



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

KEVIN DEHMER
Acting Commissioner

September 24, 2024

Ms. Angela Best, Executive Co-Chair
New Jersey Science Convention
31 Kingwood Avenue
Frenchtown, NJ 08825

Dear Ms. Best:

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is in receipt of your letter 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 New Jersey Science Convention planned for October 15 and 16, 2024, 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..." *N.J.A.C.* 6A:23A-7.11(b) and State Department of the Treasury OMB Circular 20-04 Section X.B specifically prohibit reimbursement of in-state overnight travel. However, the circular and *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. 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. The travel regulations are posted on the [NJDOE's website](#).

After carefully reviewing your submission, the NJDOE finds that the 2024 New Jersey Science Convention planned for October 15 and 16, 2024, meets the criteria of the regulations and is hereby approved. Because of this waiver, school districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects will be able to reimburse eligible attendees for overnight lodging on **October 15, 2024** only, provided that the remaining conditions delineated in this letter are met.

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Reimbursement for registration fees, mileage and meals, subject to the limitations and conditions set forth in OMB Circular 20-04 and OMB Circular 16-11, may also be permissible. School districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects 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 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 2024 New Jersey Science Convention in Princeton, NJ, exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district, charter school or renaissance school project for overnight lodging for **October 15, 2024**.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation for the effort of the New Jersey Science Education Leadership Association (NJSELA) and the New Jersey Science Teachers Association (NJSTA) 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Dehmer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin Dehmer
Acting Commissioner

KD/DC/mp
c: Senior Staff
Executive County Superintendent