

POLICY

Revised

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

File Code: 3570

DISTRICT RECORDS AND REPORTS

The operation of a school district results in the generation of numerous documents and official records. These must be maintained in compliance with the NJ Open Public Records Act and other laws and regulations. Members of the public have the right under law to inspect and copy (with certain exceptions) the public records of the district.

The district plans to preserve these records by:

- A. Appointing the business administrator as records custodian;
- B. Periodically reviewing records retention with the chief school administrator and the school board or a committee thereof, and
- C. Retaining records according to the schedule for educational institutions promulgated by ~~NJDARM (NJ Division of Archives & Records Management)~~ *NJ Department of Treasury, Division of Revenue and Enterprise Service, Records Management Services (RMS)*;

A partial schedule, for key classes of records, is shown at the end of this policy.

Availability to the Public

For the protection of the public interest, the board believes that members of the community have a right to inspect, copy or examine district records, with certain exemptions as specifically described in statute. Any limitations on this right shall be construed in favor of the public's right to access. Requests for district records shall be submitted to the records custodian (or designee) in writing on the appropriate form. The custodian shall reply to all requests promptly and shall grant access or deny the request as soon as possible, but within seven days, provided that the record is currently available and not in storage or archived.

The custodian shall permit district records to be inspected, examined or copied during the hours that the board office is open (or for small districts with an enrollment of 500 or fewer, during not less than six regular business hours over not less than three business days per week). Immediate access ordinarily must be granted for budgets, bills, contracts and collective negotiations agreements. Copies may be made at fees not to exceed those set by statute. Anonymous requests for government records are permitted by law. If an anonymous request is made and the estimated cost of producing copies exceeds \$5.00, a deposit may be required. Anonymous requests for personal information will not be fulfilled.

Access shall be granted in the medium requested or some other meaningful medium, unless the request is for a record in a medium not routinely used by the district; not routinely developed or maintained by the district; or requiring a substantial amount of manipulation or programming of information technology. In these cases, the board may add a special reasonable charge. The custodian shall ensure that statements are prominently posted in district offices that describe the specific terms of the public's right to appeal a denial of access and procedures for filing an appeal.

Records Exempted from Public Access

Records exempted by law include: security and emergency response procedures; purchase, lease or acquisition of real property; pending or anticipated litigation; reports of investigations in progress; matters for which disclosure would impair the right to receive federal funds; pending negotiations toward a collective bargaining agreement; most personnel and pension records of an individual; questions and answer keys (for personnel or academic examinations and job interviews); records concerning individual pupils and staff, their home addresses and telephone numbers (unless waived by the individual); reports and recommendations that involve unwarranted invasion of privacy; medical and psychological records. The records custodian will keep confidential and edit out information in records that disclose social security numbers, credit card information and drivers' license numbers.

Record Retention

Record retention periods in conformance with state and federal codes, regulations, and statutes of limitation may be accessed through the ~~New Jersey Division of Archives and Records Management (NJDRAM)~~ **New Jersey Department of Treasury, Division of Revenue and Enterprise Service, Records Management (RMS)** in the School District Records Retention and Disposition Schedule located at <http://www.state.nj.us/state/darm/links/retention.html#eds>. The records custodian will ensure that records are retained and appropriately stored in accordance with state and federal statute and regulation. A partial schedule of retention periods for pertinent school record categories is listed below (Note: the School District Records Retention and Disposition Schedule should be consulted before any record is destroyed).

Partial Record Retention Schedule

- A. *Financial records*: 7 (seven) years
- B. *Agendas and minutes*: Permanent for originals; 1 year for copies
- C. *Resolutions of the school board*: Permanent
- D. *Administrative policy and advisory statements*: Permanent
- E. *Correspondence, including emails*: 3 (three) years for general external correspondence; one year for internal correspondence
- F. *Official public meeting notice*: 3 (three) years
- G. *Legal notice in newspaper*: 7 (seven) years
- H. *Publisher's affidavits*: 10 (ten) years

