

# **POLICY 210**

## **OPSBA Trustee Expenses**

### **1.0 Policy Statement**

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) believes that engagement of trustees in OPSBA meetings and events is critical to ensuring member boards are represented. To ensure that trustees are fully able to participate in OPSBA meetings and events, every effort will be made to ensure meetings (in person or virtual) are accessible and consider a wide range of diverse needs and accommodations.

### **2.0 Objective**

To identify trustee expenses eligible for reimbursement.

### **3.0 Application**

This policy is applicable to all trustees who belong to a member board or school authority within OPSBA and are appointed or elected to serve in an official capacity of OPSBA including on the Board of Directors, Executive Council, Core Issue Work Groups, Indigenous Trustees' Council or any other approved committee. Alternate trustees attending OPSBA meetings on behalf of a member are permitted to submit expenses under this policy. Table Officers are the OPSBA President, First and Second Vice-Presidents, and Past President when applicable.

Expenses for any individual accompanying a member, such as, but not limited to a spouse, partner, or child are not eligible for reimbursement.

OPSBA staff have a separate expense claim process.

Trustees are expected to make their own travel and hotel arrangements and encouraged to ensure fiscal and environmental responsibility, minimizing expenses wherever possible.

OPSBA travel and meal reimbursement rates will be reviewed as part of the annual budget development process or as required taking into consideration Provincial and Federal directives as well as reimbursement rates of school boards from across the province. Proposed revision to these amounts will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

Trustees are required to complete an Expense Claim Form for the reimbursement of expenses to attend in-person meetings. All expenses and reimbursement requests shall

be itemized on the Expense Claim Form and submitted to OPSBA's Finance department as soon as possible, but no later than 60 days after incurring the expense. All related itemized receipts must accompany all expense claims. Colour-coded Meeting Expense Claim Forms are provided at each face-to-face meeting and may also be submitted electronically with an electronic signature and PDF scanned copies of original itemized receipts. Original receipts should be maintained by the individual for at least seven years and produced if asked for auditing purposes.

### *Accessibility and Accommodations*

Trustees may submit a request for prior approval to the Executive Director for reimbursement of expenses related to accommodation of needs defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* or the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. This includes, but is not limited to, disability, family status, etc. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the OPSBA Accessibility policy, this policy and any applicable legislation. To facilitate participation, other special circumstances such as financial hardship may be considered by the Executive Director.

## **4.0 Responsibility**

Board of Directors, Executive Council, Executive Director

## **5.0 Expense Reimbursement Framework**

### **5.1 Overnight Accommodation**

- a) OPSBA secures a discounted room rate for Board of Directors (BOD) meetings as part of the negotiated overall meeting package. A minimum room guarantee is required and therefore BOD members are asked to book rooms at the designated hotel by the booking deadline.
- b) Trustees who choose to stay at a hotel other than the one identified by OPSBA or who miss the booking deadline will be reimbursed only to a maximum of the discounted rate negotiated by OPSBA.
- c) Trustees traveling greater than 100 kilometres one-way from their home to the meeting location are eligible to receive hotel accommodation for the night prior to full-day meetings. Reimbursement for accommodations, at the OPSBA negotiated rate, will be provided to all members attending Board of Directors meetings for one night. Upon request, additional nights may be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances.
- d) Special circumstances may warrant staying overnight following a full-day meeting for those driving significant distances and/or where air travel is a factor. Related expenses incurred, in accordance with this policy, are to be discussed with the Executive Director for prior approval.

**5.2 Travel and Mileage**

- a) Trustees are responsible for making their own arrangements and travel by the most reasonable and economical form of transportation. Expenses will be approved on the basis of the actual costs incurred (E.g., train, economy plane or bus, including related transportation costs to/from the air, rail or bus terminal).
- b) Provided that the total does not exceed the total cost of economy airfare/rail fare for the same distance, automobile transportation will be paid at the rates outlined in the Expense Claim Form. In exceptional circumstances, approved in advance by the Executive Director, first class travel by air or train may be permitted provided the cost does not exceed the cost of economy travel and relevant meal allowances. Taxis, ride-shares, and any parking charges are also reimbursed with original receipts.

