

Santa Clara County Office of Education

Administrative Regulation

Travel Authorization and Travel Expenses/Reimbursements

AR 3350

Business and Noninstructional Operations

1.0 Authorization to Travel on SCCOE Business

The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) may require or allow SCCOE employees to travel for work for the purpose of attending conferences, meetings, workshops, and other temporary assignments away from their primary job location.

For the purpose of this regulation, a "conference" is a generic term and shall be defined as a formal meeting, workshop, in-service, or convention presented or conducted by a public or private national, state, or regional agency, group, individual expert, or professional organization.

This administrative regulation is designed to address the office's support system for travel and the need to maintain accurate records on all SCCOE employees' travel.

It is the responsibility of the authorized traveler to use sound, prudent, and professional judgment when requesting travel approval. It is also the responsibility of the recommending and approving authority to determine the need, benefit, and appropriate use of employee time and office funds.

Allowable expense reimbursements will consist of actual and necessary expenses incurred by any employee required to attend any activity covered by the definition of conference. The SCCOE may prepay some expenses such as airline reservations and conference registration.

1.1 Local Travel

Local travel is defined as travel within Santa Clara County or neighboring counties within the San Francisco Bay Area (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz), Sacramento, or within a 150 mile radius, that is one day only, and does not involve an overnight stay.

SCCOE employees are authorized to travel locally, as defined above, when said travel is required by the department and is considered a part of the routine or day-to-day official duties of the employee as defined and authorized by the employee's immediate supervisor.

No Travel Request form is required for local travel if mileage and parking are the only expenses.

For local travel in which there are anticipated expenses in addition to mileage and parking, an approved Employee Travel Request form (AR 3350-1) is required. Acceptable additional expenses include conference registration fees, meals associated with a training, meeting, or conference that are not included in the registration fee, and tolls. Lunches may not be claimed if the normal scope of the job assignment requires multi-county travel. Reimbursement for travel outside of the normal scope of the job would be travel that includes attending conferences, meetings, workshops, and other temporary assignments away from the primary job location or job duties. Travel approval and expenses in this category shall be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor.

1.2 Out-of-Area Travel (within California)

Out-of-area travel within California is defined as any travel that does not occur within the locally defined areas as defined in section 1.1.

When an employee travels out-of-area, but within California, an Employee Travel Request form (AR 3350-1) is required. Employees who travel on business that is not local shall request approval at least two weeks in advance of their trip, except in instances when the two weeks requirement is not feasible.

When an employee travels out-of-area, but within California, he/she must secure approval from his or her immediate supervisor, Department Head, or Branch Chief.

1.3 Out-of-State Travel

When an employee travels outside of California an Employee Travel Request form (AR 3350-1) is required prior to travel. Employees who travel outside of the State shall request approval at least 30 days in advance of their trip, except in instances when the 30-day requirement is not feasible.

When an employee travels out of California, but within the US, he/she must secure approval from his/her immediate supervisor, Department Head, Branch Chief, and Superintendent.

1.4 Out-of-Country Travel

When an employee travels outside of the country, an Employee Travel Request form (AR 3350-1) is required prior to travel.

Employees who travel outside of the U.S. shall request approval at least 30 days in advance of their trip, except in instances when the 30-day requirement is not feasible.

When an employee travels out of the country he/she must secure approval from his/her immediate supervisor, Department Head, Branch Chief, and the Superintendent.

2.0 Travel Expenses

2.1 Lodging

An employee on approved travel requiring overnight lodging shall be reimbursed the actual and necessary lodging expenses, not to exceed the rate of single occupancy lodging, supported by itemized receipts.

Employees traveling on business shall request the Government reduced rate, if available, and may be able to obtain a waiver from paying the hotel/motel transient occupancy taxes, subject to certain conditions (e.g., only if payment will be made by a purchase order or office-issued purchase credit card (PCard). Waiver forms and requirements vary from city to city. Employees should always inquire about obtaining a waiver when making reservations.

2.2 Meal and Gratuity Allowances

The meal and gratuity reimbursement is provided for out of area travel and determined by the General Services Administration (GSA) allowable rate. The GSA allowable per diem rate is location-specific and the information can be found at the GSA website for allowable rates (www.gsa.gov/perdiem).

Per diem rates are not itemized by meal. A full day of travel allows the employee to use the total per diem for that day. The first and last calendar day of travel is calculated at 75% of the total per diem for the area of travel. Employees are allowed to spend the allowable per diem rate on meals in any way as long as it is within the allowable per diem rate for the travel area.

