



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

JON S. CORZINE
Governor

LUCILLE E. DAVY
Commissioner

December 15, 2009

Marie S. Bilik
Executive Director
New Jersey School Boards Association
P.O. Box 909
Trenton, NJ 08505-0909

Dear Ms Bilik:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of the application you submitted on behalf of the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) and its co-sponsors, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA) and the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO), for a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate a three-day workshop. This Annual Workshop is to be held from October 26, 2010 through October 28, 2010.

On April 17, 2008, the Department issued proposed guidelines on waivers for overnight travel. See Proposed Guidance on Overnight Travel (Proposed Guidance) http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/travel_overnight.pdf. Subsequently, after careful consideration, the Department revised the guidelines to reflect its determination that waivers of the overnight travel prohibition should be granted in only extremely limited circumstances, consistent with the clear Legislative intent to reduce non-instructional expenses of public school districts, particularly those related to travel. The revised guidelines were incorporated into regulations adopted on December 18, 2008 at N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.11 and are posted on the Department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap23a.pdf>.

Pursuant to the regulations, waivers will not be granted for reimbursement for lodging prior to the first day of the event or after check-out time on the last day of the event. Moreover, waivers will be considered only where the sponsoring organization can demonstrate that the conference is broad and multi-disciplinary in scope, incorporates content offerings from numerous specialty areas, and includes important professional development opportunities and/or required training. In addition, the sponsoring organization must demonstrate that the conference's content, structure, and anticipated attendance necessitate that it be held on multiple consecutive days with overnight lodging.

In connection with your waiver application, you submitted the program booklet from your 2009 Workshop along with a memorandum providing detailed information on this

years' workshop including a description of the training offerings, the target audience, program benefits, costs, etc. After carefully reviewing the submissions, the Department finds that the 2010 Workshop meets the criteria of the revised guidelines. First, I note the wide variety of topics in areas such as state legislative updates, regionalization and shared services, school safety, curriculum and professional development are covered. Additionally, the NJSBA is providing mandatory new board member orientation training along with training sessions for incumbent and re-elected/appointed board members at the Workshop, which should reduce the number of additional training sessions needed during the year. For these reasons, this waiver request is being granted for the 2010 Annual Workshop.

As a result of this waiver, school districts will be able to reimburse attendees for overnight lodging, provided that the remaining conditions delineated in this letter are met. Reimbursement for registration fees, mileage and meals, subject to the limitations and conditions set forth on *OMB circular 06-14*, may also be permissible. School districts should ensure that they approve attendance only of board members and employees whose duties are related to the purposes of the conference or who are required to attend to meet continuing education requirements.

Moreover, please be advised that the waiver of the prohibition for reimbursement for overnight lodging covers only those attendees whose home to event commute exceeds 50 miles. In other words, only those individuals whose one-way commute to the NJSBA Annual Workshop exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district for overnight lodging.

Finally, I want to emphasize that I recognize the value and importance of the NJSBA Annual Workshop, and appreciate the efforts of the NJSBA, NJASA and NJASBO to reduce the costs associated with school district travel. As you are aware, in these difficult fiscal times it is incumbent upon everyone in the education community to search for more efficient ways to deliver educational services. In the future, I encourage you and your organization to continue to consider alternative means of providing this professional development to minimize the need for overnight stays, such as holding one day, regional events.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Lucille E. Davy
Commissioner

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c: Executive County Superintendents
Senior Staff