

TRAVEL

SECTION 9

FY 2026–2027

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INTRODUCTION

This section covers travel policies and procedures for George County School District employees and Board of Trustees members, including out-of-district travel, the Professional Leave Request process, travel credit cards, in-district mileage reimbursement, and student travel. This section was separated from Section 3 (Purchasing and Accounts Payable) for FY 2026–2027 to make travel guidance easier to find and to incorporate updated Professional Leave Request routing and documentation requirements issued by Human Resources.

The Professional Leave Request Form

Must be completed by staff when away from their building on all school related activities that would prohibit them from clocking in and out and/or a substitute teacher is employed in a teacher's absence. This includes field trips, athletic events, and professional development meetings in and out of district.

Note: Travel expenses may be paid from Activity Funds when applicable — including travel for students and chaperones attending in-state or out-of-state school-related programs, conventions, or seminars and travel expenses of school district personnel. See Section 5 – Activity Funds, Allowable Activity Fund Purchases, for the complete list of allowable and unallowable purchases.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT TRAVEL — EMPLOYEE AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- A Professional Leave Request must be completed and authorized in advance.
- The request must include:
 - Conference name and address
 - Conference Proposed Agenda or Notification of the Conference
 - If Hotel Reservations are needed, documentation for two hotels must be submitted with the paperwork, labeled First Choice and Second Choice. One of the two should be the conference hotel, if applicable.
 - If claiming mileage, a Google map, or other printable GPS mileage printout for mileage verification from place of work to conference site or home to conference site, whichever is the shorter distance.
 - Public carrier confirmation if applicable. Rental Car and Airline Ticket reservations should be made by the School District's Business Office if prepay is desired, and the reservation information should be attached. Airline Tickets require two quotes.
- There should be one Professional Leave Request submitted per individual traveling.
- All out-of-state travel must have Board authorization.

General Requirements

- This application must be submitted a minimum of **2 weeks prior to leave**.
- Applications requiring board approval must be submitted prior to the board meeting that falls before the training date.
- Application must be **approved before attendance**.
- To be prepaid, the application must include Conference, Hotel, and Travel documentation when initially submitted.

- The form must be completed in its **entirety**, or it will be returned without approval.

Acceptable Supporting Documentation

Acceptable documentation for the conference or event includes any of the following:

- A flyer or brochure from the organization hosting the event.
- A formal invitation or registration confirmation.
- A screenshot or link to the workshop webpage that includes the title of the session, date(s) and location (if applicable), and a brief description of the event or agenda.
- An email from the event organizer outlining key details.
- A PDF copy of the event agenda or schedule.

Before Submitting to Human Resources — Verification Checklist

Verify the following before submitting a Professional Leave Request to Human Resources:

- **The employee's name is listed exactly as it appears in the district's Marathon system** (this is the employee's legal name). Forms with incorrect names will be returned to the school or department for correction.
- Required signatures are complete: the employee attending the professional development, and the employee's immediate supervisor.
- The appropriate funding code(s) are entered in Section Two of the Request. Registration fees and hotel reservations cannot be processed without the required funding code(s).
- All required supporting documentation for the event is attached (see Acceptable Supporting Documentation above).
- Mileage verification is attached, if mileage reimbursement is being requested.
- Hotel information is attached, if overnight travel is required — documentation for two hotels (labeled First Choice and Second Choice), including conference hotel information and any group rate or conference code, if available.

Email the completed Professional Leave Request and all supporting documentation to **Phyllis McDonald** and **Karen Causey** for review.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE ROUTING PROCEDURES

Sections One & Two — Completed at the School/Location Level

1. Participant completes and signs Section 1 of the Professional Leave Request and submits it to their Supervisor/Principal for funding and approval, including hotel information if applicable (Check-In and Check-Out dates must be included).
2. If mileage reimbursement will be requested, contact Karen Causey (ext. 2011) at the District Office prior to travel to check availability of the district SUV. (See Transportation Type & Mileage Reimbursement below.)
3. Principal completes Section 2 of the Professional Leave Request, including complete fund numbers for all expenses. If fund numbers are incomplete, the form will be returned without approval.
4. Principal forwards the completed form to Human Resources and keeps a copy for his/her records.

