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To: Charter School Leaders and Chief Emergency Officers

From: Gemma C. Rinefierd, Ed.D. 

Subject: Updating and Submitting 2025-26 School Year Safety Plans

This memo provides essential information about updating and submitting building-level emergency response plans and district-wide school safety plans for the 2025-26 school year. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) encourages charter school leaders to share this information with members of district and school safety teams, and the chief emergency officer.

[Education Law §2801-a](#) and [Commissioner's Regulation §155.17](#) require that each public school (inclusive of charter schools) develop and annually update a confidential building-level Emergency Response Plan (ERP) that includes details about how school personnel and students would respond to different types of emergency situations. In addition, each public school district, BOCES and charter school must also develop and annually update a district-wide school safety plan that provides critical information to parents, educators and the school community about the policies and procedures in place related to school safety. Building-level ERPs and district-wide school safety plans are required to be submitted as outlined below by October 1 of each year.

It is essential that plans include all components that are required by the law and regulation. **Plans that are missing required information are subject to return for correction.**

Charter schools should use the table below to determine the specific requirements for their school regarding the building-level ERP. **All charter schools**, regardless of location are required to develop a district-wide school safety plan.

Charter school location	Building-level ERP
Charter schools outside NYC	Required that the school develop and document emergency response procedures and submit the plan via SED Monitoring application accessed through the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Business Portal. In addition, you must submit a copy of the plan to local police.
NYC charter schools that are co-located in a NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) school building	There must be one plan for the building that is inclusive of the charter school and the DOE space. The plan is developed in collaboration with NYCDOE school and safety and security staff.  NYCDOE will submit the plan to NYSED and the NYC police.

NYC charter schools that are not co-located in a NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) school building	The charter school is required to develop and document emergency response procedures and submit the plan via SED Monitoring. In addition, the school must submit a copy of the plan to the NYC police.
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### Recent Changes to Commissioner's Regulation

The Board of Regents recently adopted two sets of amendments to Commissioner's Regulations §155.17 that must be included in 2025-26 school year safety plans. The first set of amendments effective [July 31, 2024](#) includes requirements that:

- All drills be trauma-informed; that parents and those in parental relation receive advance notice of upcoming drills;
- Students and staff always be informed a drill is a drill (except for evacuation drills); and
- Floor plans and area maps included as part of each school's building level ERP are labeled to indicate essential information.

The second set of amendments becomes effective [July 1, 2025](#) and requires that all New York schools and districts statewide use the same emergency response terms listed below in emergency plans and procedures. In addition, it is required that annual training to staff and students include the terms and response protocols listed below:<sup>1</sup>

- **Evacuate or evacuation:** Move students for their protection from a school building to a predetermined location in response to an emergency.
- **Shelter or shelter-in-place:** Keep students in school buildings and shelter them when it is deemed safer for students to remain inside rather than to return home or be evacuated.
- **Lockdown:** Immediately clear the hallways, lock, and/or barricade doors, hide from view, and remain silent while readying a plan of evacuation as a last resort. Lockdown will only end upon physical release from the room or secured area by law enforcement. Lockdown is initiated during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school.
- **Hold or hold-in-place:** The restriction of movement of students and staff within the building while dealing with short-term emergencies.
- **Secure lockout:** Students and staff remain inside school buildings that are locked and secured during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside the school.

### Afterschool Safety Procedures and Parent Communication During Emergencies

Every charter school must ensure that 2025-26 building and district plans are inclusive of all settings and times, including before, during and after school activities and times, as well as indoor and outdoor activities.<sup>2</sup>

Functional annexes that are developed as part of the building-level ERP, Security and emergency procedures, and procedures for greeting and managing out-of-district student and adult visitors who

<sup>1</sup> Additional information about the regulation changes is available in the [FAQ: Amendments to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17](#) and in the April 2025 memo regarding amendments to CR §155.17 that become [effective July 1, 2025](#).

<sup>2</sup> See the Commissioner's September 2024 memo to schools, districts, and BOCES regarding [Review of School Safety Plans and Procedures for Afterschool Activities and Events](#).

attend athletic events, afterschool programs, and other activities should be inclusive of all settings and times.

Charter school leaders should provide training to addresses safety needs of leaders of afterschool programs, such as coaches and program directors. This includes providing training to all staff in emergency procedures, making visitors aware of school safety protocols, not only informing them of exits but also of broader safety procedures. Consider posting memos or signage that clearly communicates safety information to visitors and parents during these activities

Communication with parents and stakeholders during emergencies is of paramount importance. Charter schools should proactively ensure that parents are informed about safety protocols and how they will be informed in the event of an emergency. It is vital that parents do not learn about emergencies from news outlets or social media, as this can lead to disinformation. We encourage schools to develop processes for timely communication with families, particularly in scenarios where students may not have immediate access to their phones.