If travel includes meals that are already paid for by the SCCOE (such as a registration fee for a conference that includes meals), the employee will need to deduct those meals from the per diem total. Even if the employee does not take the conference meal, he/she must deduct the meal amount from the per diem total.

No allowance shall be made for the purchase of alcoholic beverages.

Reimbursement will be made upon submission of the Employee Travel Request form (AR 3350-1) and the Employee Expense Reimbursement form (AR 3350-2) with itemized receipts not to exceed the GSA approved per diem rates.

The purchase of alcoholic beverages is prohibited by education code section 32435.

No meal and gratuity expense reimbursement will be allowed within Santa Clara County unless meals are scheduled as an official part of conventions, conferences, workshops, or

meetings. When such meals are scheduled, an employee must submit the Employee Travel Request form (AR 3350-1) and the Employee Expense Reimbursement form (AR 3350-2) plus supporting documentation in the form of itemized receipts and conference registration forms must be included.

2.3 Incidental Expenses

Employees on approved travel outside of the county may claim actual and necessary incidental expenses up to a maximum of \$6.00 per day for housekeeping and portage.

3.0 WIFI/INTERNET

When away from the office and the use of internet is required for business purposes, an employee may purchase internet use, if the SCCOE cannot provide the resources to access the internet in advance.

4.0 TRANSPORTATION

An employee is expected to travel in the most direct and economical manner.

4.1 Personal Vehicles

Employees and others listed in Section 4.2 below may use their personal automobiles on official business as long as the use of said vehicle is properly insured with at least the minimum required insurance coverage. Under no circumstances will the use of private aircraft or motorcycles be authorized or approved.

4.2 Mileage Reimbursement

The provisions below apply to all employees and others entitled to expense reimbursement by a county office of education that are identified in Education Code, except those covered by bargaining contracts which provide different provisions.

- a. An employee can be reimbursed for the use of his or her personal automobile when used for official business. Mileage reimbursement shall be at the current IRS mileage rate.
- b. All claims for mileage reimbursement shall be submitted on the online Mileage Reimbursement Request on the employee intranet or on the Mileage Expense Reimbursement Form (AR 3350-3). A separate reimbursement claim shall be prepared and filed for each calendar month by the 30th of the subsequent month after the travel has occurred or, for the month of June, on or before June 30 for fiscal year end. Employees authorized to receive a mileage stipend for routine travel within Santa Clara County only need to file a mileage reimbursement claim for travel outside of Santa Clara County.

- c. An employee will be reimbursed for mileage only between points of official business.
- d. An employee using his/her automobiles on an extended trip outside the county will be reimbursed in an amount that does not exceed the amount which would have been spent if the employee had used coach or economy air transportation or other commercial transportation.
- e. Reimbursable mileage when travel originates or ends at an employee's residence is determined by the following formula:

Total Mileage - Round Trip Home-to-Work Mileage (Regular Commute) = Reimbursable Mileage

Per IRS Pub 463, mileage between an employee's home and primary work location is considered commuting expense and not subject to reimbursement. However, in unique situations, special program needs may require that an employee is assigned at different work locations and must commute to one or more separate sites. An employee will only be reimbursed for the accumulated official business mileage between locations. The computation of mileage subject to reimbursement is the total miles traveled during the day minus the daily round-trip miles from Home to the primary assigned work location.

- f. Actual and necessary parking expenses shall be reimbursed. Receipts are required for this reimbursement. For metered parking, employees are to provide the time, date, location and/or any other information regarding the amount of the expense for reimbursement.

4.3 Car-pooling

The office strongly encourages employees to share transportation whenever it is practicable for employees to travel together on official business.

4.4 Rental Cars

- a. An employee shall use a rental car only in cases when other forms of commercial transportation (e.g., shuttle, taxi, etc.) are unavailable, too costly, or impractical. Prior approval for the use of rental cars should be obtained and documented on the Employee Travel Request form (AR 3350-1).
- b. Employees shall sign up for the standard insurance package when entering into the rental agreement unless coverage is automatic through the credit card being used. No such coverage is provided through the use of a PCard. Employees should verify whether or not such coverage is automatic, if they are using a personal credit card.
- c. The itemized rental agreement is to be included with the Travel Request form (AR 3350-1) and the Employee Expense Reimbursement form (AR 3350-3) when it is submitted in accordance with the provisions of section 6.0 below.

