

BALDWIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEE TRAVEL PROCEDURES

OVERVIEW

The Baldwin County Board of Education allows travel expenses incurred by school personnel to be reimbursed or paid via BCBE-approved Purchasing Cards for applicable staff. Proper approvals must be obtained prior to travel and must relate to employee's duties and responsibilities for BCBE. ACH is available and encouraged for all travel reimbursement claims. Sign up forms are available on BCBE website. Please note the overall general guidelines for travel:

- ❖ All travel must be pre-approved by the department head or principal on the BCBE Leave Request Form. (Appendix A)
- ❖ All travel claims are due to the paying entity, whether that be the Accounts Payable Department or the local school bookkeeper, by the 15th of each month for processing.
- ❖ For mileage expenses, personnel will be reimbursed at the established rate set forth by the State of Alabama for use of personal vehicle.
- ❖ No reimbursement shall be authorized for travel between the employee's residence and assigned work place (commute mileage).
- ❖ Limits may be established on the amount of authorized travel.
- ❖ Official travel for a pre-approved conference or meeting includes a maximum of one travel day at the beginning and one travel day at the end of the trip.
- ❖ Local Travel: Reimbursement for hotel costs and food/meal allowance are not allowed for the performance of routine job responsibilities within Baldwin County and surrounding areas within 100 miles one way.
- ❖ Overnight trips of less than 100 miles one way traveling distance are not permitted.
NOTE: Overnight trips of less than 100 miles for two or more nights are permitted IF based on the judgment of the Assistant Superintendent/Division Director/Principal, returning home each night is unreasonable. Under these circumstances, the Assistant Superintendent / Division Director / Principal must submit justification and any pertinent documentation to the Superintendent for approval PRIOR to the actual travel. A once-a-year exception per employee may be submitted. This provision may be subject to restrictions based upon cost containment measures as directed by Superintendent.
- ❖ 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. Each Principal/Supervisor will be responsible for determining commuting mileage for all employees within their school/department/division.
- ❖ Non-allowable travel expenditures placed on an approved BCBE purchasing card must be refunded by the employee per the signed Purchasing Card Agreement.

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Registration: Registration fees are the sole travel expenditure that may be paid in advance via purchase order or paid with a BCBE pre-approved P-Card. Request for payment/reimbursement must have agenda indicating meeting place, dates and must be accompanied with receipt. The Board does not pay personal membership fees or dues. Also, a copy of the approved Leave Request must accompany the documentation submitted for advance payment of registration fees.

Hotel/Motel: Personnel may be reimbursed OR use BCBE issued P-Card to pay hotel/motel expense at the single room rate up to \$230 per night plus applicable taxes or the conference-room hotel rate if higher. Itemized receipts are required. Parking and taxes may be also reimbursed. Movie rentals, alcoholic beverages and other personal expenses are not allowable expenditures. If P-card is being utilized, rooms should not be reserved if a minimum payment is required prior to travel and/or must not be booked through third-party vendors, i.e. Travelocity, Priceline, Orbitz, etc. as these require payment prior to travel.

Airfare: Personnel attending professional development conferences/workshops requiring airfare will be paid via reimbursement process only. Itemized receipts are required. Most airlines have initiated fees for checked baggage. The Board will reimburse the employee for one baggage charge each way if ticket is submitted. The employee is responsible for any excess weight charges or for any charges for two or more checked baggage items.

Food/M meal Allowance: A paid receipt is not required for this allowance. The Board has adopted the Meal and Incidental Expense per diem rates set by the United States General Services Administration (GSA) for out of state travel. (*The GSA food/Meal allowance is only allowable for out of state trips that are 6 hours or more and 100 miles or more one way.*) Personnel will be reimbursed \$45 per day for approved in-state travel for 100 miles or more one way.

Car Rental: Rental cars must be pre-approved on Leave Request Form and must serve a legitimate business purpose. Personnel requiring a rental car will be paid via reimbursement process only and must include rental and gas. If additional insurance is purchased, it will be the responsibility of the employee. Itemized receipts are required.

