



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

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Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Acting Commissioner

April 16, 2012

Ms. Nancy Evans Bennett, Executive Co-Chair
Ms. Lola Szobota, Executive Co-Chair
New Jersey Science Convention
5 Cypress Circle
Morristown, New Jersey 07960

Dear Ms. Bennett and Ms. Szobota:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of the travel waiver application you submitted on behalf of the New Jersey Science Education Leadership Association (NJSELA) and the New Jersey Science Teachers Association (NJSTA,) joint sponsors of the New Jersey Science Convention, requesting a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of the Thirty-Sixth Annual New Jersey Science Convention planned for October 9 and 10, 2012 in Princeton, 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..." State Department of the Treasury *OMB Circular 11-05* 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 11-05 Section I.B.8*.

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.

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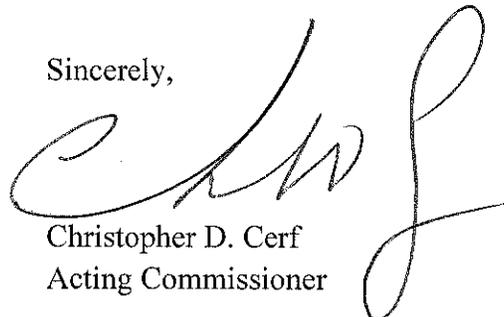
Moreover, waivers will be considered only where the sponsoring organization can demonstrate that the conference is broad and comprised of content-rich educational programming with important professional development opportunities and/or required training. In addition, the sponsoring organization must 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 Thirty-Sixth Annual New Jersey Science Convention planned for October 9 and 10, 2012 in Princeton, New Jersey meets the criteria of the regulations. Specifically, I note that based upon the content of your submission, the conference will offer a comprehensive two day professional development opportunity of significance to New Jersey's public school mathematics, science, and technology educators. Furthermore, the structure and scheduling of the conference necessitates a multiday event. For these reasons, the waiver request is granted. As a result of the waiver, school districts and charter schools will be able to reimburse those attendees for overnight lodging related to attendance at this conference. Such reimbursement is only for overnight lodging on October 9, 2012 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 11-05* and *OMB Circular 11-09*, may also be permissible. School districts and charter schools 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 this waiver permitting reimbursement of in-State 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 Thirty-Sixth Annual New Jersey Science Convention planned for October 9 and 10, 2012 in Princeton, New Jersey exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district for overnight lodging for October 9, 2012.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation of this effort to provide professional development opportunities to those who strive to provide quality mathematics, science, and technology education in New Jersey. My best wishes for a successful conference.

Sincerely,



Christopher D. Cerf
Acting Commissioner