- I. *Tape recordings of school board meetings (audio tape and video):* 45 (forty-five) days or until summary or verbatim transcripts have been approved as minutes
- J. *Election file:* 5 (five) years for bonding election report, certificate and voting authority
- K. *Other election materials:* 1 (one) year
- L. *Master publications file of school newsletters, yearbooks, student handbooks, etc.:* Permanent
- M. *School monitoring file (with school monitoring annual plan):* Permanent
- N. *Internal monitoring guide and action plan:* 14 (fourteen) years
- O. *Academic master plan (updated every seven years):* Permanent
- P. *Support file for the academic master plan, including school evaluations:* 10 (ten) years.
- Q. *Fall and statistical report file:* 5 (five) years
- R. *Settlements (original):* Permanent
- S. *Agency copy of routine settlements:* 3 (three) years after final settlement

School District Retention Schedule: Active Records – Administration, can be found at ~~NJDARM School District Records Retention and Disposition Schedule reference number M7000101-999~~ **RMS School District Records Retention and Disposition Schedule reference number M7000101-001**. For all other items the district will consult NJDARM School District Records Retention and Disposition Schedule for retention and disposal information.

Implementation

The chief school administrator shall periodically review the work of the records custodian with the school board or a committee thereof, to ensure that necessary steps are being taken to gather, record, disseminate, copy, store and ultimately to destroy school district records in accordance with applicable laws. Particular attention shall be paid to implementing the public's right to access records and to protecting from public access those records specifically exempted by law. If deemed necessary, the board will adopt additional rules, regulations and procedures to implement this policy.

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Date revised: 1/12/09

POLICY

Revised

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

File Code: 4231/
4231.1

STAFF DEVELOPMENT; INSERVICE EDUCATION/VISITATIONS/CONFERENCES

The board recognizes that the skills required of support staff members change with changing technology. In order to ensure both optimum efficiency in district operations, and the continued growth in expertise of the staff, the chief school administrator shall ensure that appropriate programs of inservice training shall be developed for support staff as necessary.

The chief school administrator may recommend to the board the granting of leave for attendance of personnel at state, regional, and national job-related meetings without pay deduction and with expenses paid by the school system according to established allowances.

Achievement Gap and Inequity

The board shall on a continuing basis, provide professional development training for all school personnel (certified and noncertified) to identify and resolve problems associated with the student achievement gap and other inequities arising from prejudice. Parents/guardians and other community members shall be invited to participate in the professional development training. Newly hired certified and noncertified staff shall be provided professional development training on educational equity issues within the first year of employment.

Mandated Inservice Programs

The chief school administrator shall arrange development of appropriate inservice presentations, seminars and/or workshops on equity issues, special education, child abuse and neglect, drug/alcohol abuse awareness, handling blood and body fluids, possible hazardous substances in the workplace, crises response, school violence and other topics specifically required by federal or New Jersey law.

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POLICY

Revised

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

File Code: 5114

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

While the Board finds that positive approaches to acceptable behavior are usually more effective, it is sometimes necessary to penalize pupils for violations of school regulations to ensure the good order of the school and to teach pupils the consequences of disruptive behavior.

Pupils who indulge in disruptive behavior may be suspended or expelled. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Continued and willful disobedience;
- B. Open defiance of the authority of any teacher or person having authority over a pupil;
- C. Actions that constitute a continuing danger to the physical well-being of other pupils;
- D. Physical assault upon another pupil, a teacher, or any school employee with or without a firearm or other weapon;
- E. Taking, or attempting to take, personal property or money from another pupil whether by force or fear;
- F. Willfully causing, or attempting to cause, substantial damage to school property;
- G. Taking part in any unauthorized occupancy of a district facility and refusing to leave promptly when directed to do so by a person in authority;
- H. Inciting others to take part in an unauthorized occupancy;
- I. Inciting other pupils to truancy;
- J. Truancy and class cutting; leaving school property without permission;
- K. Poor attendance and lateness;
- L. Use or possession of unsafe or illegal articles;
- M. Use of any tobacco product on school property;
- N. Use, possession or sale of a controlled dangerous substance, drug paraphernalia, anabolic steroids or alcohol;
- O. Use of profanity or abusive language;

- P. Turning in a false alarm;
- Q. Tampering with or damaging property of other pupils or staff members;
- R. Selling or buying lottery tickets or any other gambling paraphernalia on school property
- S. Being convicted or adjudicated delinquent for possession of a firearm or a crime while armed with a firearm or found knowingly in possession of a firearm on any school property, on a school bus or at a school-sponsored function.
- T. Harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Any pupil who commits an assault (as defined by N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1) **with or without a weapon** upon a board member, teacher, administrator or other employee of the board of education shall be suspended from school immediately according to procedural due process, and suspension or expulsion proceedings shall begin no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the pupil's suspension.

