



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
PO Box 500  
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HESPE  
Commissioner

June 8, 2016

Dr. Douglas B. Cleary  
Affiliate Director for PLTW at Rowan University  
Civil and Environmental Engineering  
201 Mullica Hill Road  
Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701

Dear Dr. Cleary:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of your letter submitted on behalf of Rowan University as the State Affiliate for the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program, for a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of six individual PLTW Core Training sessions. Four concurrent training sessions for the high school level pre-engineering curriculum are planned for June 20 through July 1, 2016, and will be hosted by Rowan University. Two individual middle school teacher training sessions are planned for June 20 through June 24, 2016, and June 27 through July 1, 2016, also hosted by Rowan University.

As you are aware, *N.J.S.A.* 18A:11-12 requires that boards of education must ensure that all school district charter school, and renaissance school project 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 1.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 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 each of the PLTW Training Conferences planned for June 20 through July 1, 2016, meets the criteria for a waiver of the prohibition on in-State overnight travel. You have presented that school districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects that have elected to adopt the Project Lead the Way pre-engineering curriculum must provide career and technical education training on the curriculum to teachers who will be directly involved in the provision of classroom instruction. Specifically, I note that the program schedule for the ten day high school training conference offers the mandatory 80 hours of specialized training plus evening homework assignments necessitating an overnight stay for those attendees whose home to event commute exceeds 50 miles. I note similar rigor for the two middle school training conferences encompassing the mandatory 40 hours of specialized training. For these reasons, the waiver requests are granted. As a result of the waivers, school districts charter schools, and renaissance school projects that have adopted the PLTW curriculum, will be able to reimburse those attendees for overnight lodging in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, as follows, provided that the remaining conditions delineated in this letter are met:

| <u>Name of Course</u>                     | <u>Dates offered</u>                 |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <u>Introduction to Engineering Design</u> | <u>June 20 through July 1, 2016</u>  |
| <u>Principles of Engineering</u>          | <u>June 20 through July 1, 2016</u>  |
| <u>Engineering Design and Development</u> | <u>June 20 through July 1, 2016</u>  |
| <u>Computer Science Principals</u>        | <u>June 20 through July 1, 2016</u>  |
| <u>Design &amp; Modeling</u>              | <u>June 20 through June 24, 2016</u> |
| <u>Automation and Robotics</u>            | <u>June 27 through July 1, 2016</u>  |

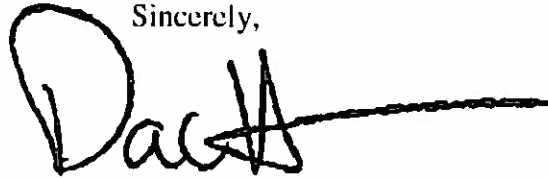
Reimbursement for registration fees, mileage and meals, subject to the limitations and conditions set forth in *OMB Circular 16-11* and *OMB Circular 11-09*, may also be permissible. Each of the ten day high school curriculum training conferences includes a weekend break which is covered by the waiver(s) only if the cost to the school district, charter school, or renaissance school project for the individual attendee to remain at the conference site

is less than the cost for the individual attendee to travel home for the weekend break. School districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects should ensure that they approve attendance only of those 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 Project Lead the Way Core Training exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district charter school, or renaissance school project for overnight lodging for the aforementioned nights only.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation of Rowan University's involvement in Project Lead the Way's effort to provide relevant training 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, appearing to read "D. Hesper", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David C. Hesper  
Commissioner

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c: Senior Staff

Executive County Superintendents