



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

October 21, 2011

Ms. April Bunn
Conference Chair
New Jersey Association of School Librarians
293 Spring St., #13B
Red Bank, NJ 07701

Dear Ms. Bunn:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of the application you 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 December 1, 2, and 3, 2011 in Long Branch, New Jersey.

As you may be 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 has issued guidelines to reflect its determination that waivers of the overnight travel prohibition should be granted in only extremely limited circumstances, consistent with the clear legislative intent to reduce non-instructional expenses of public school districts, particularly those related to travel. The guidelines were incorporated into regulations adopted on December 18, 2008 at *N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.11* and 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

April Bunn
October 21, 2011
Page 2

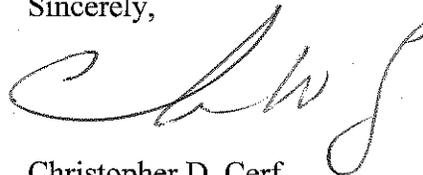
organization must demonstrate that the conference's content, structure, scheduling and anticipated attendance necessitate that it be held on multiple consecutive days with overnight lodging.

After carefully reviewing your submission, the department finds that the NJASL Fall Conference planned for December 1, 2, and 3 in Long Branch, New Jersey meets the criteria of the regulations. Specifically, I note that based upon the content of your submission, the conference offers two full days of educational programming and specialized professional development opportunities for educators. I also note that the diverse programming strands include topics such as the role of emerging technologies in learning, understanding disabilities, mentoring, budget cutbacks and the school library, and student assessment. For these reasons, and considering that the 2010 Fall Conference was attended by approximately 700 educators from across New Jersey, the waiver request for the 2011 NJASL Fall Conference is granted. As a result of this waiver, school districts will be able to reimburse attendees for overnight lodging on December 2, 2011 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 should ensure that they approve attendance only of board members 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 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 NJASL Fall Conference exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district for overnight lodging for December 2, 2011. Please note that in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.11(e), this waiver does not include the pre-conference event night of Thursday, December 1, 2011.

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 options in New Jersey. My best wishes for a successful conference.

Sincerely,



Christopher D. Cerf
Acting Commissioner

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c: Executive County Superintendents
Senior Staff