



Q & A

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Q: As an incentive for teachers to take students on international travel, a travel tour operator says it will give teachers credits for free flights or merchandise of their choosing. Is it OK for teachers to accept these incentives?

A: It has been common practice for teacher chaperones to accompany their students on international travel at no cost if a certain number of students signed up for the trip. Because the teacher is supervising students during this excursion

and acting as an employee of the district, this is acceptable because the teacher should not incur costs for accompanying students on a school-sanctioned excursion. However, more recently, tour operators have been offering teacher chaperones credits to use for flights of their own choosing or for merchandise; if the teacher books early, the number of incentives increases. Accepting such incentives could be deemed a contravention of the Code of Professional Conduct, article 7 of which states: “The teacher may not take advantage of a professional position to profit from the sale of goods or services to or for pupils in the teacher’s charge.” If a teacher takes flight credits or merchandise and keeps them for personal or family use, a professional conduct committee could find that teacher guilty of unprofessional conduct. It would be acceptable for teachers to take these incentives and to turn them over to the school to offset costs of travel for extra supervisors or to allow a student or chaperone, who would not otherwise be able to take such a trip, the chance to attend. Alternatively, merchandise could be raffled off to students and staff and the proceeds used to lower the costs for all students attending subsequent trips. Simply keeping these incentives for oneself would not be acceptable.