General Guidelines

The district recognizes that attendance at conferences and meetings may provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas and information that will enhance an employee’s ability to serve the district. The district, therefore, encourages attendance at conferences and meetings that may reasonably be expected to offer opportunities for professional improvement. However, the duration of individual absences or the concurrent absence of employees from a department must not dilute the quality of the educational program or other services to students. Attendance at meetings and conferences will normally be limited to those held within the United States. Travel to other locations must be approved in advance by the superintendent/president. Employees may contribute to the improvement of practices relating to education elsewhere. Employees are encouraged to accept invitations to be a speaker, panel member, etc. at conferences.

In order to ensure district liability and personal coverage, district-related travel must have final approval two (2) weeks in advance by the appropriate chair or supervisor and the divisional vice president or college superintendent/president. Extenuating circumstances must be approved by the appropriate vice president.

Without approved authority to travel, an employee is not authorized to be absent from work and therefore is not covered by liability insurance policies. Unauthorized travel will not be reimbursed.

Reimbursements/invoices must be for the employee only.

Schedule of Expense Reimbursement

Necessary expenses incurred by an employee on an authorized trip shall be reimbursed at actual costs, but not to exceed the following schedule:

A. Transportation (except private vehicle) – actual cost*

B. Private vehicle – current Internal Revenue Service-approved rate

C. Auto storage (garage or parking) – actual cost

D. Lodging ** – actual cost

E. Registration – actual cost
F. Meals *** – $40.00 maximum per full day; $20 maximum per half-day conference (when you are away from your regular location for four hours or less). (Meals will not be reimbursed unless there is an overnight stay, due to IRS regulations.)

* Travel by other than coach airfare will be allowed, if the comparison cost is reasonable and documented.

** If the travel is for conference attendance, reimbursement for hotel will be at actual cost, if at the conference-sponsored hotel. If from a nonconference hotel, reimbursement will be limited to the highest conference-hotel rate. If travel is nonconference related (e.g. committee meeting, training), reimbursement for lodging will be at actual cost.

***Receipts are required for reimbursement of any meal expenses and will not be reimbursed beyond the maximum per full-day limit. Meals included as part of conference registration will not be reimbursable as separate items. If meals are included in a conference, the per diem for meals may not be reimbursed, except under the following circumstance—in the event the employee must forego the provided meal for health or business reasons, an explanation for the purchase must accompany the claim. Supporting documentation will be required.

Laundry, valet service, tips (other than the standard 15 percent for meal service), etc. are personal expenses and will not be reimbursed.

**Travel Authorization**

Authorization for travel will be the responsibility of the department chair, dean or director, and the appropriate vice president. A travel request form (B-86) is required for each event or for each organization for which a schedule of meetings is established. The estimated expense of each trip and/or the estimated total expense for a schedule of meetings will be shown.

**Reservations and Tickets**

Prior to making any reservations, a travel request form (B-86) shall be submitted for approval by the supervisor/department chair. Those persons requesting commercial modes of transportation (bus, train, air) should contact the current district-contracted travel agency to obtain ticket-cost data. Employees are encouraged to utilize the services of the contracted agency in order to receive state rates, but are not required to do so. Tickets may be purchased through the Internet or any other means that accommodate the employee’s needs. After approval of the travel request, Fiscal Services will make all necessary advance payments. Travel by other than coach airfare will be allowed if the comparison cost of other means of transportation is reasonable and documented. The travel agency and Fiscal Services must be notified promptly if plans change and cancellation of tickets is necessary. Unused tickets may not be used for personal purposes.

**Advances for Travel Expenses**

Cash advances for travel expense may be requested on the travel request form (B-86) for an amount not to exceed $2,000. When the registration, lodging, and meals are included as a lump sum to be paid to the sponsor of the conference, the entire advance
may be requested. Advances will not be paid for travel occurring less than fourteen (14) business days out; exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the appropriate vice president or superintendent/president.

Advances that exceed reimbursable expenses must be repaid to the district within five (5) days following notification by Fiscal Services of the amount due. Advances of travel funds may be suspended if an employee fails to reimburse the district within the five (5)-day period. Resumption of travel expense advances must be approved by the Vice President, Business and Administrative Services.

**Use of Credit Cards**

Credit cards may be checked out to employees or board members for the purchase of petroleum products for use in district vehicles or in vehicles rented by the district. Charges for vehicle rentals will be charged to the department’s travel budget and must be approved as part of the travel request. For each trip, only one credit card will be issued for each district employee responsible for a district or rental vehicle. Only district employees or board members may sign for district gasoline purchases. Cards will not be issued to students or nonstudent volunteers.

