December 2020

TO: Religious and Independent School Leaders

FROM: Christina Coughlin, Assistant Commissioner

RE: Notification to the Commissioner of Education When Closing a School Building due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Pursuant to Education Law §215, religious and independent school leaders shall notify the Commissioner of Education immediately when closing a school building for reasons due to the Covid-19 pandemic and shall provide such information as the Commissioner may require.[1]

Per the guidance released by NYS Department of Health (DOH) on July 13, 2020, closure includes contingency plans, protocols, and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in-person education, and/or closing the school and each school Reopening Plan, at a minimum, were required to incorporate the following:

- **Closure triggers:** Identification of the conditions that may warrant reducing in-person education or closing the school, in consultation with state and local health departments, and plan for an orderly closure;

- **Operational Activity:** Determination of which operations will be decreased, or ceased and which operations will be conducted remotely; include process to conduct orderly closures which may include phasing, milestones, and involvement of key personnel; and

- **Communication:** Plan to communicate internally and externally throughout the closure process.

Notification to the Commissioner of Education of a school closure will be provided via the SED Monitoring and Vendor Support System application in the NYSED Business Portal. Each religious and independent school program serving school aged students must ensure that its Chief Executive Officer is able to access the Portal and locate the Report on School Closure form.

---

[1] Note that this requirement does not apply to school closure for routine snow or weather conditions, or for permanent closures.

Procedure for Providing Notification Regarding the Closure of a School Building operated by a Religious or Independent School for reasons due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Report of School Closure form must be submitted by the Chief Executive Officer[2] of each religious or independent school serving school aged students using the following steps:

1. Go to the [NYSED Business Portal](#);
2. Click on the "Log In" button;
3. Enter your existing SEDDAS username and password;
4. Under the heading "My Applications," click the link to "SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System;"
5. Click the link for "School Closure;"
6. In the inbox, CEO's will see the "Report of School Closure" form.

Procedure for Providing Notification Regarding the Re-Opening of a School Building operated by a Religious or Independent School after being closed for reasons related to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Report of School Closure form must be submitted by the Chief Executive Officer of each religious or independent school serving school aged students using the following steps:

1. Go to the [NYSED Business Portal](#);
2. Click on the "Log In" button;
3. Enter your existing SEDDAS username and password;
4. Under the heading "My Applications," click the link to "SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System;"
5. Click the link for "School Closure;"
6. In the inbox, CEO's will see the "Report of School Re-Opening" form.

Submission via the Portal is **strongly encouraged**. However, if schools that do not utilize the internet need to submit a hard copy, those schools may either fax the assurances and corresponding reopening plan to the State Office of Religious and Independent Schools (SORIS) at 518-474-9200 or mail to:

New York State Education Department
State Office of Religious and Independent Schools
89 Washington Ave., Room 1074 EBA
Albany, NY 12234
ATTN: Reopening Plan

Contact Information and Technical Assistance

To resolve any questions related to user accounts, password resets, the SEDDAS application, and assistance with the Business Portal itself, please contacts the Help Desk at SEDDAS@nysed.gov.

If you have questions about the information to be reported related to school closure, or if you are unsure as to whether or not you have access to NYSED's Vendor Performance and Monitoring System, please contact the State Office of Religious and Independent Schools at: SORIS@nysed.gov .