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# SECTION THREE:

# PURCHASING AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

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## PURCHASING AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

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One of the most important aspects of controls over expenditures is an efficient and effective system of purchasing. The objectives of an effective purchasing system are to buy materials, supplies, commodities and services that are of the right quality, quantity, price, and from the right source with delivery being at the right place. These objectives should be accomplished in accordance with applicable state and federal purchasing laws and in accordance with the district's purchasing policies. The Lowndes County School District has established a purchasing system which meets these objectives.

The district's purchasing system includes the following documentation:

1. **Purchase requisition** – the prescribed form in which is completed by the requisitioning party identifying that there is a stated need for materials or services and is requesting authorization to make a purchase to satisfy those needs.
2. **Purchase order** – document that result from an authorized requisition. The purchase order authorizes a vendor to deliver the specified merchandise or render the stated services. Acceptance of the purchase order by the vendor establishes a legally binding contract.
3. **Receiving report** – carbon copy of the purchase order that is signed and dated by the requisitioning party or another designated staff member that has verified the fact that the items or services that were ordered has actually been received.
4. **Invoice or request for payment** – documentation received from the vendor demanding payment of the items delivered or services rendered.

### **Purchasing and Accounts Payable related Board Policies**

DJ Expenditure of Funds  
DJAA Authorized Signatures  
DJAAB Contract Signing Authority  
DJD Expense Reimbursements (Employee Travel)  
DJDA Purchase of Foods Drinks and Food Supplies from Public Funds  
DJE Purchasing  
DJEA Purchasing Authority  
DJED Bids and Quotations  
DJEG Purchase Orders and Contracts  
DJEI Vendor Relations  
DJEJ Payment Procedures

All employees involved in purchasing activities will work to maintain and enhance the district's image by their personal conduct and methods of doing business. They will seek to obtain and purchase all goods at the lowest possible cost, considering the guidelines of prices, service, quality and delivery.

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### ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CALENDAR

Accounts payable checks will be written every Wednesday. **The cut-off day for the weekly docket will be on the preceding Monday.**

Information for payment of purchase orders and travel reimbursements must reach the Accounts Payable office on or before the cut-off date. Information must be complete – such as signatures, attachments, receipts, etc. – to be considered ready for payment.

**Do not** send receiving reports or packing slips to other Administrators in the Central Office. They are all to be sent to the Accounts Payable office.

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## PURCHASING GUIDELINES

### Vendors

- All vendors must have a W-9 on file before being added to the accounting system.
- All W-9 requests should be forwarded to the Capital Assets clerk in the Business Office.
- A new vendor must be in good standing with the MS Secretary of State's office. This will be verified before vendor will be added to the accounting system.
- A new vendor must not be listed on the Federal Excluded Parties List. This will be verified before vendor will be added to the accounting system.
- If a new vendor does not meet the above qualifications, the Business Office will submit the vendor a letter indicating so and will also notify the budget manager that requested the vendor.

### Non-Allowable Expenditures

- No public funds can be used to purchase flowers for staff members for get well gifts, who have babies, marriage, retirement, or any type gift to congratulate or motivate.

### Purchases of Supplies and Equipment

- **Purchases under \$5,000** should be made in a prudent manner consistent with the purchasing policy.
- **Purchases between \$5,000 and \$50,000**, per Purchase Order, must have at least two (2) written price quotes.
  - These quotes must be on the vendor's letterhead or vendor's standard quote form, signed by the vendor (signed faxed quotes are acceptable). Emailed quotes are acceptable when the email address corresponds to the company and is from an authorized representative from said company.
  - At no time before the quote process is complete should the school/department reveal a vendors' quoted price to another vendor.
  - It is a good practice to notify unsuccessful vendor that the quotations have been closed and awarded.
  - At no time should a school/department allow a vendor to suggest and/or solicit other quotes for them.
- **Purchases in excess of \$50,000**, per Purchase Order, must be formally bid using the following guidelines:
  1. Determine the detailed specifications of the item(s) you are requesting. Specifications pertinent to such bidding shall be written not to exclude comparable equipment of domestic manufacture.
  2. Submit detailed specifications to the bidding clerk, Mr. Percy Lee.

