

Section C-Travel Card

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Travel Card Policies and Procedures

Introduction

The purpose of the travel card program is to establish a more efficient, cost-effective method of disbursing travel funds. Rather than issuing a check to a hotel and other travel-related expenses, we will assign a travel card to the traveler for the estimated travel expenses. The travel card can be used, subject to the Travel Card Guidelines, with any travel-related merchant that accepts MasterCard as a form of payment.

If used to its potential, the travel card program should result in a significant reduction in the volume of travel-related checks.

General Information

These policies and procedures provide the general guidelines for using the travel card. Please read it carefully. Your signature on the *Cardholder Agreement* shows that you understand the intent of the program and agree to follow the established guidelines.

Your travel card is issued in the district name. All purchases made on the travel card must be only yours or your groups. You are responsible for the security of the travel card and the transactions made with it. Misuse of the travel card may result in disciplinary action, including termination of your employment with McAllen ISD.

The following important points should be reviewed before using the travel card:

- You may use the travel card at any vendor or service provider that accepts MasterCard. It may only be used for allowed school related travel expenses.
- For **employee travel without students**, the travel card can be used for the below purchases
 - Hotel, parking at the hotel, flights, and registration

Mileage, shuttle, meals, parking other than at the hotel, gas and baggage fees will be on a **reimbursement** basis

- For **student travel**, the travel card can be used for the below purchases
 - Meals, hotel, registration, flights, baggage fees, shuttle fees, parking and gas
- The travel card may only be used to pay for travel costs that have been preapproved with a Purchase Order
- The travel card must be returned to the Accounting Department within 1 business day from the return trip date

- All detailed original receipts and necessary backup to close the travel must be submitted to the Accounting Department within **3 business days of returning from the trip**
- The Accounting office shall reconcile the monthly statement received from Compass Bank to ensure that all charges are accurate. The statement shall be reconciled using your detailed original receipts, so it is critical that all receipts be submitted on a timely basis.
- The travel card is not intended to avoid or bypass appropriate travel or payment procedures as outlined in Board Policy CH or the *McAllen ISD Accounting Manual*.

Duties and Responsibilities

Program Administrator – (Iris Luna, Director of Accounting)

The Program Administrator is designated to answer questions, address issues and oversee the administration of the program. The Program Administrator has a direct relationship with the Bank.

Accounting Coordinator– (Dyanira Diaz)

The Accounting Coordinator shall serve as a secondary Program Administrator.

Travel Clerks – (Isabel Contreras, Rosalba Gandaria and Libby Anderson)

The Travel Clerks shall assist the Program Administrator and Accounting Coordinator in answering questions and ensuring compliance with fiscal guidelines. The Travel Clerks shall assign the travel cards to travelers and load the travel dates and estimated credit limit based on the approved Travel Authorization form and Purchase Order.

Accounts Payable Lead Clerk- (Sandra Pulido)

The Accounts Payable Lead Clerk shall reconcile the monthly statements and contact cardholders, as necessary, to resolve discrepancies and/or disputed charges.

Cardholder - A cardholder is designated by the Accounting Department to utilize the travel card for travel related expenses. The cardholder is responsible for following the guidelines in regards to purchases, selection of vendors, security of the card and submission of receipts. **All detailed original receipts must be submitted within 3 days of the return from the trip.**

Budget Manager – (Principal/Director)

The Budget Manager is responsible for designating cardholders and for reviewing travel card receipts and Travel Settlement forms of cardholders to ensure they are within District policy. The Budget Manager is responsible for retrieving travel cards in the event of termination or change in the employment status of a cardholder under their supervision.

Credit Rating & Liability

The program does not affect your credit rating in any way. The travel card program carries corporate, not individual liability.

Travel Card Controls & Procedures

Credit Limits

All travel cards have spending limits that are valid only for the days of travel. The limit shall be based on the preapproved travel expenses on the Travel Authorization form and Purchase Order. Each cardholder will be given information on the limits of his/her card upon signing for the travel card.

Issuance of Travel Card

Travel cards will be centrally distributed through designated Departments and the Accounting office the day before the trip. The traveler shall sign an Employee Travel Card Agreement every time he/she receives a travel card (Section D Page D-23).

Travel Card Receipts

Cardholders must obtain a receipt when using the travel card. It is every cardholder's responsibility to ensure there is an original, itemized receipt for each purchase-**the credit card charge slip is not considered adequate documentation.**

These receipts will serve as the cardholder's documentation. After review by the campus secretary/bookkeeper, the receipts should be forwarded to the Accounting Department along with the travel documentation. All detailed original receipts shall be reconciled with monthly statements by the Accounting Department. If a receipt is lost or stolen, the cardholder should obtain duplicate copies of the receipts. If the cardholder is not able to obtain copies of the receipts, the cardholder will need to reimburse the District for these amounts.

Any amounts spent in excess of what was approved, will either be deducted from pending reimbursements or will need to be paid in cash/check by the employee upon returning.

Lodging, Sales and Use Tax

The District is a tax-exempt entity and does not pay State sales tax for school-related expenditures in the State of Texas. The cardholder should present the appropriate tax exemption form when making a school-related purchase.

