinity mileage, such as mileage to dinner, local stores, and/or local attractions.
- Mileage will be reimbursed at the current per-mile rate (at the time of travel) set by the IRS.
- County vehicles may be used, if available. Use of county cars for out-of-district travel will be charged to the appropriate department.
- Employees are expected to carpool whenever possible.
- A **Google map** must be submitted with the Travel Reimbursement Request Form if transportation reimbursement is being requested. The map provided should agree with the mileage reimbursement amount.
- **Points of Travel** - Travel related to the performance of routine job responsibilities is to be reported on the Local Travel Report.
 - Employees who report to various locations in one day must subtract commuting mileage from the total mileage claimed for reimbursement on that day.
 - Documentation of mileage (Google map) must be attached to Local Travel Report.

Parking

- Hotel self-parking and taxes may be reimbursed.

- Hotel valet parking is not allowable unless pre-approved by Superintendent – Valet requests may be made for thing such as: physical limitations or illnesses, or valet parking is the only option. If valet parking is the only option, documentation must be provided.
- Parking Garage/Decks for host locations or hotels will be reimbursed at actual costs.
- A detailed payment receipt must be submitted with the Travel Reimbursement Request Form if parking reimbursement is being requested.

Airfare

- **Employees must purchase fully refundable airline tickets.**
- Employees can personally purchase airline tickets or may request to purchase the tickets using a purchasing card.
- Upgrade charges such as: first-class tickets, preferred seating, and early-boarding ***will not be*** reimbursed.
- Most airlines have initiated fees for checked baggage. Elmore County Board of Education will reimburse the employee for up to two baggage charges each way if a detailed receipt is submitted with the Travel Reimbursement Request Form. ***The employee is responsible for any excess weight charges.***
- ***Airfare will only be reimbursed for pre-approved dates of travel. If the employee chooses to extend their trip (to include days before or after the pre-approved dates of travel) a price comparison must be submitted. The price comparison should include the pre-approved dates of travel airfare charges and an extended dates of travel airfare charge. Elmore County Board of Education will reimburse the employee at the lowest rate.***
- A detailed payment receipt must be submitted with the Travel Reimbursement Request Form if airfare reimbursement is being requested.
- If airfare was purchased on the County credit card, then on the reimbursement form under airfare it should say “on County Card”

Lodging

- Employees may be reimbursed for lodging expenses at the single room rate of up to \$175 per night plus applicable taxes or the conference block room rate/group rate, if higher. The rate of \$175 per night is to include any and all fees (other than taxes).
- For travel to the Gulf Coast between April 1 and September 30, the following rate rules will apply:
 - Mobile – up to \$250 per night plus applicable taxes or the conference block room rate/group rate, if higher.
 - Gulf Shores/Orange Beach – up to \$400 per night plus applicable taxes or the conference block room rate/group rate, if higher.
 - **Documentation of the conference block room rate/group rate must be provided. This may be found on the conference website, registration email/confirmation or hotel receipt.**
 - *Alternately, a reduced room rate may be obtained utilizing the state/government employee rate if conference block rooms/group rates are not available.*
- Optional expenses such as movie rentals, alcoholic beverages, upgraded hotel wi-fi, hotel safe fees, room service, and other personal expenses are not allowable expenditures.

- A detailed payment receipt must be submitted with the Travel Reimbursement Request Form if lodging reimbursement is being requested.

Food/Meal Allowance

- Meal reimbursement will be paid on a per diem basis for in-state and out-of-state destinations.
- Meal receipts are not required.
- Employees are responsible for providing accurate per diem rates for the professional development event location.
 - Per diem rates can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/mie-breakdown> under Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) rates and breakdown.
- The full daily per diem rate will be paid for all days of out-of-system approved travel.
- Any out-of-system professional development event held in the following Alabama counties will only be reimbursed at half of the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) rate.
 - Autauga
 - Chilton
 - Coosa
 - Macon
 - Montgomery
 - Tallapoosa
- Tips for meals are included in the daily per diem rate.
- A printed copy of the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) rate must be submitted with the Travel Reimbursement Request Form if food/meal reimbursement is being requested.

Other/Miscellaneous

- Other necessary travel expenses such as cabs, subways, toll charges, etc., are allowable if deemed necessary.
 - Other necessary travel includes transportation from the airport to employee's hotel and from the employee's hotel to the conference event/location.
 - Other necessary travel does not include transportation to vendor meetings/events, meals, local stores, and/or local attractions.
- Tips for ride services are allowable up to 20%. No other tips will be reimbursed.
- Detailed payment receipts must be submitted with the Travel Reimbursement Request Form for any other/miscellaneous reimbursement being requested.
- It is the employee's responsibility to make all arrangements for attending professional development events.
- **The use of travel agents must be pre-approved by the Superintendent.**