



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HESPE
Commissioner

August 29, 2016

Ms. Lisa Bakanas
President Elect
New Jersey Association of School Librarians
215 Falls Court
Medford, NJ 08055

Dear Ms. Bakanas:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of your letter submitted on behalf of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL), requesting a waiver of the prohibition on in-State overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of the NJASL 2016 Annual Fall Conference planned for November 17 through November 19, 2016, in Long Branch, New Jersey.

As you are aware, *N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12* requires that boards of education must ensure that all travel expenditures are "in compliance with state travel payment guidelines as established by the Department of the Treasury..." State Department of the Treasury *OMB Circular 16-11 Section X.B* specifically prohibits reimbursement of in-State overnight travel. However, the circular authorizes the Commissioner of Education "to grant waivers for overnight travel for school board members and school district employees to attend in-State conferences pursuant to guidelines issued by the Department of Education," *OMB Circular 16-11 Section I.B.7*.

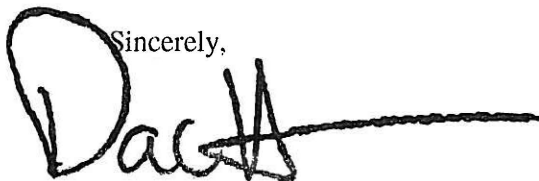
The Department's regulations at *N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.11(c)* authorize the Commissioner to grant overnight in-State travel waivers only in extremely limited circumstances, where the sponsoring organization can demonstrate that the conference is broad and multidisciplinary in scope, comprised of content-rich educational programming with important professional development opportunities and/or required training. In addition, the sponsoring organization must demonstrate that the conference's content, structure, scheduling and anticipated attendance necessitate that it be held on multiple consecutive days with overnight lodging. The travel regulations 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 of lodging prior to the first day of the event or after check-out time of the last day of the event. Moreover, waivers will be considered only where the sponsoring organization can demonstrate that the conference is broad in scope and comprised of content-rich educational programming with important professional development opportunities and/or required training. In addition, the sponsoring organization must demonstrate that the conference's content, structure, scheduling and anticipated attendance necessitate that it be held on multiple consecutive days with overnight lodging.

After carefully reviewing your submission, the Department finds that the NJASL 2016 Annual Fall Conference planned for November 17, 18, and 19, 2016, in Long Branch, New Jersey, meets the criteria of the regulations. Specifically, I note that based upon the content of your submission, the conference promises to provide three full days of workshops that will provide attendees with a variety of services and educational opportunities for School Library Media Specialists serving school districts, charter schools and renaissance school projects. Finally, I note that the program schedule for each of the three days offers multiple concurrent workshops from early morning through late afternoon, necessitating an overnight stay for those three-day attendees. For these reasons the waiver request is granted. As a result of this waiver, school districts, charter schools and renaissance school projects will be able to reimburse attendees for overnight lodging on November 17 and 18, 2016, 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 in *OMB Circular 16-11* and *OMB Circular 11-09*, may also be permissible. School districts, charter schools and renaissance school projects should ensure that they approve attendance only of board members, trustees, and employees whose duties are related to the purposes of the conference or who are required to attend to meet continuing education requirements as a condition of continued employment.

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 NJASL 2016 Annual Fall Conference planned for November 17, 18, and 19, 2016, exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district, charter school or renaissance school project for overnight lodging for November 17 and 18, 2016, pursuant to their registration. As mentioned earlier, waivers will not be granted for reimbursement of lodging prior to the first day of the event or after check-out time of the last day of the event.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation of NJASL efforts to provide professional development opportunities to those who strive to provide quality public education in New Jersey. My best wishes for a successful conference.

Sincerely,


David C. Hespe
Commissioner

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c: Senior Staff

Executive County Superintendents