Other/Miscellaneous: Other necessary travel expenses such as cabs, subways, parking, toll charges, etc., are allowable if necessary, reasonable and documented with receipts/tickets via reimbursement only.

LEAVE REQUEST

The Leave Request form is the initial documentation to support travel reimbursement claims and/or payment of travel-related expenditures with BCBE-approved P-Cards. A Leave Request must be completed and submitted to the applicable department head

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when it has been determined that the reason for the leave falls into one of the categories listed below:

- ❖ Accompanying students on school approved activities.
- ❖ Attendance at any professional development activity or workshop for which costs are incurred for substitutes, registration, etc.
- ❖ Visitation to observe other instructional techniques or programs.
- ❖ Legal Leave (Short term leave supported by subpoena or juror notification.) (Plaintiffs or defendants are NOT eligible for paid leave.)
- ❖ Special permission is/was granted by the Board of Education.

Procedures for Processing and Approval of Leave Request

- ❖ Leave Request should be submitted and approved PRIOR to the event/activity at least 1 to 2 weeks in advance.
- ❖ Travel expenses will be reimbursed ONLY for those days approved on the Leave Request.
- ❖ The meeting agenda must be attached to the Leave Request for all trips. If no formal agenda exists, submit proper documentation in lieu of formal agenda.
- ❖ Failure to obtain Leave Request approval preceding an event/activity may result in request being denied and no travel expenses reimbursed. IF changes in travel arrangements are necessary, an amended Leave Request may be submitted for approval to allow for reimbursements.
- ❖ Check applicable box and the appropriate funding source if a substitute is required. If a system-paid category is selected, the school MUST SUBMIT THE LEAVE REQUEST TO THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE TO THE ATTENTION OF lcoe@bcbe.org with a copy to sjanes@bcbe.org. The Superintendent's office will affix a protected signature for the Superintendent and return to the school via email. PLEASE NOTE: IF A SCHOOL PROCESSES REMOTE LEAVE USING SYSTEM PAID SUBS FOR AN UNAUTHORIZED/UNAPPROVED EVENT, THE SCHOOL WILL BE CHARGED FOR THE SUB UPON REVIEW OR AUDIT OF LEAVE RECORDS.

LOCAL SCHOOL / STUDENT TRAVEL

With the principal's approval, school personnel may opt to claim actual expenses in the course of a trip as a cost-saving measure for their respective locally funded programs/activities instead of the allowable travel per diem. (Actual expenses must be for the lesser amount!) A check box is available on the BCBE Travel Form that should be selected to indicate that the allowable per diem is being waived. Itemized receipts are required in these instances.

School sponsored extra-curricular activities may require travel for athletic and/or academic programs. Below are the general guidelines for travel involving students:

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- ❖ An approved Field Trip Request Form will serve as the initial approval process to incur expenses for student travel.
- ❖ Travel-related expenses may be paid via school check OR with a Region's Purchasing Card that may be obtained from the school bookkeeper for those schools participating in the P-Card Program.
- ❖ A signed Purchasing Card Agreement must be on file prior to issuing a P-Card for any cardholder.
- ❖ All applicable field trip policies/procedures must be followed per BCBE Board Policy #765.
- ❖ School bookkeeper must ensure the availability of funds prior to travel as with any expenditure.
- ❖ Transportation by bus (county or charter) or rental vehicle (if approved) will be reserved and paid via school check only. P-Card may not be used for transportation.
- ❖ Registration fees may be paid by school check or P-Card with proper approvals and adequate documentation regarding nature of travel.
- ❖ Listing of students in the traveling party must be provided including siblings of students, chaperones, etc.
- ❖ Itemized receipts with applicable personnel signatures must be submitted upon return to school bookkeeper.
- ❖ Personnel may be held accountable/responsible for expenditures without itemized receipts at the principal's discretion
- ❖ Tips/gratuities must be documented and included as part of check or P-Card documentation.