



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

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

KIMBERLEY HARRINGTON
Acting Commissioner

May 31, 2017

Ms. Suzanne Buchanan, Executive Director
Autism New Jersey
500 Horizon Drive
Suite 530
Robbinsville, NJ 08691

Dear Ms. Buchanan:

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is in receipt of your letter submitted on behalf of the Autism New Jersey requesting a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of the Autism New Jersey's 35th Annual Conference planned for October 19 and 20, 2017, in Atlantic City, New Jersey

As you are aware, *N.J.S.A.* 18A:11-12 requires that boards of education must ensure that all school district travel expenditures are "in compliance with state travel payment guidelines as established by the Department of the Treasury..." *N.J.A.C.* 6A:23A-7.11(b) and State Department of the Treasury *OMB Circular 16-11* Section X.B specifically prohibit reimbursement of in-state overnight travel. However, the circular and *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 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.

Ms. Suzanne Buchanan

Page 2

May 31, 2017

After carefully reviewing your submission, the department finds that the Autism New Jersey's 35th Annual Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey, meets the criteria of the regulations. Specifically, I note that based upon the content of your submission, the conference promises to be broad in scope, of current relevance to New Jersey's professionals who work with students affected by autism spectrum disorders and will attract attendees representing a wide geographical area. For these reasons, a waiver request for the 2017 conference is granted. As a result of the waiver, school districts, charter schools and renaissance school projects will be able to reimburse attendees for overnight lodging on October 19, 2017, 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 Autism New Jersey's 35th Annual Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey, exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district, charter school or renaissance school project for overnight lodging for October 19, 2017.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation of Autism New Jersey's effort 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberley Harrington". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kimberley Harrington
Acting Commissioner

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c: Senior Staff

Executive County Superintendents