



State of New Jersey  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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Governor

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Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF  
Commissioner

September 24, 2012

Ms. Pamela J. Gunter  
Conference Chair  
New Jersey Association of School Librarians  
17 Ryers Lane  
Matawan, NJ 07747

Dear Ms. Gunter:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of your letter submitted on behalf of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) requesting a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of the Annual Fall Conference planned for November 29 through December 1, 2012 in Long Branch, 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. 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 NJASL Fall Conference planned for November 29 through December 1, 2012 in Long Branch, New Jersey meets the criteria of the regulations for waiver approval. Specifically, I note that the 2012 program brochure demonstrates NJASL's commitment to the delivery of comprehensive professional development opportunities of significance to New Jersey's librarians, teachers and administrators. Furthermore, the large number of workshops planned for each day of the two day conference, and anticipated attendance of education professionals statewide, necessitates a multiday event. For these reasons, the waiver request for the 2012 NJASL Fall Conference is granted.

As a result of this waiver, school districts and charter schools will be able to offer reimbursement of lodging expenses to attendees on Friday, November 30, 2012 only. 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.

Please be advised that this waiver to permit reimbursement for 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 NJASL Fall Conference exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district for overnight lodging on Friday, November 30, 2012 only. Please note that in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.11(e), this approved waiver does not include an overnight stay for the pre-conference event night of Thursday, November 29, 2012.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation of the NJASL's efforts to provide professional development 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