Any pupil who is convicted or adjudicated delinquent for possession of a firearm or a crime while armed with a firearm or found knowingly in possession of a firearm on any school property or on a school bus or at a school-sponsored function shall be immediately removed from the school's regular education program for a period of not less than one calendar year. The chief school administrator may modify this suspension on a case-by-case basis. Each pupil so removed shall be placed in an alternative educational program or on home instruction and shall be entitled to a hearing before the board. The hearing shall take place no later than 30 days following the day the pupil is removed from the regular education program and shall be closed to the public.

The chief school administrator shall be responsible for the removal of such students. The chief school administrator shall also notify the appropriate law enforcement agency of a possible violation of the New Jersey Code of criminal Justice.

The chief school administrator shall determine at the end of the year whether the student is prepared to return to the regular education program, in accordance with procedures established by the Commissioner of Education.

In-school Suspension

The board directs the administration to arrange facilities for in-school suspension whenever possible. Pupils will be required to occupy themselves with school-related work during such suspensions. No socializing shall be permitted. Pupils shall be counted as present in school but absent (excused) from individual classes.

General

Pupils on home suspension shall be counted absent (excused) unless the duration of the suspension requires home instruction.

Except when special considerations warrant (at the discretion of the administration), every pupil will be given a written warning in the form of a disciplinary notice that subsequent violation of school regulations may result in his/her exclusion or suspension.

Pupils under suspension are prohibited from participating in or attending any school-regulated activity during the period of their suspension. They may not enter the school buildings or grounds of this district without the permission of the chief school administrator. Any pupil under suspension who enters the school buildings or grounds without the permission of the chief school administrator may have the period of his/her suspension extended. The right to continue the suspension or to expel is reserved to the board of education, acting upon the recommendation of the administration.

Serious violations of school regulations which create a dangerous or unsafe condition for other pupils shall cause a pupil to be suspended upon the first offense.

Making Up Missed Work

Pupils who are under suspension will be required to make up all assignments missed during the period of their suspension and will be given adequate opportunity to make up this work.

Upon their readmission, failure to complete the makeup assignments will result in a meeting with the parents/guardians. The chief school administrator will notify parents/guardians by telephone and **promptly** send a letter regarding the telephone conversation ~~immediately~~.

Procedures

The administration shall establish, and the board shall approve, specific procedures for dealing with suspension cases. Regulations ensuring due process to all pupils before a suspension is imposed shall be developed with the advice of the board attorney and shall include at least:

- A. Informing the pupil of the charges against him/her;
- B. Giving the pupil a chance to reply to them.

These regulations shall also include safeguards for the dismissal of pupils suspended from school, procedures for calling an immediate conference with parents/guardians, limitations on the length of suspensions, and specifics for the reinstatement of pupils.

Every effort shall be made to ~~adjust~~ **impose** each suspension promptly so that the pupil can be returned to school with a minimum loss of school time and school work.

When the chief school administrator imposes a suspension, he/she must report it to the board. No suspension for reasons other than assault upon a teacher, administrator, board member or other board employee may continue beyond the second regular meeting of the board following the suspension without board action. No suspension for assault **upon a teacher, administrator, board member, or other board employee**, may be

continued beyond 30 days, without board action. A suspended pupil may be reinstated by the chief school administrator before board action.

Each pupil shall be afforded an informal hearing before the suspension or, if circumstances prohibit, as soon as possible after the suspension except that, when extraordinary circumstances involving the health and safety of the pupil or others in the school require immediate exclusion, the hearing may be delayed to such time as circumstances permit. Pupils suspended for a period of time longer than a short-term suspension shall be afforded a formal hearing before the board which shall take place not later than 21 days after the suspension occurs. If the offense involves a weapon or assault with or without the weapon (as described above), the hearing shall take place not later than 30 days after the suspension occurs.

