

STAFF DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

MACON COUNTY SCHOOLS

I. Staff development as required by the state must:

1. Be intense and extensive – a minimum of 10 hours on same topic
2. Have follow up as a component
3. Be aligned to school/district improvement plans or standard course of study (document on the SEA System)

II. Guidelines for individual renewal credit

1. Approval of the activity is required unless the activity is school or county-sponsored and already has been approved by the LEA staff development coordinators. Upon completion of staff development activity, send verification to appropriate staff development coordinator.
2. Verification of credit must include a signed certificate or signed letter from the sponsoring group or agency verifying:
 - Attendance
 - Dates
 - Number of hours
 - Recommended units of credit

If the organization or agency does not provide credit, it can be earned by providing a detailed agenda with sessions attended indicated and signed by the participant. Credit will be determined from this document.

3. If the sponsoring group does not recommend units of credit, a copy of the agenda or program can be included to assist the central office in determining credit amount. If the activity involves college or university credit, a grade sheet is sufficient for renewal credit.
4. Teachers can earn a maximum of 2.5 credits per renewal cycle through the Western Carolina University student teacher program for cooperating teachers.

III. Prior approval for activity: Guidelines for attendance at any meeting or conference which involves being away from normal work station

1. Any occasion which requires school personnel to leave their classroom/school or which involves any cost, e.g. substitutes, must have a prior approval submitted and approved through the SEA System.
2. The prior approval form is available on the web. It can be accessed by going to the Macon County Schools website at www.macon.k12.nc.us/Pages/Main.aspx and clicking on the staff development button at the top of the screen.
3. Care should be used in noting estimated costs. If state rates are exceeded in any area, e.g. lodging, a rationale should be included. Staff development committees can use this information to guide their determination of reimbursement rates. Personnel are expected to stay at least two per room and individual rooms will not be covered if an uneven number of persons are attending the same event. The exception to this would be in the event that an odd number of males or females attend a conference. If the source of funding is uncertain, please contact the staff development chairperson at the school to learn the preferred fund allocation.
4. For substitute reimbursement there are two amounts – one for a certified substitute and one for a non-certified substitute. When completing this part of the prior approval, please be as accurate as possible in indicating which type of substitute you will be using.
5. County cars are assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. **IMPORTANT:** Persons requesting a county car will need to note “Car Request” on the form in the box “Description of Activity.” This is the only location that this program has which will allow us to track car requests. Mileage is not paid for individuals taking their own cars unless a county car has been requested and is not available. If mileage is paid at the amount per mile adopted by the Board of Education, no gasoline charges are covered.
6. Only one vehicle will be assigned per event unless the number exceeds four persons. Travelers will be expected to coordinate departure and return times to accommodate the majority of participants.
7. Keys for cars can be picked up the afternoon prior to morning departure or at the time of departure. Cars should remain at central office until time of departure and should be returned to the central office upon arrival back in town. Cars are often scheduled

closely and it is important that they not be picked up early or returned late unless prior approval is received.

8. A gasoline credit card will be issued for trips that will require additional gas. Travelers will need to fill the gas tank at the bus garage before departing. The bus garage is open from 6 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Gas credit card receipts must be returned with credit card and keys.
9. When breakfast, lunch, or dinner is provided by the activity, reimbursement is not allowed. Likewise, if a county car is used, mileage cannot be paid and/or accepted.
10. Reimbursement for lunch is not available unless an overnight stay is involved. Breakfast can only be paid on the day of departure if the starting time of the activity requires leaving town prior to 6:00 a.m. Dinner is not a reimbursable expense unless the ending time of the conference requires arriving home after 8:00 p.m.
11. Within 30 days of return from an activity, a reimbursement form should be completed and returned to the central office. **Receipts are not required for meals. Receipts are necessary for registration, lodging, and parking.** They should be stapled to the reimbursement form when it is sent for payment. Reimbursement forms will be approved at the central office and forwarded to the finance department for payment during their next check writing process. This procedure may take up to three weeks, depending upon the date the request is received in the central office. **The approved SEA System form must be attached for reimbursement to be processed.**

IV. SEA System Approval

1. Accounting procedures do not allow for prepayment of registration and other expenses. School personnel must expend these costs and then be reimbursed upon return from the activity. If special circumstances occur which may require an employee to attend staff development or training, the district may prepay registration. In the event that an employee fails to attend a prepaid event, they will be required to refund the full amount to Macon County Schools. The principal of each school will have a prepayment form that must be filled out, signed and sent in along with the registration form and SEA form that is to be prepaid.
2. The computerized program will send you an email upon your return asking for an evaluation of the activity and plans you have for implementing newly-acquired knowledge. These emails come from a server in Raleigh that automatically attaches the

program director's name. If the activity is not such that a response is appropriate, the participant can ignore the request. Otherwise, it is important for various program audits to have this evaluation filled out and submitted.

3. Dues to professional organizations are the responsibility of the employee and are not reimbursable.

V. After the Activity

1. The school secretary makes a copy of the approval sent back to the principal and submits with monthly payroll.
2. The teacher makes a copy of the approval and attaches to the reimbursement form with appropriate receipts.
3. In the event that an employee is approved to be reimbursed for college courses, the reimbursable amount will not exceed \$450 per semester (tuition and books).

VI. Employee's Responsibility

1. An employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees will be responsible for unauthorized costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.
2. Excess lodging authorization must be obtained in advance from local superintendent or designee. Excess lodging is allowed when the employee is in a high-cost area and unable to secure lodging within the current allowance.

VII. Meals

1. Reimbursement: Each employee is responsible for his/her own request for reimbursement. Filing procedures are the same as for lodging. Each meal reimbursement rate must be listed on the reimbursement request. Times of departure and arrival must be listed on the reimbursement request.
2. Daily travel – overnight: Employees may receive allowances for meals for partial days of travel when the partial day is the day of departure or the day of return. To be eligible, the employee must;
 - Breakfast: depart duty station prior to 6:00 a.m.

- Lunch: depart duty station prior to 10:00 a.m. (day of departure); return to duty station after 2:00 p.m. (day of return)
 - Dinner: return to duty station after 8:00 p.m.
3. Daily travel – not overnight: Allowances shall not be paid to employees for lunches if travel does not involve an overnight stay.
 4. Reimbursement for Meals – required employee attendance: A local employee may be reimbursed for meals, including lunches, when the employee’s job requires his attendance at the meeting of a board, commission, committee or council in his official capacity and the meal is preplanned as part of the meeting for the entire board, commission, committee or council. Employees claiming reimbursement under this provision shall be limited to \$21 per day or to the total daily meals’ reimbursement.

A local employee may be reimbursed for meals, including lunches, when the meal is included as an integral part of a congress, conference, assembly, convocation, etc. Such congress must involve:

- the active participation of persons other than the employees of a single school unit;
- the employee’s attendance is required for the performance of his/her duties, but must not be part of the employee’s normal day-to-day business activities;
- the congress must be planned in advance with a formal agenda; and
- the congress must provide written notice or an invitation to participants.

Employees claiming reimbursement under this provision are limited to the meal subsistence rates for local officials and employees, set out in the section on *Summary of Statutory Provisions* and may be entitled to receive excess reimbursement.

VIII. Professional Exams

1. Tests may be paid at 100% for first administration in the area of hire. Money will come from Title II, Local Staff Development, or specific Program Area Staff Development.