### **Reminders for Building-Level Emergency Response Plans**

Each school's confidential building-level ERP must include information about the school, key staff, floor plans, maps, and detailed response procedures for different types of emergency situations. The ERP must be in place by September 1 each year and must be submitted to both the state police and local law enforcement within 30 days of adoption, but **no later** than October 1.

Schools fulfill the requirement to submit building-level ERPs to the state police by submitting their plan electronically via the SED Monitoring application accessed through the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\) Business Portal](#). The Portal for submissions of the 2025-26 Building-Level Emergency Response Plans **will open on June 16, 2025**.

Local law enforcement must be a part of the required Building-Level Emergency Response Team, and school officials must contact local law enforcement directly to comply with the requirement to submit the building-level ERP for each school's required Building-Level Emergency Response Planning Team. Schools must submit the name of the local law enforcement agency, contact information, and the date the plan was submitted. **Be sure the dates entered are for the 2025-26 school year.**

#### Important reminders regarding developing and submitting the plan:

Floor plans, blueprints, schematics, or other maps of the school interior at a minimum must include the following labels:

- school name and address;
- a key to define any symbols used;
- a compass indicating North;
- labels indicating building entrances/exits with alphabetic or numeric identifiers assigned (e.g., "Door A" or "Entrance 2");
- windows, interior doors, room numbers, common areas and administrative offices labeled by use; and

- location of water, gas, and electrical shutoffs; location of fire alarm panels, fire sprinkler control valves, and if applicable, fire department key boxes; and location of emergency and security equipment.<sup>3</sup>

Area maps showing school grounds and road maps of the immediate surrounding area must be clearly labeled with the following (at a minimum):

- the school's name and address;
- a key to define any symbols used;
- a compass indicating North;
- labeled buildings, outbuildings, fields, parking lots, building entrances/exits with alphabetic or numeric identifiers assigned (e.g., "Door A" or "Entrance 2"); parking areas and property entrances/exits; and
- designated fire lanes and fire apparatus access roads and evacuation routes; street names; and emergency response areas.

The plan must include all minimum required elements, as outlined in the [Building-Level Emergency Plans Self-Assessment Checklist](#).

In circumstances when a single physical building contains multiple "schools" or "programs," the safety team(s) should be inclusive of all grades, schools, and programs located in the building and the team should develop one emergency plan per physical building.

School administrators must include information about each local law enforcement agency the plan was submitted to and the date the ERP was submitted.

Every school ERP must include functional annexes for how the school will implement their plan of action in response to an emergency. Required functional annexes must be complete, specific to your school procedures, and should not include the use of codes, colors, or cards.

When identifying personnel to fulfill Incident Command System (ICS) roles, it is recommended that the team identify staff to fulfill key roles who are on-site daily, and that the team does not designate the same staff person to fulfill multiple roles. Please designate an alternate for each role.

You must designate a person to fill each required safety team and ICS role.

Do not input "NA" in any required field in the portal. Plans submitted with "NA" are subject to return to you for correction.

### **Reminders for District-Wide School Safety Plans**

By September 1 each year, every public school district, BOCES and charter school must and update and adopt a comprehensive district-wide school safety plan. The plan must be reviewed by the board of education or governing body at a public meeting and must be made available for a 30-day public comment period before it is adopted, for most districts the plan must be updated, approved by the board of education, and available for public comment in July.<sup>4</sup>

To comply with the requirement that the plan be filed with the Commissioner, each school district, charter school and BOCES (local education agency or LEA) is directed to post their district-wide school

<sup>3</sup> See [Floor Plan and Area Map Tip Sheet](#) for more information.

<sup>4</sup> Charter schools will receive separate notification regarding how to submit their plans.

safety plan on their LEA website and submit the web address/URL to NYSED **no later than October 1 each year** via the Safe Schools collection in the SED Monitoring application accessed through the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\) Business Portal](#). Instructions for submitting plans in the SED Monitoring application are included in Attachment A. The Portal for submissions of 2025-26 District-Wide School Safety Plans will **open on August 25, 2025**.

Important reminders regarding developing and submitting the plan:

The plan must include all minimum required elements as outlined in the [District-Wide School Safety Plan Self-Assessment Checklist](#), including a copy of the board-adopted written contract or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that defines the roles and areas of responsibility of school personnel, security personnel and law enforcement in response to student misconduct that violates the code of conduct for school districts and charter schools that employ, contract with, or otherwise retain law enforcement or public or private security personnel, including school resource officers. For additional information, see the [September 2019 memo](#) regarding this requirement.