Sections Three Through Six — Completed by the District Office

1. Human Resources logs the Professional Leave Request and forwards the form to the Fund Director/Designee.
2. Fund Director/Designee verifies that funds are available and either approves or denies the leave.
3. If approved by the Fund Director/Designee, the form is routed to the Chief Financial Officer for Fund Availability Verification.
4. The Chief Financial Officer verifies and approves the form. Hotel reservations will be made at this stage, if applicable (see Hotel Reservations below).
5. Upon complete approval, the form is routed back to Human Resources, who will disperse it: the original is returned to the school/department secretary, and copies are sent to the Fund Director, Payroll, and the Human Resources Director.
6. If applicable, hotel confirmation will be provided by the Business Office and a requisition/purchase order will be submitted for Travel Card services.

Note: A copy of the approved Professional Leave Request must be submitted with the employee's payroll leave sheet and with any travel reimbursement request.

REGISTRATION FEE

- After travel is approved, a requisition/purchase order should be submitted by the school/department secretary. When a registration fee is required before attendance, a completed registration form can be used in lieu of an invoice.
- School/Department Secretary processes the claim for payment.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

- If overnight travel is required, hotel reservations must be made through the School District's Business Department (**Ms. Vickie Byrd**), using the District Travel Card, once the Professional Leave Request has received complete approval. **Employees should not make their own hotel reservations.**
- Please include conference hotel information as well as any conference hotel group rate or code, if available, with the Professional Leave Request.
- Confirmation of the reservation will be provided, and a purchase order to the travel card service provider will be put in place. Once the reservation has been made with the District Travel Card, the charges should not be transferred to a personal rewards or honors account.

TRAVEL CREDIT CARDS

- **Card Checkout:** Travel credit cards can be checked out from the Business Office Travel Specialist (Ms. Vickie Byrd) only after an approved Professional Leave Request has been processed and a purchase order has been approved. An email will be sent once the card is ready to be picked up.

- **Approved Use:** A travel card can only be used for hotel room stay (no incidentals), parking, flights, baggage, ride-share, and rental vehicles as determined by the State of Mississippi Travel Card Procurement Program.
- **Mississippi Travel:** For in-state travel, travelers must present the tax exemption letter at hotel check-in. Receipts must reflect the exclusion of state and local taxes.
- **Card Return:** Within 48 hours of returning from travel, the card must be returned to the Business Office Travel Specialist, along with all receipts for reconciliation and review.

TRANSPORTATION TYPE & MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

- Employees are expected to carpool where two (2) or more employees are traveling to the same destination and using the same funding code. In cases where this is a gender mix, additional mileage will be permitted.
 - The passengers in the above scenario should indicate who they are commuting with on the space provided.
- **If a district vehicle is available, employees must use it.**
 - To check vehicle availability, contact Karen Causey at the District Office (ext. 2011).
 - If a district vehicle is available and an employee chooses to drive a personal vehicle instead, mileage reimbursement will be reduced to the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration's current reduced rate (currently \$0.235 per mile).
 - If a district vehicle is not available, or if the travel is within the county, mileage will be reimbursed at the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration's current standard approved rate (currently \$0.76 per mile, effective 07/01/2026).
 - If claiming mileage, a Google map or other printable GPS mileage printout verifying mileage from place of work to the conference site/event must be attached.
- Public carrier transportation such as train or air is only allowed for out-of-state travel. Airline tickets require two quotes/cost comparison.

Note: Mileage rates effective 07/01/2026, per the Business Office: \$0.76 per mile (standard) and \$0.235 per mile (reduced rate, when a district vehicle was available but not chosen). Both the Out of District Travel Voucher and In-District Travel Reimbursement Form reflect these rates.

MEALS

- Employees will be reimbursed for actual expenses up to the maximum amount allowed by the State Department of Finance for overnight travel only. Original receipts are required. Receipts must be itemized.
- Door Dash fees can be claimed as long as the total bill is within the daily meal rate as set by the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration.

