



District Funds for Purchase of Meals, Refreshments, and Gifts

Portland Public Schools receives funds from a variety of sources. It is the responsibility of the District to steward those scarce resources carefully and in the best interests of students. District employees are expected to exercise prudent and appropriate judgment in the expenditure of District funds for meals and/or refreshments.

Generally, District funds may not be used for meals or gifts for employees. Nonetheless, there may be occasions when it is appropriate for Board members, administrators, and others to expend District funds while conducting District business to provide meals or refreshments as outlined below. The purchase of gifts may also be appropriate in certain situations, as outlined below.

“District funds” as used in this policy, refers to any of the general accounts of the District. This includes the General Fund, Bond Fund, Grants, and others accounts. It also includes money in student body accounts held at each school that are derived from student activities or from parent organizations that is designated to be used only for students and student activities.

Funds not generated by the District (e.g., a “social fund” or “sunshine fund”) voluntarily collected from staff members or others for the specific purpose of providing gifts or parties, such as birthday recognition, bereavement and illness acknowledgement, etc., are exempt from the following requirements. Donations from PTAs, local businesses, individual made directly to schools are also not considered “District funds.”

Required documentation and business justification for food and beverage purchases shall be specified in the [Administrative Directive](#).

I. Meals and Refreshments

Meals and refreshments for regular staff meetings are generally not allowed.

In order to support an efficient, effective, and productive work environment, District funds may be used to pay for group meals during meetings that require extended time (for example, all-day meetings) or take place after normal work hours, as specified in [Administrative Directive](#). Minimum group size for meeting meals shall be specified in the Administrative Directive.

Meal and refreshments expenses must be reasonable based on the facts and circumstances, and not lavish or extravagant.

A. Definition:

- a. Meals are defined to include food and non-alcoholic beverages provided at breakfast, lunch, or dinner.
- b. Refreshments are defined to include non-alcoholic beverages and snack items that are less extensive than full meals.



District Funds for Purchase of Meals, Refreshments, and Gifts

- B. Meals or refreshments for staff and volunteers may be provided by the District as part of Board meetings, at District or building-level committee meetings, professional development trainings, District-authorized advisory committees, community engagement events where they will also be provided to community members, or other District-approved activities, as within reasonable limits and as detailed in [Administrative Directive](#).
- C. Refreshments may be provided by the District for employees at the discretion of the overseeing administrator for mandatory meetings for staff scheduled outside of the normal work day or that by necessity extend over a meal period, within reasonable limits and as detailed in [Administrative Directive](#).
- D. Meals that are not directly business-related may not be provided to staff or others at the District's expense.
- E. The purchase of alcoholic beverages with District funds is strictly prohibited.

II. Gifts

There are occasions when Board members, administrators, or other District staff may want to recognize employees, and they may provide such recognition at their personal expense only, unless otherwise permitted below, and at all times in compliance with Oregon law:

- A. The Department of Human Resources and/or the Board may provide a small token of appreciation for a Board member's or employee's retirement or years of service and other related service activities utilizing District funds. Approval for this must be sought in the method outlined in [Administrative Directive](#). For example, the Board generally proclaims special recognition for classified employees' week and teacher appreciation week, and Board members may receive plaques in their honor, framed certificates, or student art for their service to the District. The District also may provide an item that acknowledges significant and extraordinary work on behalf of an employee (e.g., a framed certificate).
- B. Modest gift items may be purchased and distributed as incentives for students or community members to participate in district-sponsored activities under certain circumstances. Only under limited circumstances should gift cards for students and community members be purchased and distributed. Details on the authorization process and accountability procedures are provided in [Administrative Directive](#).

Gift cards may never be purchased for employees with District funds.

All other expenditures of District funds for gifts is permitted only with prior authorization from the Board or Superintendent.



District Funds for Purchase of Meals,
Refreshments, and Gifts

III. Grant Funds

Grant funds are subject to the same guidelines as outlined in this policy in addition to any other restrictions that are imposed by the granting agency. Expenditures for food and drink may be made with grant funds if the event requiring the refreshments was included in the grant proposal and approved by the granting agency.

[Administrative Directive](#)

History: Government Standards and Practices Commission staff opinion No. 01S-016 and ORS 244.040(1)(a) Adopted 2/28/2005; BA 3224; Amd 4/7/2020