The board shall make a decision within five days of the close of the hearing. Any appeal of the board's decision shall be made to the Commissioner of Education within 90 days of the board's decision.

The board requires that such hearings shall be closed to the public, but should all parties thereto agree, the hearing may be publicly held. Each suspended pupil who has requested a formal hearing shall be restored to the regular educational program pending the outcome of the hearing, except when, in the opinion of the chief school administrator, the presence of the pupil in school poses such a danger to himself/herself or others as to warrant continued absence.

Each such pupil suspended from the school of this district shall receive individual instruction commencing not later than 5 working days after the suspension occurs, except that the board may, on the recommendation of the chief school administrator, assign the pupil to an alternate educational program to meet his/her particular needs (see policy # 6172).

Expulsion

The board will consider expulsion only if:

- A. The chief school administrator with his/her staff have exhausted all means of bringing about a correction of repeated misconduct; or
- B. The nature of a single act presents such a clear possibility of danger to others that immediate definitive action is indicated.

The parents/guardians of the pupil shall be interviewed, if possible, and advised of the reasons why expulsion is being considered, of the rights of the pupil to a full hearing which will afford him/her procedural due process, and the right of parents/guardians to appeal to the chief school administrator.

The child shall remain out of school until either:

- A. An appeal made to the chief school administrator is decided in the child's favor; or

- B. The appeal (if made) has been denied and the board has met to hear the chief school administrator's recommendation.

If the board determines that the charges, if true, may warrant expulsion, the board will set a date for the hearing. The board attorney will arrange for the giving of legal notice to all parties concerned for the preparation and presentation of evidence in support of the charges at the hearing.

The pupil must receive:

- A. Notification of the charges against him/her;
- B. The names of the adverse witnesses;
- C. Copies of the statements and affidavits of those adverse witnesses;
- D. The opportunity to be heard in his/her own defense;
- E. The opportunity to present witnesses and evidence in his/her own defense;
- F. The opportunity to cross-examine adverse witnesses; and
- G. The opportunity to be represented by counsel.

Juvenile authorities and law enforcement agencies shall be notified or consulted if necessary.

If a pupil younger than 18 years of age is expelled, the board must continue to supply an educational program for him/her.

Implementation

The chief school administrator shall develop detailed written procedures to implement this policy. He/she shall ensure uniform and consistent application of the policy and shall report to the board as required on its effectiveness.

The chief school administrator or his or her designee shall annually evaluate district data regarding short- and long-term suspensions and expulsions and take measures as appropriate to ensure that minority and male students are not disproportionately represented in detentions, suspensions and expulsions.

When an alternative educational program is provided for a pupil identified as disruptive but not disabled, the chief school administrator shall inform the board.

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POLICY

Revised

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

File Code: 5120

ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Each pupil shall be assessed upon entrance into the district's schools and annually thereafter, to identify pupils ability to meet district proficiency levels.

The chief school administrator shall develop procedures to implement a program of individual pupil needs assessment that shall include but not be limited to:

- A. Identifying district needs as the basis for development of mandated goals; development of staff inservice programs; selecting and approving instructional materials; staffing;
- B. Identifying and determining the needs of:
 1. Gifted and talented pupils;
 2. Disruptive pupils;
 3. Disaffected pupils;
 4. Potential dropouts;
 5. Students who exhibit one or more potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disability;
 6. Pupils who require basic skills improvement programs;
 7. Pupils with limited English proficiency;
 8. Pupils who may require formal referral to the child study team for classification.
- C. ~~Interpreting~~ **Disseminating** results of such assessments to parents/guardians and to appropriate staff and state and federal agencies as required without invading the privacy of the individual pupil.

The chief school administrator/designee shall review all individual assessment procedures annually to ensure that they serve the purposes for which they are intended. At all times, these procedures shall be in full conformity with New Jersey law.

Dyslexia Assessment

"Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurological **neurobiological** in origin. It ~~can be~~ **is** characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. **These** Difficulties typically result from a deficit

in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.3).