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- a) The bidding clerk will make preparations to advertise that we are accepting bids for the requested items.
  - b) The advertisement must appear for two (2) consecutive weeks in a regular newspaper published in the county.
  - c) A bid package will be submitted to all responders of the advertisement. You must notify the bidding clerk, in writing, if you want a bid package to be sent to specific companies.
  - d) The bid opening shall not be less than 7 working days after the last published notice.
  - e) The bidding clerk shall determine the lowest and best bid.
  - f) The bidding clerk will make preparation for the Board of Trustees to award the purchase to the recommended lowest and best bidding company.
  - g) If a contract is required for this purchase, it too should be submitted to the Board for approval at this time.
  - h) Upon Board approval, the bidding clerk will notify the school/department of the vendor awarded the bid. The bidding clerk will include the bid package number, board agenda item number and approval date.
  - i) Once the notification is received, the school/department can submit the requisition to make the purchase.
  - j) Once a bid is awarded to a vendor by the Board of Trustees, that vendor must be used for the purchase of the bided items.
- **Splitting Orders** is knowingly and willingly issuing multiple purchase orders to avoid the bidding process. Miss. Code, Section 31-7-13 (o) states that no contract or purchase shall be made for the purpose of circumventing competitive bids.
  - **Single Source Purchases** are noncompetitive items available from one (1) source only.
    - A certification of the conditions and circumstances requiring the purchase from a sole source vendor requires board approval. If the board approves, such authority, it shall be noted on the minutes of the body at the next regular meeting.
    - The certification must be in the form of a letter from the vendor, on their letterhead, stating that said item(s) are only available from them; no other source exists, and signed by the vendor.
    - Examples of circumstances, which could necessitate a single source purchase are:
      - a) Where the compatibility of equipment, accessories or replacement parts is the paramount consideration and the manufacturer is the sole supplier.
      - b) Where a sole supplier's item is to be required when no other item will serve the need of the school/department.
      - c) Where sole supplier's item is copyrighted and available only from the publisher.

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- Once board approval is obtained, a requisition can be submitted for the purchase.
- **State Contract Purchases** are available on the internet at, <http://www.dfa.state.ms.us/Purchasing/StateContracts.html>. Purchases off a State Contract are not limited by a dollar amount unless otherwise stated in the contract.
- **Emergency Purchases** can be made if the Superintendent determines that an emergency exists in regard to the purchase of any commodities or repair contracts and the delay to make the purchase, giving opportunity for competitive bidding, would be detrimental to the interest of the district. Emergency situations come about from extenuating circumstances or acts of God. Emergency situations do not result from a lack of planning. The provisions for competitive bidding shall not apply to emergency purchases, but must adhere to the following guidelines:
  - The budget manager must request the emergency purchase to the Superintendent. Request should include the state of emergency, the cause, the name of the proposed vendor and the cost.
  - If the Superintendent agrees, he shall make an official emergency declaration in writing and shall submit the declaration to the budget manager.
  - Once the declaration is received, the budget manager can submit a requisition for the purchase.
  - Once the products and/or services have been received, the Superintendent must notify the board of the emergency purchase or repair contract. Documentation of the purchase or repair contract, including a description of the commodity purchased the price thereof and the nature of the emergency shall be presented and placed on the minutes.
- **Maintenance Purchases from School's budget**
  1. Maintenance items to be paid from the school's maintenance budget should be submitted in the same manner as other purchases.
- **Centralized Maintenance Purchases for small everyday repairs**
  1. Work order is submitted and authorized by school/department.
  2. Maintenance Worker comes to evaluate the issue.
  3. Maintenance Worker then goes to vendor or calls to get quote for parts and communicates the information to the Maintenance Bookkeeper.
  4. Maintenance Worker is then issued a manual maintenance purchase order number by the Maintenance Bookkeeper with authorization from the Maintenance Supervisor.
  5. Maintenance Worker then picks up repair parts from vendor and will receive ticket/invoice for those parts.
  6. Maintenance Worker goes back to school/department to complete work order.
  7. Maintenance Worker submits all tickets/invoice to Maintenance Bookkeeper at end of day and signs the receiving reports.
  8. Maintenance Bookkeeper submits requisition in School Connect for the