It is required to refuel the vehicle prior to the return of the vehicle; unless it is less expensive to have the rental agency fuel the vehicle.

4.5 Air Travel

Employees who need to travel by air that is expensed and reimbursed by the SCCOE, shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- a. Fly economy class
- b. Check multiple sources (e.g., internet sites) to find the lowest airfare
- c. Plan to purchase with a minimum of 14-days advance of flying for a low fare ticket
- d. Find the lowest available fare within a two-hour window from the desired departure/arrival time
- e. Find the lowest available fare with direct connections to destination, if possible. Deviations from the above guideline will require a written explanation and the approval of the Chief Business Officer.

5.0 CASH ADVANCES

Cash advances are an exception to the regular practice of the office. The Branch Chief shall submit the cash advance request for her/his staff to the Chief Business Officer for approval.

If an employee finds that projected meals, travel, and incidental costs to be an extreme hardship to make payment out-of-pocket (cash or credit card) and obtain later reimbursement from the office, cash advances can be made available. These advances are to cover the following travel related costs, if advanced purchase by the office cannot be arranged:

Expenses for hotel rooms or conference/seminar registration, when employees are requested by their supervisors to be in attendance.

Expenses for hotel rooms and conference/seminar registration, when the hotels or conference/seminar organizers require cash or credit card payment and will not accept the office's purchase orders, warrants or PCard from an authorized office employee who is not the traveler, even if there is sufficient time to issue warrants for the employees to take with them for personal delivery.

No advance under \$100.00 shall be made. An employee may request a cash advance by submitting the Employee Travel Request form (AR 3350-1). He/she must also have a

copy of the Cash Advance Payroll Deduction form (AR 3350-5) on file with Accounting Services and Payroll Services.

Cash advances will not be approved or processed for airline tickets.

Should a cash advance be issued and travel plans subsequently canceled, an employee receiving such an advance must return the full amount of the cash advance to Accounting Services no later than three (3) days after cancellation. When travel has been completed, necessary documentation must be submitted by employees as outlined in Section 6.0. Any difference between the amount of the cash advance and the actual necessary expenditures and for which the expenses are less than the advance must be returned to the office after travel is completed

6.0 TRAVEL COST REIMBURSEMENT

Claims for cash reimbursements for authorized expenses are subject to the following provisions.

6.1 Documentation

- a. Reimbursement claims shall be prepared on the Employee Expense Reimbursement form (AR 3350-3) and the Mileage Reimbursement form (AR 3350-4), and shall only be approved per the noted requirements as indicated on the instructions for Employee Expense Reimbursement form (AR 3350-3) and on the instructions for the Mileage Reimbursement form (AR 3350-4).
- b. All claims for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while traveling (lodging, meals, and transportation subject to the limitations established in AR 3350) shall be itemized on the Travel Expense form (AR 3350-1) and the "Employee Expense Reimbursement" form (AR 3350-3), and accompanied with itemized receipts except that no receipt or voucher is necessary for fares, tolls, or fees under \$10.00 (e.g., for taxi, limousine, bus, street car, bridge, or parking, etc.) or for incidental expenses under \$6.00. Original copies of receipts for transportation and lodging are required, even if payment has been made by the Office via warrant or purchase order.

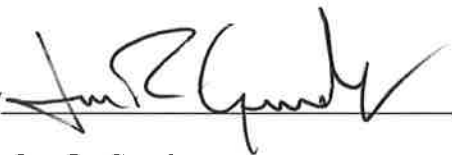
6.2 Timelines

All claims for reimbursement must be submitted on a monthly basis but in no case later than the end of the month following the month in which the expenditure was incurred. Exceptions shall be made when a claim is \$10 or less.

7.0 PAY STATUS WHILE TRAVELING ON BUSINESS

Employees are considered in active pay status while traveling on an approved travel request. While in approved travel status for the office, employees may request and be approved for vacation time. Specific time frames for vacation days must be identified in advance of beginning travel and approved by the immediate supervisor.

While on vacation status during authorized travel, all expenses incurred by the employee during the vacation time are the responsibility of the employee and will not be reimbursed by the SCCOE. Detailed time and expense documentation is required for all office-covered reimbursable time, excluding any transit time in route to or from the destination. SCCOE is not responsible for any claims of workers' compensation or liability while employee is on vacation status during business travel.

By 

Jon R. Gundry
County Superintendent of Schools

Effective: January 1, 2016

Regulation
approved: July 1, 2013
revised, January 1, 2016

SANTA CLARA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
San Jose, California