The board shall select and implement age-appropriate screening instruments for the early diagnosis of dyslexia and other reading disabilities.

The board shall ensure that each student enrolled in the school district who has exhibited one or more potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities is screened for dyslexia and other reading disabilities using a screening instrument selected by the board. The screening shall be conducted no later than the student's completion of the first semester of the second grade.

Students newly enrolling in the district or transferring into the district in kindergarten or grades one through six who exhibit potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities and who have not been previously assessed, shall be assessed using the board selected age-appropriate screening instruments. Students shall be assessed at the same time as other students enrolled in the student's grade if feasible. If other students enrolled in the student's grade have previously been screened, the assessment shall be conducted within 90 calendar days of the date the student is enrolled in the district.

Potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities include, but are not be limited to:

- A. Difficulty in acquiring language skills;
- B. Inability to comprehend oral or written language;
- C. Difficulty in rhyming words;
- D. Difficulty in naming letters, recognizing letters, matching letters to sounds, and blending sounds when speaking and reading words;
- E. Difficulty recognizing and remembering sight words; consistent transposition of number sequences, letter reversals, inversions, and substitutions; and
- F. Trouble in replication of content.

The screening shall be administered by a teacher or other teaching staff member properly trained in the screening process for dyslexia and other reading disabilities. If the results of the assessment substantiate that the student possesses one or more potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities, the student shall receive a comprehensive assessment for the learning disorder. If the diagnosis of dyslexia or other reading disability is confirmed by the comprehensive assessment, appropriate evidence-based intervention strategies shall be provided to the student, including intense instruction on phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

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POLICY

Revised

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

File Code: 9250

EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENTS

Board members 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 and employees shall only be reimbursed for work-related travel that is directly related to and within the scope of the board member's and employee's current work responsibilities. Board members 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. Unless approved in advance by the Board of Education, 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 NJ Department of Treasury in NJOMB circular letters, 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.state.nj.us/infobank/circular/circindx.htm>). 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.
- 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 comply with 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 and employees shall provide within one week, 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.
- E. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.8 concerning out-of state and high-cost travel events, out-of-state travel shall be limited to the fewest number of board members or employees needed to present the content at the conclusion of the event. Lodging may only be provided if the event occurs on two or more consecutive days and where home-to-event commute exceeds 50 miles. Prior written approval of the executive county superintendent may be required when the travel event has a total cost that exceeds \$5000.

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 and prior approval by a majority of the full voting membership of the board (as set forth below).

Prior Approval is Required

Board members 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 are in compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24 and 24.1 of the School Ethics Act. District faculty and staff are not required to receive formal Board approval for travel within Hunterdon County.

- A. Specifically, a board member must recuse himself/herself 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, the board 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 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 (C.18A:12-24) and section 5 of P.L.2001, c.178 (C.18A:12-24.1).

Regular Business Travel Authorization and Approval

Regular business travel, such as NJDOE meetings and association events, is authorized by the board not to exceed \$1,500 per employee, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3(b). Approval by the superintendent or designee is required, including justification for the travel. Regular business travel is authorized for regularly scheduled in-state professional development activities for which the registration fee does not exceed \$150 per employee or board member.

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.A.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 pre-budget 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 pre-budget 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 attendee 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;
 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.
7. Air and rail tickets shall be purchased via the internet, if possible, using online travel services such as Travelocity, Expedia, Hotwire or Priceline.

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, a 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, number of employees and school board members attending the event.

Types of Expenditures Not Eligible for Reimbursement

Unnecessary and excessive travel expenditures as listed in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A:7.8 are prohibited. Prohibited types of expenditures include: travel by spouses and other relatives; costs for unnecessary employee attendance (for example employees who merely coordinate other attendees' accommodations at the travel event); charges for laundry, valet service and entertainment; district payment for alcoholic beverages; excessive tipping and gratuities; airfare without documentation of at least three (3) price quotes; and souvenirs. Travel expenses, subsistence expenses and incidental travel expenses shall only be allowable when consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.

Penalties

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

- 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.A.18A:4-23 and N.J.S.A.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.
- 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 may develop regulations to implement this policy.

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