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- cost of the invoice. Maintenance Bookkeeper uses the school's maintenance budget that is allocated to centralized maintenance.
9. Requisition should include the work order number, maintenance purchase order number, and maintenance purchase order date in the body of the requisition.
  10. When requisition authorized and upgraded to a PO, Maintenance dept. will get a copy of PO.
  11. Maintenance Bookkeeper then matches the receiving reports, signed by the Maintenance Supervisor, with the tickets/invoices for submission to Accounts Payable.
- **Centralized Maintenance Purchases for projects** should be mutually agreed upon by the Principal and Maintenance Supervisor.
    - Once agreed, Maintenance Bookkeeper enters the requisition into the accounting system and it's authorized by the Maintenance Supervisor. Maintenance Bookkeeper uses the school's maintenance budget that is allocated to centralized maintenance.
    - PO is delivered to the vendor.
    - Products or services are received and receiving report is signed by Maintenance Supervisor.
    - Receiving report is submitted to Accounts Payable and will be matched with invoice for payment.
  
  - **Transportation Purchases for everyday repairs to vehicles, etc.**
    - Repair request is submitted from school/department/ bus driver through Transportation Supervisor.
    - Mechanics or Transportation Supervisor determines what parts, etc. will be needed for repair or maintenance of vehicle, tractor or lawn mower and communicates the information to the Transportation Bookkeeper.
    - Mechanics are then issued a manual transportation purchase order number by the Transportation Bookkeeper with authorization from the Transportation Supervisor.
    - Mechanics picks up repair parts from vendor and will receive ticket/invoice for parts.
    - Mechanics complete repairs to vehicle, etc.
    - Mechanic submits all tickets / invoices to Transportation Bookkeeper
    - Transportation Bookkeeper submits requisition through School Connect for the cost of the invoice.
    - Requisition should include the transportation purchase order number, and transportation purchase order date in the body of the requisition.
    - When requisition is authorized and upgraded to a PO, Transportation Dept. will get a copy of PO.
    - Transportation Bookkeeper then matches the receiving reports and tickets/invoice for submission to Accounts Payable.

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- **Binding agreements/contracts** from the vendor for the purchase of supplies or equipment must be board approved before requisition is submitted. Prime example of this is software.
  - A request for contract approval should be completed in its entirety and submitted to the Business Office to be submitted for board approval. The vendor's contract must be attached.
- **Purchase of Gift Cards for Student Incentives** can be made, however evidence that the cards were received by the student is required by the student(s) signing the receiving report.

### Purchases of Services

- **Consulting, Professional Development Training, Technical and Data Processing Services** in any amount must have a board approved contract before requisition is submitted.
  - These purchases will be coded to a 300 object code.
  - A request for contract approval should be completed in its entirety and submitted to the Business Office to be submitted for board approval. The vendor's contract must be attached. If the vendor does not have a contract, one will be provided.
  - Professional services can be approved on an annual basis.
  - Once the board approves the contract, a requisition can be submitted for the purchase.
- **Maintenance and Repair services** that include labor over \$2,500 must have a board approved vendor agreement.
  - These purchases will be coded to the 430 object.
    - Quotes and contracts must be itemized between parts and labor.
    - Entire requisition can be coded to 430 if vendor supplied items that would otherwise be coded as supplies if we were purchasing them.
    - If the vendor is supplying an item that would otherwise be capitalized if we were purchasing them, then it must be coded to the appropriate capitalized object code.
  - A request for contract approval should be submitted to the Business Office to be submitted for board approval. The vendor's contract must be attached. If the vendor does not have a contract, one will be provided.
  - If any maintenance vendor requires a contract or agreement to be signed, regardless of amount, it must have board approval.
  - Once the board approves the contract, a requisition can be submitted for the purchase.