The traveler must present a Hotel Occupancy Certificate to the hotel upon registration to avoid state taxes on lodging at the hotel. The District is not exempt from city lodging taxes. The Hotel Occupancy Certificate does not apply to lodging outside the state of Texas. A copy of the Hotel Occupancy Certificate can be found on the District's Accounting Forms webpage (Section D page D-19).

The traveler must present a Sales Tax Exemption form to the hotel upon registration to avoid state taxes on parking at the hotel and at restaurants to avoid state tax on meals (**state tax exemption on meals is only for student travel**). The Sales Tax Exemption form does not apply to lodging outside the state of Texas. A copy of the Sales Tax Exemption form can be requested through the Accounting Office. If the cardholder fails to present a Sales Tax Exemption form and/or Hotel Occupancy Certificate at the time of registration, and taxes are charged on the travel card, the cardholder shall be personally liable for reimbursement of all taxes upon returning.

Returns, Credits, and Disputed Charges

Should a problem arise with a travel-related charge, every attempt should be made to first resolve the issue directly with the merchant. All credits and/or corrections to charges must be reimbursed by crediting the credit card account; cash refunds are prohibited.

Security of the Travel card

The cardholder is responsible for the security of the travel card. The traveler should guard the travel card account number carefully. It should not be posted in a work area or left in a conspicuous place. It should be kept in a secure location. If the traveler loses or forgets to take the travel card during a travel event, he/she will be required to pay for all approved, travel-related expenditures with his/her own cash or personal credit card. The District shall reimburse all approved, travel-related expenditures made with personal funds upon receipt of the detailed receipts.

Violations & Consequences

The only person authorized to use the travel card is the cardholder who is issued the travel card.

The card is to be used for school business purposes only. The card is not intended for personal use. Personal purchases, if any, shall be considered misappropriation of District funds, a criminal offense, and will be reported to the proper authorities. **The card must not be used for other travelers (with the exception of student travel), or non-employee (such as family) expenses.**

Inappropriate use of the travel card or failure to abide by the Travel Card Policies and Procedures will result in revocation of the travel card privileges and appropriate disciplinary action, including termination of employment. If an employee's travel card privileges are revoked, the traveler shall pay for all travel-related expenses with his/her own cash or credit card. The travel-related expenses will be reimbursed with an accounts payable check after the trip upon receipt of all detailed receipts.

Lost or Stolen Cards

If a travel card is lost or stolen, immediately contact the Bank's Customer Service (1-877-558-8814). After contacting the Bank, notify the Program Administrator (Iris Luna @ Iris.luna@mcallenisd.net).

Overview of Procedures

- Employee submits all required documentation (quotes, agenda, check request forms, student rosters, etc.) to the secretary/bookkeeper along with a completed Travel Advance/Reimbursement Requisition Form with the employee signature and approval signature from Principal or Department Head/Supervisor.
- Secretary/Bookkeeper reviews Travel Advance/Reimbursement Requisition to make sure it is properly filled out and then proceeds to process a Purchase Order Requisition for each vendor including Employee reimbursement PO's. Employees should pre plan accordingly so that all PO's can be made to the appropriate vendor (this includes restaurants for student travel).
- If a Check is needed in lieu of a Travel Card, Secretary/Bookkeeper must write "CHECK NEEDED" on the Travel Advance/Reimbursement Requisition Form next to the category the check is needed for. Accounting Clerk will automatically issue a Travel Card for expenses allowed to be paid with a Travel Card unless otherwise noted on the Travel Advance/Reimbursement Requisition Form.
- Once Purchasing approves and prints the PO, the Secretary/Bookkeeper must receive on the PO (use the last date of the trip unless it's an advancement then use the date you submit the PO for payment).
- Secretary/Bookkeeper writes the PO#, Vendor Name, and amount encumbered on the bottom grid of the travel form and submits the PO status inquiry for all PO advancements.
- Accounts Payable clerks will review the Travel Form and load the travel card based on the preapproved travel expenses. Even though an MISD check will not be issued for preapproved travel expenses, the McAllen ISD check writing schedule should still be followed.
- Accounting clerk will send the yellow and pink travel form copies back to the campus.
- Two days before the trip the sponsor/Employee traveling will need to go to the Accounting office or Department to sign a Cardholder Agreement Form and pick up the assigned Travel Card.
- Once the employee has returned, the travel card must be submitted to the Accounting Department within 1 business day. It is recommended that the employee personally return the card directly to Accounting and not any other staff member since the employee is responsible for **ALL** charges made on the assigned travel card regardless of who is claimed to have made the charge. The Accounting clerk will indicate on the Cardholder Agreement Form the date the card was returned.

- Detailed receipts are submitted to the Secretary/Bookkeeper within **1** day of returning. Secretary/Bookkeeper fills out the “Actual” column on the pink/yellow copy of the travel form and submits to Accounting along with the original receipts, copies of the receipts and PO Status Inquiry report for the Reimbursement PO’s (if applicable) within 3 days of the return date of the trip.
- Accounting clerk reviews the documentation and processes any reimbursements. The Pink travel form will be sent back to the secretary/bookkeeper indicating the travel has been closed.