District credit cards may not be used to charge fuel for privately owned vehicles, other than those rented for district use.

**Mode of Travel**

Employees may travel by public carrier, school vehicles, rental cars, or private vehicles. Reimbursement shall not exceed round-trip coach fare, mileage to the public carrier, and necessary ground transportation at the carrier’s destination. Air transportation is recommended for all trips beyond three hundred (300) miles. Rental of vehicles must be approved as part of the travel request when the rental vehicle is to be picked up at another point. (Administrative Procedure 6530)

The district has a limited number of automobiles available for use on district business. Highest priority for the use of these automobiles is for regular, recurring needs or for same-day use by individuals without other transportation available. Persons with occasional transportation needs are encouraged to use their own vehicles following district guidelines and claim reimbursement at the rate currently authorized by the Internal Revenue Service for tax-reporting purposes.

Persons wishing to claim mileage reimbursement for the use of a private automobile must follow Administrative Procedure 6530. When more than one employee is traveling in a private vehicle, mileage will be reimbursed only to the owner of the vehicle, including reimbursement in lieu of airfare.

Forms referenced in Administrative Procedure 6530 are available from the Vice President, Business and Administrative Services, and the Accounts Payable and Risk Management offices. Completed forms should be returned to Accounts Payable. Copies of the forms will be sent to Fiscal Services for authority to reimburse approved claims and charge the amounts to the account numbers.

Administrative Procedure 6530 provides the district with assurance that the vehicle is insured adequately to at least the district’s required automobile liability insurance
minimum requirement for driver accountability. New, revised forms are to be filed whenever the insurance carrier or automobile information changes. It is not the intent of the district to contact the insurance agent or company of the employee unless a question of responsibility arises or unless there is an emergency that would require it. The district will check occasionally to be sure that forms under Administrative Procedure 6530 are current and it may delay reimbursement if the information needs updating.

All persons operating a vehicle on district business must be approved prior to operation of the vehicle. (Administrative Procedure 6530)

Employees who have assignments at different district locations in the course of a single workday as a part of their contractual obligation will be reimbursed at the district mileage rate for necessary travel between these locations. Contractual obligation is defined as meeting classes, discharging counseling/library/supervisory duties, attending department meetings, or meetings of Academic Senate Council, Classified Senate Council, or other district/Academic Senate/Classified Senate committees. No mileage will be paid for travel from home to the first workstation of the day or to home from the last workstation of the day, nor will the district pay mileage to locations for any overload assignment.

Standard one-way mileage will be allowed between the MiraCosta Oceanside Campus and the following work locations in the district:

- Community Learning Center: 7 miles
- Camp Pendleton: 15 miles
- Canyon Crest Academy: 26 miles
- Carlsbad High School: 5 miles
- El Camino High School: 3 miles
- Oceanside High School: 7 miles
- San Dieguito Academy: 16 miles
- San Elijo Campus: 18 miles
- Torrey Pines High School: 24 miles

Standard one-way mileage also will be allowed between the San Elijo Campus and the following work locations in the district:

- Community Learning Center: 16 miles
- Camp Pendleton: 28 miles
- Canyon Crest Academy: 11 miles
- Carlsbad High School: 13 miles
- El Camino High School: 18 miles
- Oceanside High School: 18 miles
- San Dieguito Academy: 1 mile
- Torrey Pines High School: 8 miles

Persons requesting reimbursement must submit form B-46.

Travel Expense Claims

The claim portion of form B-86, Mileage Claimed for Use of a Private Car, for reimbursement of travel expense must be completed and submitted by the end of the fifth working day following return from authorized travel. Receipts are required for all
expenses except mileage. Expenses not supported by receipts will be disallowed. Laundry, valet service, etc. are personal expenses and will not be reimbursed.

District employees who receive a monthly automobile allowance may submit mileage claims for mileage related to approved travel, e.g., mileage to and from the airport and as allowed by individual employment contracts.

Travel-claim expenses will be reviewed by Fiscal Services and any amount due the employee will be reimbursed within ten (10) business days following submittal of the travel claim. If the travel advance exceeds the reimbursable expense, the employee will be notified and must reimburse the district within five (5) days following notification.

See Administrative Procedure 6530, District Vehicles.