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## REQUISITIONS

- A requisition must be completed in its entirety with the specific items, item numbers and/or services listed to be ordered. Once a requisition is upgraded to a purchase order, the Purchasing Clerk will make the order so there is no other opportunity for you to clarify anything on the purchase order, so please be specific and detailed on your requisitions. The more information the better!!
- All requisitions should be generated from the requestor on a formatted excel spreadsheet.
- It is the responsibility of each school/department secretary/bookkeeper to upload or key in requisitions in "School Connect." (See School Connect Requisitions)
  - Be sure to include one or two words to summarize the items being purchased on the first line under description on the main page of the requisition. This is what the board will see on the claims docket.
- All requisitions must be authorized by the budget manager or primary authorizer and secondary authorizers according to the account codes used. (See School Connect Authorization section)
- If the purchase requires quotes, said quotes must be uploaded and attached to the requisition.
- ~~Other items that must be listed on requisition~~ if applicable: State Contract Number, Bid Number, and Express Products List (EPL) Number.
- If the requisition is authorized as an emergency purchase, the emergency declaration from the Superintendent must be attached to the requisition.
- If the requisition is for services, a copy of the board approved contract must be uploaded and attached to the requisition.
  - ~~Annual service contracts should be entered into the accounting system~~ for the full annual contracted amount. 12 @ \$xxx.xx for a total of \$xxxx.xx.
    - When you send in the receiving report for the first payment, you would then email [purchasing@lowndes.k12.ms.us](mailto:purchasing@lowndes.k12.ms.us) and request a reprint of the purchase order for the next month's payment and every month thereafter.
    - By doing this, the money will be encumbered up front and you will always have a purchase order for these payments.
- Shipping must be included on requisitions. If there is not shipping cost, indicate so by typing "no shipping cost."
- The requisition must have a fax number or email address for the purchase order to be electronically delivered. If fax number, email address or direction to "order online" is not included, the purchase order will be mailed.
- We are exempt from tax on all orders. Effective July 1, 2013 the sales tax became exempt on items purchased for resale for the purpose of fundraising.
- Budget Issues

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- The accounting system will only allow a requisition to be processed only if there are sufficient funds available in the budget for the account code used.
  - If there is not a sufficient budget in the account code, you will need to prepare a budget revision or budget amendment form. (See Budget Section)
- Status of requisition approval flow-through can be tracked in School Connect.

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## PURCHASE ORDERS

- An approved and signed purchase order by the Superintendent is required to make all purchases for the LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT.
- After a requisition has been properly authorized, it will be upgraded to a purchase order and the following copies will be printed:
  - Tan- mailed to the vendor if applicable
  - Pink- receiving report
  - Gold- accounts payable copy
  - Blue- administrative or capital assets copy
  - Yellow- school file copy
- We do not allow open purchase orders for general purchases. Open purchase orders are only allowed on Child Nutrition food purchases.
- The purchase order is the document that legally authorizes the purchases of the goods or services.
- Only the approved items on the PO can be ordered/purchased.
- An order made without an approved purchase order becomes the responsibility of the employee placing the order.
- A purchase order will not be issued after the invoice has been received.
- We do not prefer back orders.
- There is no substitution on items ordered.
- If a purchase order has a change of any way, for any reason, you are to notify the Purchasing Clerk as soon as possible.
  - If reason acceptable, the Purchasing Clerk can adjust the PO and re-submit to the vendor.
  - This cannot be done, after the invoice has been received.
- All purchases of computer and computer equipment must be approved by the Technology Department and Capital Asset Clerk.
- **Local Office Depot Purchases** require the credit identification card, as well as, a copy of the purchase order. Only bonded employees may pick up items from Office Depot.