PAYMENT TIMING

- The checks for the Conference Vendor will be paid and mailed prior to travel when timely travel requests are made and approved, and input by secretaries.
 - If requests are **untimely** made and approved, and the checks were printed prior to the travel date but too late to be mailed, the employee will need to pick up these checks from Accounts Payable prior to traveling.
 - If requests are **untimely** made and approved, and the checks were not printed prior to the travel date, the employee will have to pay all travel related expenses and be reimbursed, with proper documentation, after the trip.

AFTER TRAVELING — REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

After traveling, the employee must submit the following to their school/department secretary:

- Out of District Travel Expense Voucher form completed and signed by employee and supervisor.
 - **Receipts must be totaled and entered by day.** Each day's receipts should be added together and entered on their own line on the voucher — not combined into a single total for the entire trip — since reimbursement is subject to a maximum daily rate.
- Copy of approved Professional Leave Request.
- Proof of attendance at workshop such as Conference Agenda or name tag.
- **Hotel Folio with \$0 balance.**
- Meal receipts (Original and itemized) for overnight stay. No alcoholic beverages will be reimbursed. If eating with a group, each employee must have their own individual receipt.
- Any other travel supporting documents, i.e. incidental receipts.
- Google Map.
- Employees are paid via ACH and therefore must have an AP Employee ACH form on file (see the AP Employee ACH Form in the Section 3 Forms Index).
- School/Department Secretary should submit Travel Reimbursement claims on the next available docket — either the Regular or Ratified Docket.
- All items above, including the reimbursement for Out-of-District travel, must be submitted to Accounts Payable as soon as possible. **No refund for expenses will be paid after 60 days from the date of travel.**

TRAVEL PAID WITH FEDERAL FUNDS

Cannot be paid more than a month in advance. This would include registration and hotel checks that are cut and mailed before the travel. This also includes all checks cut for out-of-state travel.

TRAVEL CANCELLATION

If travel has to be canceled because of extenuating circumstances, the employee will need to advise:

- Supervisor and document that you advised prior to the conference start date.

- Conference host to request registration fees be refunded. This documentation is needed even if they won't refund the fees.
- Send an email to Vickie Byrd (vickie.byrd@gcsd.us) to cancel hotel reservation.

IN-DISTRICT EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

If an employee needs to claim mileage for an in-district meeting, that claim needs to be included on the in-district reimbursement form.

- Use the In-District Travel Reimbursement form.
- No reimbursements will be made for in-district travel submitted over 60 days.
- The in-district reimbursement form must be signed by the employee and principal or supervisor.
- Mileage is reimbursed at the current approved rate as set by the Mississippi State Department of Finance.
- An AP Employee ACH form must be on file with the Accounting Specialist (see the AP Employee ACH Form in the Section 3 Forms Index).
- Forms should be submitted to the school/department secretary who will then process a vendor claim to be paid on the next Ratified Docket or Regular Docket, whichever comes first.
- A map or chart should be included.

STUDENT TRAVEL & FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are requested and approved by submitting a Field Trip Request Form to the Superintendent's office. All overnight trips require School Board approval.

Field Trip Approval & Bus Permit Process

1. The Superintendent's office forwards the form to the Transportation Department to check if a bus is available. The Transportation Department must have a roster and seating chart before the Bus Permit Form will be issued.
2. If approved, the form will be returned to the Superintendent's office.
3. The Superintendent's office will approve or disapprove the trip and send a copy to the schools, unless board approval is needed for an overnight trip.
4. A Bus Permit Form is created by the Transportation Department and given to the assigned bus driver.
5. After the trip, the bus driver will complete the Time Sheet section and the Odometer Reading, and give the Bus Permit Form to the school for sponsor and principal signatures.
6. The school should then send the form to the Transportation Office, which will process extra duty pay for the bus driver.
7. The Transportation Department sends a copy of all trip forms to the Accounting Specialist at the Business Office, who will invoice schools for reimbursement.

Note: Every Activity field trip using a bus and bus driver must be reimbursed to GCSD, regardless of internal or external funding source. Exceptions include required Athletic, Band, JROTC, and CTE trips — however, regular Band, JROTC, and CTE field trips must still be reimbursed.

