

**Sample Bylaw**

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EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENTS

Board members and Charter school trustees receive no payment for their services. With board approval, they may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred on board business.

Travel and Related Expenses

Travel reimbursement will be paid only upon compliance with the board's policy provisions and approval requirements. Board members, trustees and employees shall only be reimbursed for work-related travel that is directly related to and within the scope of the board member's, trustee's and employee's current work responsibilities. Board members, trustees and employees shall only be reimbursed for travel that:

- A. Promotes the delivery of instruction and is critical to the instructional needs of the school district or furthers the efficient operation of the school district,
- B. Is educationally necessary and fiscally prudent, and
- C. Is directly related to and within the scope of the board member's current responsibilities, and for school district employees, the school district's professional development plan.

As described in this policy, school district travel expenditures include, but are not limited to, all costs for transportation, meals, lodging, and registration or conference fees to and for the travel event. School district travel expenditures include costs for all required training and all travel authorized in existing school district employee contracts and school board policies. This includes, but is not limited to, required professional development and other staff training, required training for new school board members, and attendance at specific conferences authorized in existing employee contracts.

Travel Payments

Travel payments will be paid only upon compliance with the school board's policy provisions and approval requirements. The school board will not ratify or approve payments or reimbursements for travel after completion of the travel event. All board members, trustees and employees shall adhere to the following specifications to be considered for reimbursement:

- A. Reimbursement may not exceed State travel reimbursement guidelines as established by the Department of Treasury in NJOMB circular letter [Circular 08-19-OMB](#) or [Circular 06-14-OMB](#) including but not limited to the types of travel, methods of transportation, mileage allowance, meal allowance, overnight travel and supporting documentation.
- B. Reimbursement must also be in compliance with OMB Circular A-87 (found at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a087/a87\\_2004.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a087/a87_2004.html)). No reimbursement will be issued without submission of written documentation such as receipts, checks and vouchers detailing the amount of each expenditure. Such documentation must be submitted within a timeframe to be established by the board.

EXPENSES (continued)

- C. Travel expenditures must be in compliance with State travel payment guidelines as established by the Department of the Treasury and with guidelines established by the federal Office of Management and Budget; except that those guidelines that conflict with the provisions of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes shall not be applicable, including, but not limited to, the authority to issue travel charge cards. The board of education shall specify in its travel policy the applicable restrictions and requirements set forth in the State and federal guidelines including, but not limited to, types of travel, methods of transportation, mileage allowance, subsistence allowance, and submission of supporting documentation including receipts, checks or vouchers.
- D. Board members, trustees and employees shall provide within one week [or other reasonable time specified by the board], a brief report that includes, as appropriate, but may not be limited to, a description of the primary purpose for the travel, and a summary of the goals and key issues that were addressed at the event and their relevance to improving instruction or the operation of the school district. This report will be submitted to the Board secretary or other appropriate party designated by the board.

Abbott districts may have additional requirements, such as pre-approval by NJDOE for travel with a total cost that is projected to exceed \$2,500 or more than two employees or board members are attending the same event, at least one month prior to the travel date; they should check with NJDOE to determine what additional requirements for Abbott districts will be in effect at the time of travel.

In addition to the requirements above, employee travel, to be reimbursable, must be directly related to the employee's professional development. No district employee shall be reimbursed for travel and related expenses without prior written approval of the chief school administrator or charter school lead person, and prior approval by a majority of the full voting membership of the board (as set forth below).

Prior Approval is Required

Board members and trustees shall only be reimbursed for travel and related expenses that have received prior approval by a majority of the full voting membership of the board, and is in compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24 and 24.1 of the School Ethics Act.

- A. Specifically, a board member must recuse himself from voting on travel if the board member, a member of his immediate family, or a business organization in which he has an interest, has a direct or indirect financial involvement that may reasonably be expected to impair his objectivity or independence of judgment.
- B. Also, a board member shall not: act in his official capacity in any matter in which he or a member of his immediate family has a personal involvement that is or creates some benefit to the school official or member of his immediate family; or undertake any employment or service, whether compensated or not, which may reasonably be expected to prejudice his independence of judgment in the execution of his official duties.
- C. For employees, a board of education requires that travel occur only upon prior written approval of the chief school administrator and prior approval by a majority of the full voting membership of the board.
- D. For regular business travel only, a school board may authorize in its travel policy an annual maximum amount per employee for regular business travel for which school board approval is not required. As defined by law, "regular school district business travel" is distinct from "training and seminars" and "conventions and conferences."
- E. For board members, travel may occur only upon prior approval by a majority of the full voting membership of the board and that the travel be in compliance with section 4 of P.L.1991, c.393

EXPENSES (continued)

Travel Advances are Banned

An employee of the school board, a school board member, or organization, shall not receive an amount for travel and travel-related expenses in advance of the travel pursuant to N.J.S.18A:19-1 et seq.