### RECEIVING REPORTS

- As soon as ordered items are received, the designated staff member should verify received items against the receiving reports.
- If any discrepancies between what you ordered and what was delivered are discovered, notations should be made on the receiving report.
- Receiving report must be signed and dated by the staff member that received the delivery and also signed and dated by the requisitioning party.
- Once the receiving report has two signatures, it should be submitted to Accounts Payable. You should also include any packing lists.
- A signed receiving report indicates to the Accounts Payable Clerk that ordered items have been received or services have been rendered and it is okay to pay the vendor's invoice. Please do not hold the signed receiving reports.

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### ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

- If invoices are received by the school or department, they must be forwarded to Accounts Payable immediately.
- Legally we only have 45 days from the date we receive the invoice to pay the vendor. **There are no exceptions to this rule!**
- Invoices that are received without a prior approved purchase orders will not be paid. The individual who placed the order without a PO will be held responsible for payment.
- Once the invoice, receiving report and AP copy of the PO is matched, the Accounts Payable clerk will enter the claim into the accounting system to be included on the next docket.
- Claims dockets are processed every Wednesday or as indicated in the Business Office Calendar for claims \$10,000 or less.
- Cut off dates are established to indicate when the Accounts Payable Clerk will stop accepting information to be processed for that week's docket.
- Checks are printed and mailed after the Wednesday docket has been processed.

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## TRAVEL

### *Out of District – Employee, Board of Trustees and Parents*

- A travel packet must be completed and authorized which serves two purposes. One, it completely estimates the travel expenses and encumbers the budget. Second, it serves as the professional development leave authorization.
- A travel packet consists of:
  - Travel Approval/Requisition **\*Must be completed electronically.**
  - Conference Registration Confirmation
  - Conference Proposed Agenda or Notification of the Conference
  - Hotel Reservation (if applicable)
  - If claiming mileage, MapQuest or other printable GPS mileage printout for mileage verification from place of work to conference site or home to conference site, whichever is shorter distance.
  - Public carrier confirmation if applicable. The rental car reservation confirmation should be attached.
- There should be one travel packet submitted per individual traveling.
- Transportation Type
  - Employee can claim mileage at the current approved federal reimbursement rate per mile **only if it is more cost effective than a car rental.** If an employee chooses to use their own vehicle instead of a car rental, they can claim the standard rate of \$34/day.
    - Employees are expected to car pool 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.
  - A rental car reservation can be made through Enterprise Rental Car. Depending on how long the travel is, using a rental car could save the district money.
    - Current daily rental rates are as follows:
      - Standard \$34
      - Full \$43
      - Minivan \$63
      - SUV \$63
      - 15-Pass Van \$106
    - When making the reservation, you must inform Enterprise that you work for Lowndes County School District. You should give Enterprise the billing number that is associated with your travel card that they have on file for the district.
    - Each school has been issued a Fuelman card that is to be used

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ONLY for Enterprise car rentals. The secretary/bookkeeper is responsible for the safe keeping of these cards and pin numbers.

- Public carrier transportation such as train or air is only allowed for out of state travel.
- Meals
  - Employee will be reimbursed for meals at the current domestic per diem rates on overnight travels only.
  - Employee will not receive reimbursement for meals provided by the conference host.
  - Dinner can be included on the return trip if employee does not return to origination address by 5pm.
- Hotel Accommodations
  - Overnight stay accommodations are to be put on the school travel credit card when traveling to destinations greater than 120 miles. The travel card will be used when making the reservations by the school secretary/bookkeeper. The cards themselves will not be allowed to be taken from the school locations. Applicable for the night prior to first day of conference. Employee is expected to return at the end of the conference.
- Registration Fee
  - Include the cost of registration for conference and should be put on the travel credit card. In some instances the vendor may not accept credit card payments. In that case it will be put on the form for a purchase order. (Follow instructions below.)
- If there is no cost associated with the travel or the employee wishes not to be reimbursed for travel costs, said employee must sign on space provided indicating so.
- Once the travel packet is completed, employee must obtain the necessary authorizations.
  - First authorization is from principal or supervisor.
  - If travel is being funded by a budget manager other than employee's supervisor, they too must authorize form.
  - Once those two authorizations have been obtained, the entire travel packet should be emailed to [purchasing@lowndes.k12.ms.us](mailto:purchasing@lowndes.k12.ms.us).
  - Purchasing clerk will obtain authorization from Business Manager, Superintendent and if applicable Board of Trustees.
  - All out of state travel must have Board authorization?
- Once the travel packet is completely authorized, the travel requisition is then processed by the Purchasing Clerk.
- A purchase order will be issued in the name of the employee for transportation costs and meal per diems. These costs will be paid after travel. Travel by public carrier for out of state travel will be paid to employee prior to travel.
- A separate purchase order will be issued to Conference Vendor and another one to the Hotel. (Only applicable if travel credit card could not be used.)
- Copies of the purchase orders, including receiving report, will be submitted back