Note: Field Trip Reimbursement Rate: \$2.00 per mile driven (subject to change upon Board approval), plus the driver's salary of \$16.00, plus FICA and Workers' Compensation (rates subject to change). The Business Office will update Field Trip forms and send an email notification when and if any rates change.

Chartered Buses

- If a chartered bus is to be used, the contract must be Superintendent-approved prior to travel. All funds are paid to the chartered bus company after the trip.

Requisitions & Documentation

- Requisitions for expenditures related to student travel should be submitted in Marathon.
- Requisitions should be detailed with student and chaperone names and field trip date.
- An approved Field Trip Request Form/Bus Permit, along with student and chaperone names, must be attached to the requisition in Marathon. Trip details — including the date, group, and approval date — should be included in the requisition top section as well as a line item in the requisition body.

Field Trip Meals

- **Meals** — if at all possible, choose a vendor that accepts purchase orders. If the vendor does not accept purchase orders, a Request for Field Trip Custodial Cash can be submitted to the school secretary to add to the next Ratified Docket. (See Section 5 – Activity Funds.)
 - Funds shall be used solely for student meals.
 - The custodian in charge of said funds should immediately return any leftover funds to the school secretary to be redeposited along with original receipts.

Overnight Field Trips — Employee Leave & Student Lodging

- For all employees: if time will be missed from their primary job/position due to a field trip, a Professional Leave Request must be submitted in order for a leave record to be entered. (See Professional Leave Routing Procedures above.)
- **If the overnight field trip requires hotel rooms for students, the sponsor/chaperone completing their own Professional Leave Request must also check “Student Rooms needed?” in Section One of the form, in addition to their own overnight travel information, so hotel arrangements can be made for the students traveling with them.**
- Hotel rooms for students and chaperones may be put on the District Travel Card. The trip must have prior approval before the reservation is made. The travel card can be checked out from the Business Office as per instructions in the Travel Credit Cards section above.

Field Trip Payment Policies

The practice of **only accepting cash** for field trip payments is **not allowed**. The district is required to offer parents more than one payment option — cash, check, and money order are accepted.

- Field trip payments are **non-refundable**, unless the trip is canceled by the school.
- Money collected for a field trip should be recorded on the Class Field Trip Collection Sheet or Money Collection Sheet and turned in to the school secretary daily. (See Section 5 – Activity Funds for these forms.)
- See district policy IFCB (Field Trips) for further guidance.

FORMS INDEX

The following form examples are inserted at the end of this section. Fillable forms can be downloaded from the Business Office Department website: <https://www.gcsd.us/business-office-gcsd-forms>

Form Name	Purpose
Professional Leave Request	Request leave approval and funding for travel
Out of District Travel Expense Voucher	Submit reimbursement claims after travel
In-District Travel Reimbursement Form	Claim mileage for in-district travel

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GEORGE COUNTY SCHOOLS Professional Leave Request

This application must be submitted at a minimum of 2 weeks prior to leave. Applications requiring board approval must be submitted prior to the board meeting. Application must be approved before attendance. Application must include Conference, Hotel, and Travel documentation when initially submitted. Form must be completed in its entirety, or it will be returned without approval.

SECTION ONE (TO BE COMPLETED BY PARTICIPANT)

Date Submitted: _____ Out of State _____ Overnight _____
 Name _____ Position _____ School/Dept. _____
 Dates Leave Requested _____ through _____ Total Days _____
 Destination _____
 (Name and address of workshop, conference) (City, State) Out of state Leave must be board approved
 Description (Attach Documentation): _____

Anticipated Paid/Reimbursable Expenses CHECK ALL THAT APPLY: Travel Expenses: ☐ Mileage (Total Miles Roundtrip) _____ ☐ Meals (Overnight only) Itemized Receipts required ☐ Hotel \$ _____ Check-In Date _____ Check-Out Date _____ Student Rooms needed? ☐ Other (i.e. parking) Please list: _____ Registration Expenses: ☐ Registration Fees \$ _____ Credit to be earned: CEU ☐ SEMI ☐ OSL ☐ Other _____	CIRCLE YES OR NO Using Activity Bus: Yes or No Dist. SUV Available: Yes or No _____
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Signature _____ Date _____ Number of credits to be earned: _____
 Participant

