

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

9354
Bylaw No.

BYLAWS OF THE BOARD

I. Board Members' Vouchered Reimbursement of Expenses

In addition to the compensation provided by law, members of the Board of Education (BOE) are entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable expenses for travel and other expenses related to the performance of Board duties.

The purpose of this bylaw is to provide guidance to Board Members regarding appropriate expenditures of public funds. The primary purpose of Board Members' expense accounts is to cover allowable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of their responsibilities.

Section 3-1003(b) of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, provides that a member of the Board of Education may not be reimbursed more than \$7,000 in travel and other expenses incurred in a single fiscal year. No member is authorized to possess a Board-issued credit card to cover Board-related expenses. In addition, no member is authorized to spend more than \$7,000 for allowable expenses. Any expenditures in excess of the total allowance are the responsibility of the Board Member.

II. Allowable Expenditure Reimbursements

Among the expenses that a member is authorized to incur are the following:

- a) Installation and monthly charges for home office telephones, fax, and computer lines, cellular phones and other telephone devices used to conduct Board-related business, as well as the cost of local and long distance calls related to the conduct of Board business. All efforts will be made to provide Board Members with the most reasonable, economic telephone plans and cell phone packages.
- b) Education-related materials, books, publications and subscriptions.

- c) Office supplies, postage, and other materials necessary for discharging the duties of Board Members. Members shall have access to the system's normal procurement and supply system for the purchase of office supplies.
- d) Board-related travel. This includes local and non-local mileage-based reimbursement for the use of a personal vehicle in accordance with the policies and reimbursement rates established for school system employees, as well as reimbursement for the actual costs of items such as parking, tolls, taxis, buses, airfare, etc. Travel outside the immediate area will be by the most economic means.
- e) The convening and organization of educational and Board-related activities and events.
- f) Printing and distribution of letters, newsletters, and other materials to students, parents and others on educational or Board business. Members of the Board may not be reimbursed for producing and mailing a newsletter, posting signs, purchasing advertisements/greetings or any other expenditure that may be construed as campaign activities within 45 days of an election. Board members should use PGCPs printing services whenever possible.
- g) Attendance at conferences, seminars, and meetings, including registration fees, travel, and other expenses related to the attendance by the Board Member. All expenditures must be clearly documented.
- h) Cost of Board Member's participation in and support for education, school-related and community-related events and activities, including awards dinners, civic association functions and similar events.

III. Unallowable Expenditures

Board members must use prudence and exercise due care in incurring expenses. The following are guidelines for Board Members' determination of unallowable expenditures and includes but is not limited to the following:

- Payment for hire or salary of any individual;
- Any personal bills or expenses not related to the BOE;
- Cash or cash advances except for use on non-local travel;
- Alcoholic beverage and tobacco products;
- Non-business (BOE) related meals;

- Expenses related to family member and spouse travel;
- Relocation expenses;
- Entertainment;
- Recreation;
- In-flight internet;
- In-room movies;
- Hotel mini bars;
- Laundry services;
- Valet services;
- Airline membership fees;
- Incremental costs over standard size room rate and upgrades;
- Cancellation fees where reasonable prudent actions could have been taken to avoid such charges;
- First class airline, train or other travel tickets or upgrades;
- Rental cars for local travel;
- Parking tickets and traffic violations
- Clothing/personal items;
- Contributions to support religious or political activities; and,
- Board member compensation in any form from expense account.

IV. Local Meal Reimbursement

Board members may receive reimbursement for certain local meals. Local meals are defined as meals taken within 30 miles or less from the Board of Education headquarters in Upper Marlboro, MD. Board Members may be reimbursed for no more than two (2) local meals weekly under the following conditions:

- a) Board members' local meals may only be paid via expense reimbursement. Reimbursement will follow the per diem guidelines for "Daily Meal Expenses" (see below).
- b) Board members may be reimbursed the cost of meals while attending business meetings with constituents, leaders and PGCPs staff.
- c) Board members are authorized reimbursement for the cost of their own meals between Board Meetings and other official Board business when it is not feasible, prudent or cost effective to return home in the interim.
- d) The following information is required on all meal receipts: names of meeting participants, and the purpose of the meeting.
- e) Daily Meal Expenses - Board member meal expenses should be within the following limitations to obtain reimbursement:

Breakfast	23.00
Lunch	20.00
Dinner	33.00

Any amount over the approved allocated amount for each meal is the sole responsibility of the Board member.

V. Non-Local Travel

Non-local travel includes expenses and other costs related to the Board member's attendance at conferences, workshops, or projects which require the traveler to be in a travel status one or more nights. This includes locations 30 miles or farther from the Board of Education headquarters in Upper Marlboro, MD. Special exceptions may be considered by the Board Chair. The following are deemed as allowable costs for travel:

- a) air, chartered bus and train fare at coach rates
- b) airport shuttle
- c) taxi service to and from non-local mode of travel
- d) rental car (if deemed the most economical mode of non-local travel)
- e) airline baggage fees
- f) garage parking, tolls, bus or subway fare

Daily Meal Expenses shall not exceed **\$76.00**. Board Members should partake in meals that are included with conferences whenever possible. However, a Board member may request reimbursement for meals on arrival/departure travel days that does not exceed seventy-five percent (75%) of the daily per diem (i.e. \$57.00).

I. Responsibilities

Board members and staff have the following responsibilities for administration of Board member expenditures:

- a) All travel arrangements for Board Members to attend conferences and participate in other business activities outside of the local area shall be made by staff to ensure efficiency and economy.
- b) Board Members may obtain a cash advance for travel outside of the local area to cover the costs for meals and other allowable expenses. Board Members who receive such advance must provide all receipts for credit. If a Board Member is unable to provide receipts to show the proper expenditure of a portion of advance, the Board Member is personally responsible to reimburse the Board.
- c) All requests for reimbursement must be accompanied by a receipt or other appropriate documentation, as well as an explanation of the purpose of the expense. It is the responsibility of the member to provide appropriate statements when supporting documents are not provided
- d) Board members are subject to denial of reimbursement or request for restitution when either appropriate documentation is not provided or expenditures are made

that are not deemed as allowable. When Board members are notified of reimbursements due, arrangements for payment must be made within 15 days of notice.

- e) If equipment is purchased by the school system for the use of a Board Member, that equipment is the property of the school system. All efforts will be made to supply the member with acceptable equipment from within the inventory of the school system.
- f) Board Members will be provided with an updated monthly report on the status of their accounts. Monthly telephone statements will be provided upon request.
- g) Procedures for processing expenses are as follows:
 - 1) All original receipts and supporting documentation for reimbursements should be submitted to the Board office monthly and no later than 30 days after the date of the transaction.
 - 2) The Board Office shall process the reimbursement report, checking with the Budget Office Liaison to ensure that sufficient funds exist in the member's account and referring any discrepancies or questions about individual expenditures or account balances to the Board Financial Analyst. Should a question arise, the Board Financial Analyst may refer a disputed amount to the Board Chair.
 - 3) The expense form shall then be transmitted to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for processing and payment.

Should a question arise about whether an expense is covered under these provisions, the matter shall be referred to the Chair for a ruling, and if unresolved by the Chair, referred to the Board's Ethics Panel for a ruling. If the Chair believes the issue should be reviewed by the Board, the Chair shall present the issue to the Board and the decision made by the Board shall be final, including any decision to refer the matter to the Ethics Panel. If the matter is referred to the Ethics Panel, the procedures in Board Policy 107 (D), "Ethics Regulation", shall be followed.

Legal Reference: MD Ann Code, Educ. Art §3-1003 and 4-107.

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7/29/76

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