- Safety teams must include all required members as described in the in the [District-Wide School Safety Plan Self-Assessment Checklist](#).
- It is required that the district-wide school safety plan be adopted by the school board by September 1 each school year. Prior to adoption, the district-wide school safety plan must be shared at a public meeting and posted for public comment for a minimum of 30 days. Consult your school board calendar and your district's attorney regarding meeting these requirements.
- The district-wide school safety plan must be posted on the LEA website in a location that is readily accessible to parents/guardians and the public (such as on a page describing school safety procedures).
- After the 2025-26 school year plan has been adopted and posted on your LEA website, you must report the following to NYSED via the Safe Schools collection in SED Monitoring application:
  - Contact information for the chief emergency officer;
  - The URL for the district-wide school safety plan for the 2025-26 school year; Note: The plan must be posted as a PDF document as a publicly accessible resource (not a google doc);
  - The URL for the Emergency Remote Instruction Plan if not part of the district-wide school safety plan;
  - Date of public board of education meeting, start and end dates of the public comment period, and date of board adoption; and
  - Certification that all district and school staff have undergone annual training **by September 15, 2025**. Such training must now include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the building-level emergency response team, the building-level Incident Command System including the roles and responsibilities of designated staff, and the building level-emergency response plan procedures for implementing the following required emergency response terms: shelter/shelter-in place, hold/hold-in place, evacuate/evacuation, secure lockout, and lockdown. The required training shall also include the procedures for conducting drills, including whether during drills classrooms will be released from lockdown by law enforcement or school or district administrators, and the district and building policies, procedures, and programs related

to safety including those which include components on violence prevention and mental health. New employees hired after the start of the school year shall receive such training within 30 days of hire or as part of the district's existing new hire training program, whichever is sooner. Do not submit the report until all staff have received required training. Note that districts should maintain training records for all staff. A resource to assist districts in developing and delivering this training is available on the New York State Center for School Safety website at <https://www.nyscfss.org/annual-safety-login>.

\*Schools are encouraged to conduct training required in the Workplace Violence Prevention Law at the same time they conduct this training. For more information on the Workplace violence requirements see [Workplace Violence Prevention Information | Department of Labor \(ny.gov\)](#).

## Resources

NYSED has developed the following resources to support the development and implementation of safety plans. Terminology and emergency response actions that must be incorporated in plans:

- [New York Edition of the I Love U Guys Foundation's SRP and SRM materials](#)
- [Emergency Response Chart](#)
- Parent and Guardian resource about emergency response actions is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- [Sample](#) annual notification to parents and those in parental relation about safety procedures and drills
- [Sample](#) notification to parents and those in parental relation about upcoming drill
- [Floor Plan and Area Map Tip Sheet](#)
- [District-Wide Safety Plan Self-Assessment Checklist](#)
- [Building-Level Safety Plan Self-Assessment Checklist](#)
- [Quick Guide to Emergency Response Planning Requirements](#)
- [Plan Development Resource Packet for Districts and Schools](#)
- [Guide for Developing and Reviewing Functional Annexes](#)
- [School Safety Communications Planning Guide](#) from the National Center for School Safety
- [Lockdown Drill](#) video series

We encourage all school leaders to consult the [School Safety Plans webpage](#) and the [New York Center for School Safety webpage](#) for additional resources.

Thank you for all you do to keep students and staff safe every day. If you have questions about these requirements, please contact the Office of Student Support Services at [SafetyPlans@nysed.gov](mailto:SafetyPlans@nysed.gov).

## Attachment A

### Instructions for Submitting Building-Level Emergency Response Plans & District-Wide School Safety Plans in the SED Monitoring Application

Building-level emergency response plans (ERPs): must be submitted by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)\*\* of each school.

District-wide school safety plans must be submitted by the CEO of each LEA (school district, BOCES, or charter school).

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of each public school district, public school, charter school and BOCES and BOCES building as recorded in [SEDREF](#) has been entitled to enter information into SED Monitoring and the School Building ERPs Safe Schools electronic application in SEDDAS. If the CEO information in SEDREF is incorrect for your institution, please update it by following the instructions found at: <http://www.oms.nysed.gov/sedref/home.html>.

#### How to Access the Safety Plan Submission(s) in the SED Monitoring Application

1. Go to <https://portal.nysed.gov/>
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. For **School Building-Level ERPs** –principals (and designated staff) will see **School ERP**” in the inbox that appears in SED Monitoring. BOCES principals will see “**BOCES ERP**” in the inbox. Click “**View**” to enter and review data.
  - a. All floor plans and area maps must be uploaded as a PDF document
  - b. It is recommended that you save your changes frequently
  - c. It is not required that you enter all data at once; you can save your changes and finish at a later time
  - d. The CEO of the school or district/BOCES must submit when information is complete
6. For the **District-Wide School Safety Plan** – in the inbox that appears in SED Monitoring, public school superintendents, district superintendents, and charter school leaders will see “**LEA District Safety Plan URL and Information.**” Click “**View**” to enter and review data.