Upon completion send form to immediate Supervisor/Principal

SECTION TWO (TO BE COMPLETED BY PARTICIPANT'S SUPERVISOR)

☐ Substitute Required: No. Days _____ Leave Recommended _____ Leave Not Recommended _____
Enter Complete Fund Number(s) below for all above indicated/approved expenses. If fund numbers are incomplete, form will be returned without approval. (2311, 2511, 2211-Title 2610-SPED 1120-District 2711-Vocational 1151-1160-Activity)
 Fund Number(s) _____
 Approved with expenses indicated above _____ Approved without expenses (no expenses indicated above) _____
 Hotel Reservations/Prepay by Central Services _____ Yes _____ No (If yes, hotel information must be attached)
 Supervisor/Principal Signature _____ Date _____

Upon completion send form to Human Resources

SECTION THREE (TO BE COMPLETED BY HUMAN RESOURCES)

Date Received at Human Resources: _____

SECTION FOUR (TO BE COMPLETED BY FUND DIRECTOR/DESIGNEE)

Approved _____ Denied _____ Reason for Denial: _____
 Fund Director/Designee Signature _____ Date _____

SECTION FIVE (TO BE COMPLETED BY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER)

Fund Verified _____ Reservations Made _____ CFO Signature _____ Date _____

SECTION SIX (TO BE COMPLETED BY HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR)

Human Resources Director Signature _____ Date _____

VERY IMPORTANT:

--School secretary should attach copy of approved form to teacher/substitute payroll report when submitting payroll.

--School secretary should attach copy of approved form to travel reimbursement requests.

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GEORGE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
OUT OF DISTRICT TRAVEL VOUCHER
REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

Name: _____ School/Dept: _____

Destination _____ Purpose of Trip: _____

Expenditure Code (as shown on Prof. Leave Form): _____

Fund Director Approval (if applicable): _____

Supervisor Approval_____
Date**The following Required Documents must be attached:**

- Copy of your approved Professional Leave Application
- Proof of attendance at workshop or conference (example: name tag, copy of agenda...)
- Hotel receipt for overnight travel.
- Meals are reimbursed for actual expenses up to the maximum amount allowed for overnight stay only. One night = one day meals. **Original** meal receipts must be **itemized** and attached.
- For reimbursements other than meals, please attach proof of expenses (example: parking receipt, taxi receipt, car rental)
- Google map if requesting mileage reimbursement. (Mileage requested must be verified by map) Email Verifying district vehicle availability status must be attached. **Reminder: If district vehicle was available but not chosen, mileage will be reimbursed at lower rate of .235.**

IMPORTANT: No refund for expenses will be paid after 60 days from date of travel.

TRAVEL DATE	LODGING AMOUNT	MEALS (overnight stay)	MILES	MILEAGE EXPENSE (miles X .76 or .235)	LIST OTHER EXPENSES (taxi, baggage, airfare, etc.)	AMOUNT OF OTHER EXPENSES	TOTAL
GRAND TOTAL:							\$ -

I certify that all expenditures were incurred in the performance of school business. I also understand that I will not receive a paper check and I verify that my ACH deposit information has been submitted to the Business Office.

Employee Signature_____
Date

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George County School District In-District Travel Reimbursement Form

This form will be the authorized reporting form for mileage reimbursement for employees whose job assignments require them to travel using their personal vehicles in the performance of their duties.

Please include a map or a chart with mileage between schools.

Policy Reference: DJD Expense Reimbursements

Name	Job Title
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Travel Period to Expenditure Code

Travel Date	Trip Routing: Include All Stops		Miles Traveled
Office Use:		Total Miles this Page	0.00
Vendor # _____		Miles from back side of form	0.00
Invoice # _____		Total Miles	0.00
ACH information has been submitted: ☐		Reimbursement Amount @ .76 per mile (Effective 07/01/2026) \$	-

I certify that I have actually traveled to perform the duties of my job assignment as indicated on the above report and am entitled to reimbursement for such travel as per board policy.

I also understand that I will not receive a paper check and I verify that my ACH deposit information has been submitted to the Business Office.

Employee Signature

Supervisor Approval