Annual Maximum Travel Expenditure Amount

The board shall:

- A. Allot in its annual budget a maximum travel expenditure amount and annually review its policy to assure that it properly reflects the amount budgeted.
- B. Vote to authorize each reimbursement; specifying the way in which it promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district, within the maximum annual amount.
- C. Annually in the prebudget year, establish by school board resolution, a maximum travel expenditure amount for the budget year, which the school district shall not exceed in that budget year. The school board resolution shall also include the maximum amount established for the prebudget year and the amount spent to date.
- D. Provide that the maximum school district travel expenditure amount shall include all travel in accordance with this policy supported by local and State funds.

Additional Detailed Accounting Requirements which Demonstrate Compliance

In order to demonstrate compliance with this policy, documentation of all reimbursed travel expenses shall be maintained on file. This record may include receipts, checks and vouchers submitted in connection with any reimbursement. The district shall maintain separate accounting for school district travel expenditures as necessary, to ensure compliance with the school district's maximum travel expenditure amount. This may include, but need not be limited to, a separate or offline accounting of such expenditures or expanding the school district's accounting system. The tracking system shall be sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the board's policy and this section, and shall provide auditable information.

To minimize travel expenditures, school boards and staff will take the following steps:

- A. "Retreats" will be held at school district facilities, if available. A retreat is a meeting of school district employees and school board members, held away from the normal work environment, at which organizational goals and objectives are discussed.
- B. A school district shall not bear costs for car rentals, limousine services, and chauffeuring costs to or during the event, as well as costs for employee attendance for coordinating other attendees accommodations at the travel event.
- C. One-day trips that do not involve overnight lodging are not eligible for a subsistence payment or reimbursement except in limited circumstances authorized in Department of the Treasury guidelines.
- D. Overnight travel is eligible for a subsistence payment or reimbursement as authorized in Department of the Treasury guidelines, except as otherwise superseded by the following:
  1. Per diem payment or reimbursement for lodging and meals will be actual reasonable costs, not to exceed the federal per diem rates as established in the federal register for the current year;

EXPENSES (continued)

2. Lodging expenses may exceed the federal per diem rates if the hotel is the site of the convention, conference, seminar or meeting and the going rate of the hotel is in excess of the federal per diem rates. If the hotel at the site of the convention, conference, seminar, or meeting is no longer available, lodging may be paid for similar accommodations at a rate not to exceed the hotel rate for the event;
3. Receipts are required for hotel expenses. Meal expenses under the federal per diem allowance limits do not require receipts;
4. In any case in which the total per diem reimbursement is greater than the federal per diem rate, except when the going rate for lodging at the site of the convention or meeting exceeds federal per diem rates, the costs will be considered to be excessive and shall not be paid by school district funds;
5. School districts shall patronize hotels and motels that offer special rates to government employees unless alternative lodging offers greater cost benefits; and
6. Payment or reimbursement is approved for the full cost of an official convention meal that the employee or school board member attends, when the meal is scheduled as an integral part of the convention or conference proceedings. If a meal is included in the registration fee, the allowance for the meal is not eligible for reimbursement.

Blanket or general pre-approval for travel is not authorized, and will not be permitted by the board. Specifically, approval shall be itemized by event, event total cost, and number of employees and school board members attending the event. However a school board may also approve, at any time prior to the event, travel for multiple months as long as the school board approval, as detailed in school board minutes, itemizes the approval by event, total cost, and number of employees and school board members attending the event.

Exclusions Allowed by Law

- A. A board of education may, in its policy, exclude from the requirements of prior school board approval any travel caused by or subject to contractual provisions, other statutory requirements, or federal regulatory requirements. The school board may not exclude such travel from the subsistence requirements and the annual maximum travel expenditure amount.
- B. A district board of education may elect to exclude travel expenditures to be supported by federal funds in the maximum travel expenditure amount. If federal funds are excluded from the established maximum school district travel expenditure amount, the board of education shall include in the board resolution, the total amount of travel supported by federal funds from the prior year, prebudget year, and projected for the budget year.

Penalties

The board by this policy informs its members and staff that the penalties for violating this policy based on State law include:

- A. By law, any district board of education that violates its established maximum travel expenditure, or that otherwise is not in compliance with the travel limitations set forth in this section may be subject to sanctions by the commissioner as authorized pursuant to N.J.S.18A:4-23 and N.J.S.18A:4-24, including reduction of State aid in an amount equal to any excess expenditure.
- B. A person who approves any travel in violation of the school district's policy or this section shall be required to reimburse the school district in an amount equal to three times the cost associated with

attending the event.

File Code 9250

EXPENSES (continued)

- C. An employee or member of the board of education who travels in violation of the school district's policy or this section shall be required to reimburse the school district in an amount equal to three times the cost associated with attending the event.

The chief school administrator or charter school lead person may develop regulations to implement this policy.

Date:

Legal References: Use legal reference sheet.

Cross References: List your appropriate policies. See legal reference sheet for possibilities.

Key Words

Reimbursement of Board Members, Board Member Reimbursement, Board Member Expenses, Employee Reimbursement, Employee Expenses