



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Acting Commissioner

July 20, 2012

Dr. Richard G. Bozza, Executive Director
New Jersey Association of School Administrators
920 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08618-5394

Dear Dr. Bozza:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of the travel waiver application you submitted on behalf of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA) requesting a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of the 2013 NJASA Techspo Conference scheduled for January 31 – February 1, 2013, and the 2014 NJASA Techspo Conference scheduled for January 30 – 31, 2014. Both the 2013 and 2014 conferences will be held 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...” 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. 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.

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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.

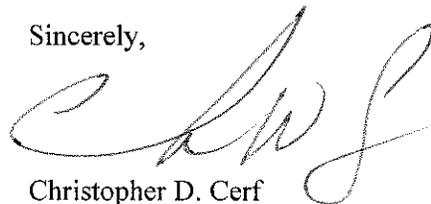
After carefully reviewing your submission, the Department finds that both the 2013 Techspo Conference and the 2014 Techspo Conference meet the criteria of the regulations for waiver approval. Specifically, I note that the 2012 Program Book and the preliminary 2013 Program Brochure demonstrate NJASA's commitment to the delivery of comprehensive professional development opportunities of significance to New Jersey's teachers, administrators, and information technology specialists. Furthermore, the planned structure, anticipated attendance, and scheduling of each conference necessitates two multiday events. For these reasons, the waiver request for each of the two annual conferences is granted.

As a result of the waivers, school districts and charter schools will be able to offer reimbursement of lodging expenses to attendees. Regarding the 2013 Techspo Conference, reimbursement is only for overnight lodging on January 31, 2013. Regarding the 2014 Techspo Conference, reimbursement is only for overnight lodging on January 30, 2014. 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 2013 Techspo Conference exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district for overnight lodging on January 31, 2013. Only those individuals whose one-way commute to the 2014 Techspo Conference exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district for overnight lodging on January 30, 2014.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation of this effort to provide professional development opportunities to those who strive to provide quality public education in New Jersey. My best wishes for a successful 2013 and 2014 conference.

Sincerely,



Christopher D. Cerf
Acting Commissioner

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c: Executive County Superintendents

Senior Staff

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