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— East Rutherford Board of Education

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Board Member Travel Expenses

0147 BOARD MEMBER TRAVEL EXPENSES

The Board of Education will reimburse Board members for travel expenses in accordance with applicable New Jersey Statutes.

For the purpose of this Policy:

1. Travel Expenditures - means those costs paid by the school district using local, State, or Federal funds, whether paid directly by the school district or by employee reimbursement, for travel by school district employees and/or Board of Education members to training and seminars, conventions and conferences, regular school district business, and retreats.
2. Training and Seminars - means all regularly scheduled, formal residential or non-residential training functions conducted at a hotel, motel, convention center, residential facility, or any educational institution or facility.
3. Conventions and Conferences - means general programs, sponsored by professional associations on a regular basis, which address subjects of particular interest to a school district or are convened to conduct association business. The primary purpose of employee attendance at conferences and conventions is the development of new skills and knowledge or the reinforcement of those skills and knowledge in a particular field related to school district operations. These are distinct from formal staff training and seminars although some training may take place at such events.
4. Regular School District Business - means all regular official business travel, including attendance at meetings, conferences, and any other gatherings which are not covered by the definitions for training and seminars and convention and conferences above.
5. Retreats - means meetings with school district employees and Board members held away from the normal work environment at which organizational goals and objectives are discussed. If available, school district facilities shall be utilized for this type of event.

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Eligible Expenditures

School district travel expenditures include, but are not limited to, all costs for transportation, meals, lodging, and registration or conference fees to and from the travel event. School district travel expenditures include costs for all required training and 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.

The school district shall not bear costs for: car rentals, limousine services, and/or chauffeuring costs to or during the event; alcoholic beverages; souvenirs or promotional items; subsistence reimbursements for one-day trips, except for meals expressly authorized by and in accordance with N.J.A.C 6A: 23A-7.12; travel by spouses, civil union partners, domestic partners, immediate family members and other relatives; entertainment or social activities (including tickets to shows or sporting events); as well as costs for employee attendance for the purpose of coordinating other attendees' accommodations at the travel event; or any other travel expenditures that are unnecessary and/or excessive.

All travel by Board members shall be educationally necessary and fiscally prudent and all travel expenditures shall be directly related to and within the scope of the Board member's current responsibilities. All travel expenditures must be for travel that is critical to the instructional needs of the school district or furthers the efficient operation of the school district and is 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.

Approval Process

Travel for Board members may occur only upon prior approval by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and the travel shall 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).

The Board may approve, at any time prior to the event, travel for multiple months as long as the Board approval, detailed in Board Meeting minutes, itemizes the approval by event, total cost, and number of employees and/or school Board members attending the event. General or blanket pre-

approval for travel is not authorized. Approval shall be itemized by event, event total cost, and

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number of employees and school Board members attending the event.

Travel payments will be paid only upon compliance with P.L. 2007, c. 53 and this Policy's provisions and approval requirements. The Board will not ratify or approve payments or reimbursements for travel after the completion of the travel event. A Board member or organization shall not receive an amount for travel and/or travel-related expenses in advance of the travel pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:19-1 et seq.

A Board member shall recuse himself/herself from voting on travel if the Board member, a member of his/her immediate family, or a business organization in which he/she has an interest, has a direct

or indirect financial involvement that may reasonably be expected to impair his/her objectivity or independence of judgment. A Board member shall not act in his/her official capacity in any matter in which he/she or a member of his/her immediate family has a personal involvement that is or creates some benefit to the school official or member of his/her immediate family; or undertake any employment or service, whether compensated or not, which may reasonably be expected to prejudice his/her independence of judgment in the execution of his/her official duties.

The Board shall exclude from the requirements of prior Board approval any travel caused by or subject to contractual provisions, other statutory requirements, or Federal regulatory requirements. The Board may not exclude such travel from the subsistence requirements and annual maximum travel expenditure pursuant to P.L. 2007 c. 53.

Eligible Reimbursements

One-day trips that do not involve overnight lodging are not eligible for a subsistence payment or reimbursement except in limited circumstances authorized in the Department of the Treasury guidelines. Overnight travel is eligible for a subsistence payment or reimbursement as authorized in the Department of the Treasury guidelines, except as otherwise superseded by the following provisions:

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;

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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 rate. 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;
4. In any case in which the total per diem reimbursement is greater than the Federal per diem rate, except as stated in 2. above, the costs will be considered to be excessive and shall not be paid by school district funds;
5. The school district shall patronize hotels and motels that offer special rates to government employees unless alternative lodging offers greater cost benefits; and
6. Reimbursements for meals shall be governed by the guidelines established in N.J.A.C. 23A:7-12. Payment or reimbursement is approved for the full cost of an official convention meal that a 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

The Commissioner shall grant waivers for overnight travel for school board members to attend in-state conferences in accordance with procedures outlined in N.J.A.C. 23A:7-11.

Records and Documentation

A Board member shall submit to Business Administrator/Board Secretary within thirty (30) calendar days of incurring the travel expense(s) a brief report that includes the primary purpose for the travel and the key issues that were addressed at the event and their relevance to improving instruction or the operation of the school district.

The detailed documentation that demonstrates compliance with P.L. 2007 c.53 and this Policy including travel approvals, reports, and receipts for all school district funded expenditures, as appropriate, shall be maintained in the office of the Business Administrator/Board Secretary. The records and supporting documents related to travel expenses shall be maintained in accordance with the procedures outlined in N.J.A.C. 23A:7-13.

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The school 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 P.L. 2007 c. 53, and shall provide auditable information.

Violations

Any Board of Education that violates its established maximum travel expenditure as set forth in P.L. 2007 c. 53, or that otherwise is not in compliance with the travel limitations set forth in P.L. 2007 c. 53 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.

Any person, either the Superintendent or the School Business Administrator, who approves any travel in violation of the P.L. 2007 c. 53 or this Policy shall be required to reimburse the school district in an amount equal to three times the cost associated with attending the event. An employee or Board member who travels in violation of the Board's policy or P.L. 2007 c. 53 shall be required to reimburse the school district in an amount equal to three times the cost associated with attending the event.

Annually in the pre-budget year, the Board shall establish by Board resolution, a maximum travel expenditure amount for the budget year, which the school district shall not exceed in that budget year. The Board resolution shall also include the maximum amount established for the pre-budget year and the amount spent to date. The maximum school district travel expenditure amount shall include all travel in accordance with P.L. 2007 c. 53 supported by local and State funds.

The Board may elect by Board resolution to exclude travel expenditures to be supported by Federal funds in the maximum travel expenditure amount. The Board resolution shall include the total amount of travel supported by Federal funds from the prior year, pre-budget year, and projected for the budget year.

P.L. 2007 c. 53; N.J.A.C. 23A-7.11; N.J.A.C. 23A:7-12; N.J.A.C.23A:7-13

Adopted: 25 June 2000

Revised: 29 January 2009
