

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Belmar](#)

School board OKs another parental contract for displaced families

Helps displaced families with financial cost for travels to, from school

By *Haley Behre*

BELMAR – The school board here unanimously approved another parental transportation contract at the April 25 meeting to help residents temporarily displaced from Hurricane Sandy receive financial relief for their extended travel to and from school.

This approval makes it the third family to be approved for the assistance.

School districts are permitted to enter into a contract with parents who transport their children to school themselves, if the school district is unable to provide transportation and the family lives more than two miles from the school. However, those parents must carry a minimum of \$1 million in automobile liability insurance.

The Belmar School District received a waiver to nullify the \$1 million insurance caveat, and allow the board of education to reimburse displaced parents who apply for aid.

The state's student transportation regulation provides local boards of education with the means to enter into a parental contract for transportation reimbursement, according to Richard Vespucci, a New Jersey Department of Education spokesperson.



The provision under the regulation that applies to displaced residents is the homeless provision, as the displaced residents temporarily reside in another school district, Mr. Vespucci said. Based on that provision, school districts can enter into a parental contract with families, he said.

According to Mr. Vespucci, the \$1 million in insurance required for a parental contract is the “typical” amount a commercial transportation contractor would get. Under the regulation, if a parent is unable to get that insurance, they cannot be reimbursed.

For homeowners, though, the “typical” insurance covers less money.

According to Mary Loigu, the customer service representative for personal lines at Conover Beyer Associates, based in Wall, the majority of people carry \$100,000 per person, with \$300,000 maximum per accident coverage. In order to get that coverage, the average price of insurance is \$1,100 per year for full vehicle coverage for an adult with no violations, she said.

The maximum amount of coverage for automobile liability insurance is \$500,000, Ms. Loigu said, noting that about 20 percent of people have this coverage.

Those that have the maximum coverage can also get an additional \$1 million in coverage under a personal liability umbrella, Ms. Loigu said. The personal liability umbrella costs an additional amount of money to receive.

Since Belmar Elementary School has received the OK for the waiver, the board of education passed a resolution approving \$3,757 for a Belmar family still displaced by Hurricane Sandy. The family has three children at Belmar Elementary.

Two other parental contracts had been approved in the past— one for \$2,835 and the other for \$2,923.

All the parental contracts extend from the day the family was displaced to the end of June, as long as they remain in place.

Superintendent/Principal David Hallman said, “I think it’s important we recognize the hardship that they’ve gone through and we’re following the law in terms of what we can provide to these families.”

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