



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Simcha Felder

140 Yeshivas Attend Felder's Transportation Workshop

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July 1, 2013

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Over 140 school administrators and transportation coordinators from across the five boroughs packed into Ateres Chaya Hall in Borough Park on Wednesday, June 26, to attend a workshop hosted by Senator Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn) about the new changes to the school bus transportation law. Each attendee received a packet from Senator Felder containing valuable information designed to help administrators navigate the new changes.

This past March, the New York State Legislature passed Senator Felder's historic legislation that provides an increased level of safety and protection for grade school children in the City of New York. Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, any public, private or parochial school that holds academic classes from 9:30 A.M. or earlier to 4:00 P.M. or later, is now eligible to receive enhanced transportation services, with pick up and drop off within one block of a child's home. An allocation of \$12 million has been earmarked for this program.

"When I first took office, I promised to address school transportation concerns for our families, and today, I am proud to say, with Hashem's help, we were successful," Senator Felder said in his address at the event. "People said it could never and would never be done; that private school parents would always be forced to pay out-of-pocket to bring their children home safely from school. Today, my legislation has managed to both protect our children and put money back into the pockets of hard-working parents," he added.

Rabbi Aharon Welz, who generously provided the facility for the workshop, opened the program with a warm introduction of Senator Felder, calling him the “architect of this legislation.” The crowd then heard remarks from Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein, who co-sponsored the legislation in the Assembly; Assemblyman Dov Hikind; Councilman David Greenfield; and Mrs. Deborah Zachai, Director of Education Affairs for Agudath Israel of America.

“There were many obstacles to getting this legislation passed, and so many people who contributed to making this a reality,” Senator Felder said. Senator Felder commended the staff at the Department of Education for their cooperation and commitment to seeing this new program succeed. He also had high praise for Senate Majority Coalition Leader Dean Skelos and Senator John Flanagan, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, without whom the bill would never have passed.

Senator Felder concluded his address by thanking Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Shia Ostreicher. “A father is never jealous of his son, that’s what it says,” Senator Felder remarked. With a voice filled with emotion, Senator Felder went on to say that no one has done more to help New York City’s children than Rabbi Shia Ostreicher. He then praised Rabbi Ostreicher for his devotion to seeing this bill through to passage. Senator Felder also acknowledged Deputy Mayor for Government Affairs Howard Wolfson and thanked him for his logistical assistance.

Mr. Eric Goldstein, Chief Executive of the Office of School Support Services for the New York City Department of Education conducted the presentation, while Ms. Tracy Green of the Office of Pupil Transportation explained the reimbursement process.

A lengthy question-and-answer period followed the workshop. Administrators with additional questions or concerns were advised to contact Rabbi Moshe Ausfresser at the Office of Pupil Transportation at 718-482-3863; 718-758-7618; or via e-mail at mausfresser@schools.nyc.gov.

Senator Felder continues to receive calls and e-mails from yeshiva administrators expressing their gratitude to him for hosting this workshop. “Thanks for the transportation workshop and for your effort in all this,” wrote Mrs. Chana Wolner, administrator of Nesivos Bais Yaakov. “It was very informative and should be of great help to the schools.”

“Thank You Reb Simcha for arranging the workshop and thank you for pushing through this bill,” read another e-mail from Rabbi Ephraim Scherman of Bais Brocho

D'Stolin Karlin. "It was very worthwhile."

"I have a deeply-held belief that every effort must be made to ensure the safety and welfare of all of New York's children," Senator Felder said. "I am confident that this landmark legislation achieves this goal."