



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO BOX 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

June 6, 2013

CHRIS CHRISTIE

Governor

KIM GUADAGNO

Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF

Commissioner

Ms. Nancy Evans-Bennett  
New Jersey Science Teachers Association, Inc.  
5 Cypress Circle  
Morristown, NJ 07960

Dear Ms. Evans-Bennett:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of your letter submitted on behalf of New Jersey Science Teachers Association, Inc., (NJSTA) in partnership with the Center for Innovation and Engineering and Science Education (CIESE) for a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of the eighth annual Maitland P. Simmons Summer Institute planned for July 8 to 12, 2013 at Rowan University, Glassboro, 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 12-14* 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 12-14 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. Moreover, waivers will be considered only where the sponsoring organization can demonstrate that the

Ms. Nancy Evans Bennett

June 6, 2013

Page 2

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 the eighth annual NJSTA Maitland P. Simmons Summer Institute planned for July 8 to 12, 2013 meets the criteria of the regulations. Specifically, I note that based upon the content of your submission, the course will be offered only to those middle school teachers selected through the application process who are committed to teach the Sustainable Energy-Exploring Wind and Solar Power Systems curriculum. The course registration fee for attendees will be paid by NJSTA and 40 NJ professional development credits will be earned by each participant. I also note that the workshop agenda for each of the five day course offers mandatory programming from eight A.M. through four P.M., necessitating an overnight stay for those attendees who will travel more than fifty miles each way. For these reasons, the waiver request is granted. As a result of this waiver, school districts and charter schools may reimburse attendees for overnight lodging in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12 for the nights of July 8-11, 2013 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 12-14* and *OMB Circular 11-09* may also be permissible. School districts and charter schools 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 Maitland P. Simmons Summer Institute planned for July 8 to 12, 2013 exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district or charter school for overnight lodging for the aforementioned nights only.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation of the combined efforts of the New Jersey Science Teachers Association, Inc., and the Center for Innovation in Engineering and Science Education 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,



Christopher D. Cerf  
Commissioner