

FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS

Effective January 1, 2006, the following guidelines must be followed when purchasing food, nonalcoholic beverages and other refreshment items with public funds. Public funds include all state and federal funds as well as public local funds. *(Non-public local funds may be used for purchases of food and nonalcoholic beverages. Also, food/beverages used as instructional materials/supplies are allowable uses of public funds, and there are specific state/federal grant programs that permit some limited food/beverage purchases for students.)* These guidelines are based upon guidance provided by the Examiners of Public Accounts as well as certain Attorney General Opinions regarding this matter.

1. Food, refreshments and nonalcoholic beverages may be provided at a public meeting during which official business is conducted and/or a public benefit or purpose is served. These meetings may include various types of board meetings, open houses at schools and other meetings at which the public, the community or parents/students are invited.
2. The Board may provide food and nonalcoholic refreshments at receptions attended by members of the city or county government, legislators and members of the community if the Board determines that such expenditures serve a public purpose.
3. Public funds may be expended for food, refreshments and nonalcoholic beverages at meetings or banquets for the recognition of significant contributions to education and special deeds that strengthen public education in Alabama and to promote educational excellence by students, faculty, staff and the public.
4. Athletic receipts can be expended for pre-game meals for the athletic participants and coaches (Principal and parents not included).
5. Public funds may be expended for food, refreshments and nonalcoholic beverages at training or meetings that meet the following criteria:
 - a. The training lasts all day;
 - b. The audience for the training is available for only a limited period of time, and it is necessary to extend into the lunch period;
 - c. The consultants involved are available for a limited amount of time.

Please be aware of the following restrictions regarding the above procedures:

1. The Board may not expend public funds to provide food or refreshments for Board employees at a break during a meeting or training session that does not extend through lunch or a mealtime.
2. The costs of the food and refreshments may not exceed the amount allowable to an individual employee for in-state travel. For example, the current daily amount is \$11.25 for a day.
3. Miscellaneous food and refreshment items that are not allowable with public funds include staff holiday parties, food and coffee items and paper goods for employee and teacher lounges, after-school staff meetings, pizza parties for classrooms, candy rewards for students, staff meetings at the beginning or end of school term.

Central Office Requisitions: If food and refreshment items are reflected on a requisition, please identify pertinent information in the comment section of the requisition that will reflect compliance with above criteria. Identify the facts regarding any meeting including if the meeting is public or for training purposes; the beginning and ending times of the meeting; the main agenda items; and summary of who attendees will be. If food is for students, please provide sufficient explanation to reflect compliance with above criteria. When the invoice and other documents are submitted for payment and the purchase was for a meeting, include a copy of the agenda and list of attendees along with paperwork for payment.

For purchase orders prepared at the local school level, the above justification and description information must be included on the purchase orders prior to approval by the principal. When paying the invoice, the agenda of the meeting (if applicable) must be attached along with the payment documents.