**5.3 Meals**

- a) Where meals are not provided by OPSBA, actual charges (including tax and gratuities), will be reimbursed to a maximum of the rates included on the Expense Claim Form (with original receipts). Exceptions to daily rates may be made at the discretion of the Executive Director based on the location of the meeting and availability of dining options.
- b) Personally expensing alcohol is not permitted.

**5.4 Other Expenses**

- a) Other anticipated expenses should be discussed with the Executive Director in advance to determine eligibility.

**5.5 Executive Council Meetings**

- a) Members of Executive Council will receive compensation for attending each Executive Council meeting, including virtual meetings and those called by the President, in recognition of the additional time commitment. They may also claim related expenses in accordance with this policy.

**5.6 Other OPSBA Committees**

- a) Members of other OPSBA Committees (E.g., Core Issue Work Groups, Indigenous Trustees' Council, Ad Hoc Committees, etc.) may claim expenses in accordance with this policy, if required.

**5.7 Regional Council Meetings**

- a) Expenses for the Regional Chair to attend Regional Council Meetings are eligible for reimbursement. Trustees from member boards attending Regional Council Meetings are required to pay their own expenses.

- b) OPSBA has a budget that covers morning refreshments, lunch and any facility use costs (E.g., rental, caretaking, etc.).
- c) The Regional Chair and/or Vice Chair should discuss additional costs with the Executive Director, taking into consideration OPSBA's priorities and budget.

### **5.8 Northern Regional Meeting and Program**

- a) Expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with Section 5.7.
- b) Any registration fee and travel and accommodation costs for the Table Officers will be covered by OPSBA.

### **5.9 OPSBA Conferences**

- a) Registration fees for OPSBA conferences will be waived for the Table Officers.

### **5.10 President (or Designate) Expenses**

- a) Expenses for the President's participation in OPSBA business will be reimbursed in accordance with this policy.
- b) The President or other designate may attend external events by invitation and/or because it is strategic and/or useful for OPSBA to have a presence. Associated costs for these events are approved by the Executive Director.

### **5.11 Professional Development**

- a) In most cases, expenses related to professional development delivered by external bodies are not covered unless it can be specifically related to OPSBA business. Prior approval by the Executive Director is required.

## **6.0 Responsibilities**

- 6.1 The Board of Directors approves changes to travel and meal reimbursement rates.
- 6.2 OPSBA Trustees;
  - a) obtain, complete, and submit expenses using the Meeting Expense Claim Form, in accordance with this policy,
  - b) ensure that correct mailing and banking information is on file with the OPSBA Finance department, and
  - c) submit any changes to mailing and/or banking information to the OPSBA Finance department in writing.
- 6.3 OPSBA's Finance department;
  - a) ensures all expenses are aligned with OPSBA policy,
  - b) consults the Executive Director on claims that have been submitted in response to the consideration of special circumstances, and

- c) processes expense claims and reimburses the trustee in a timely manner with eligible receipts. Where possible, funds will be transferred by direct deposit.
- 6.4 The Executive Director:
- a) considers and authorizes any other expenses that are not addressed in the policy,
  - b) ensures that information is communicated to participants related to the process for requesting accommodations,
  - c) considers and approves requests for accommodation or other special circumstances in accordance with this and any other OPSBA policy and relevant legislation, and
  - d) works with staff to ensure accessibility and accommodation options are considered when planning for OPSBA meetings and events.

## 7.0 Resources

[OPSBA Expense Claim Form](#)

[OPSBA Electronic Funds Transfer \(EFT\) Authorization](#)

## 8.0 History and Review

8.1 Approved: October 1, 2022

8.2 Next review: 2026