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to the school, authorizing the travel and reimbursements upon return. It is the responsibility of each employee to make sure their travel is approved before they travel.

- The checks for the Conference Vendor and Hotel will be paid and mailed prior to travel when **timely** travel requests are made and approved. Timely means that the approved travel paperwork is in the Business Office at least three (3) weeks prior to travel date.
  - 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 travel.
- **After traveling**, the employee must submit the following within ten (10) working days after the date of travel or five (5) days after the end of the month in which the travel was made to accounts payable:
  - Reimbursement/Settlement for Out-of-District Travel form signed by employee and supervisor **\*Must be completed electronically.**
  - Each receiving report/pink copy of PO signed by employee
  - Conference Agenda
  - Hotel Bill with \$0 balance
  - Rental Car receipt
  - Any other travel supporting documents, i.e. incidental receipts
  - Fuelman Receipts
  - All items that were charged to the travel credit card must be turned in with the travel card statement as well.
- Reimbursements will be made at the next weekly accounts payable check run for approved travel after all required items have been submitted and verified by Business Manager.
- The travel requisition/approval 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.
  - **If employee needs to claim mileage for an in-district meeting, that claims needs to be included on the in-district reimbursement form.**
- When the employee travel is to chaperone field trips or athletic events and they include meal and hotel expenses, those expenses can be accounted for in the student requisitions that will be put in through School Connect.
- 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.
- If travel has to be cancelled because of extenuating circumstances, employee will need to advise:
  - Supervisor and document that you advised prior to the conference start



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- date.
- Conference host to request registration fees be refunded. This documentation is needed even if they won't refund the fees.
- Hotel to cancel reservation and request that the check be returned to the district.
- All items above including the reimbursement for Out-of-District travel must be submitted to accounts payable as soon as possible. The PO for reimbursement to the employee will be voided at that time.

### *In-District –Employee*

- A requisition should be entered into School Connect estimating the monthly in-district travel expense for employees that commonly claim in district travel.
  - Those employees should make a claim to those estimates within 60 days of the month traveled by completing the in-district travel reimbursement form, signing the receiving report and submitting to Accounts Payable.
- For other staff members, an in-district travel reimbursement form must be completed and a requisition should be entered into School Connect within 60 days of month traveled.
  - When the requisition and purchase order process is complete, employee will need to submit the completed in-district travel reimbursement form and receiving report to Accounts Payable.
- No reimbursements will be made for in-district travel submitted over 60 days.
- The in-district reimbursement form must be signed by employee and principal or supervisor.
- Mileage is reimbursed at the current approved federal reimbursement rate per mile.
- Mileage claimed will be verified by the Lowndes County School District Travel Matrix.
- Reimbursements will be made at the next weekly accounts payable check run.

### *Student Travel*

Requisitions for expenditures related to student travel should be submitted into School Connect.

- Requisitions should be detailed with student and chaperone names.
- The approved field trip request/bus permit, student and chaperone names must be attached to requisition.
- **Hotel rooms for students and chaperones may be put on the schools travel card. The trip must have prior approval before the reservation is made.**
- **Attach the approved Field Trip permit along with the \$0.00 balance hotel receipt to the corresponding travel card statement. \*Student travel is coded to 510 NOT 580**