



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Governor

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Lt. Governor

KIMBERLEY HARRINGTON
Acting Commissioner

June 15, 2017

Ms. Mariel O'Brien
Manager of Education Programs
Science Education Institute
P.O. Box 3300
Somerville, NJ 08876

Dear Ms. O'Brien:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of your letter submitted on behalf of the Science Education Institute - Raritan Valley Community College, an approved New Jersey state professional development provider for the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) program, for a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of two individual NGSS Summer Institute sessions. One training session for the grades K-5 curriculum is planned for July 24-28, 2017, and will be hosted by Raritan Valley Community College. The other session for grades 6-12 is planned for August 7-11, 2017, also hosted by Raritan Valley Community College.

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.

After carefully reviewing your submission, the Department finds that each of the NGSS Summer Institute sessions planned for July 24-28, 2017 and August 7-11, 2017, meet the criteria of the regulations. Specifically, I note that the program schedule for each of the five, full-day training conferences offers the mandatory specialized training necessitating an overnight stay for those attendees whose home to event commute exceeds 50 miles. For these reasons, the waiver requests for the 2017 conferences are granted. As a result of the waivers, school districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects that have adopted the NGSS 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:

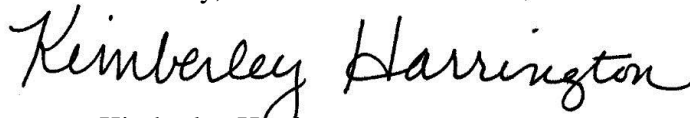
<u>Name of Course</u>	<u>Overnight Waiver</u>
<u>Summer Institute- Grades K-5</u>	<u>July 24 through July 27, 2017 (four nights)</u>
<u>Summer Institute- Grades 6-12</u>	<u>August 7 through August 10, 2017 (four nights)</u>

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. 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 Next Generation Science Standards Summer Institute 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 Science Education Institute's involvement in NGSS'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,



Kimberley Harrington
Acting Commissioner

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c: Senior Staff
Executive County Superintendents