



Rose M. LeRoy, Director of Educational Data and Research  
Information and Reporting Services  
Room 865 EBA  
Albany, NY 12234

**To:** District Superintendents, Superintendents, Public School Leaders and Charter School Leaders

**From:** Rose M. LeRoy, Director *Rose M. LeRoy*

**Date:** Thursday, June 4, 2020

**Subject:** COVID-19 SIRS Reporting Guidance: Day Calendar and Attendance

This memorandum is to alert Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) (or “reporting entity”) that the New York State Education Department (NYSED or “the Department”) is introducing two (2) new SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes to be used to report school closures that have resulted from the COVID-19 Pandemic. SIRS Day Calendar Type and SIRS Student and Teacher Attendance Codes are components of data reporting through the New York State Student Information Repository System (SIRS). This system provides a single source of standardized individual student records to meet State and federal reporting requirements.

The statutory and regulatory authority for collecting Day Calendar-Type Codes and student attendance include 34 CFR 76.720(c)(1) and (2); Education Law, Section 3205; and Commissioner Regulations (CR) 104.1, 100.19 and 100.21. The statutory and regulatory authority for collecting teacher attendance include 34 CFR 76.720(c)(1) and (2).

The SIRS Day Calendar is used by a reporting entity to report calendar information for a grade, school, or district. The enrollment records of each student and day calendar provides a mechanism for LEAs to report attendance. The SIRS Day Calendar allows LEAs to be in compliance with having a “register of attendance,” defined in CR104.1 as “any written or electronic record maintained for the purpose of recording the attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure for a pupil.” As long as the register contains the information set forth in CR 104.1(d), the LEA is free to develop its own format to be used within the context of its comprehensive attendance policy. For example, each school is required to take attendance at least once a day for state aid purposes, and LEAs determine what time of day/period to take daily attendance.<sup>1</sup> The SIRS Day Calendar also provides better quality attendance and enrollment data reporting as Student Attendance is reported for “instructional days.” The SIRS Day Calendar is not used to determine, collect, or report Commissioner Regulation (CR) 104.1. The Department does not collect or publicly report student level attendance data by class as it is not a federal reporting requirement and is for the purpose of the LEA to communicate to the parent or guardian.

LEAs may use the SIRS Day Calendar to determine the number of instructional days for each grade, building and district, but the SIRS Day Calendar is not used by the Department to determine whether public schools are meeting the “180-day Session/Instructional Hour Requirement,” for

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<sup>1</sup> CR 104.1(1) (2) (3)

State Aid purposes.<sup>2</sup> The data used to determine compliance with the “180-day Session/Instructional Hour Requirement” for State Aid calculations are made using data collected in the State Aid Management System (SAMS), not through the Day Calendar information collected in SIRS.

The Department is also reminding BOCES and LEAs of existing guidance on how to report Student and Teacher Attendance in SIRS that is relevant to the current school closure due to COVID-19.

The Office of Information and Reporting Services is implementing changes regarding SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes and providing clarification of previously issued guidance on the use of existing SIRS Student and Teacher Attendance Codes to report the status of reporting entities by COVID-19 in SIRS.

Two (2) new SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes will be used to document individual grade level, school, BOCES or LEA closures before and/or during the statewide school closures resulting from the Governor’s Executive Order(s). Either of the two new SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes may be applied to an individual grade level(s) within school(s), individual schools, or all schools and grades within a district, allowing LEAs to identify Instructional Days or Non-Instructional Days, as applicable within SIRS.

### **Use of New SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes**

The two (2) new SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes are to be used when an LEA, BOCES, or school closure occurs due to COVID-19.

#### **SIRS Day Calendar**

LEAs, BOCES, and schools must report a SIRS Day Calendar. The SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes allow reporting entities to report instructional and non-instructional days that impact their instructional calendar. SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes along with SIRS Student and Teacher Attendance Codes impact reporting of such things as: Chronic Absenteeism, Attendance Rates, Entry/Exit enrollment records, and BOCES programming for each day of the school calendar year (July 1 – June 30). SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes are reported for each date during the school year and are connected to the district of responsibility, the building of enrollment, and the grade level of students. The two (2) new SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes will ensure that days when schools were closed due to COVID-19 are not included in the chronic absenteeism or student and teacher attendance rates that are reported for the 2019-20 school year. In addition, 2019-20 school year chronic absenteeism rates will not be used to make any district or school accountability determinations. This does not impact the attendance rates that are calculated in SAMS for State Aid purposes.

A SIRS Day Calendar Type Code designates whether the date is an instructional day or a non-instructional day. SIRS *Instructional days* are only those days when students **are expected** to be in attendance or during school closures due to COVID-19 when students are expected to engage in instruction pursuant to a district’s continuity of learning plan. SIRS *Non-instructional days* are days when students **are not expected** to be in attendance or during school closures due to COVID-19 when students are not expected to engage in any instruction.

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<sup>2</sup> EDN§1704(2); EDN§3604; CR 175.5, 200.7(b)(5) and 200.20(a)(6)

**A SIRS Instructional Day Type** should be reported when an LEA, BOCES or school building closed due to COVID-19 **and** continuity of learning (i.e., instruction as delineated in an entity’s Continuity of Learning Plan) **were** provided to students.

**A SIRS Non-Instructional Day Type** should be reported when an LEA, BOCES or school building closed due to COVID-19 **and** continuity of learning **were not** provided to students.

**SIRS Day Calendar and SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes**

Each SIRS Day Type and available SIRS Day Type Code is indicated in the table below. The two (2) new SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes and descriptions will be updated accordingly in the [SIRS Manual](#).

<b>SIRS Day Type</b>	<b>SIRS Day Type Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Instructional Day	Instructional day	Instructional	
	Make-up day	Make-up day	
	Late Arrv/Early Dism	Late Arrival/Early Dismissal	
	Rgnts Attendance	Regents- attendance taken	All students are expected to be in attendance whether participating in the exam or not.
	<b>Pub health/inst</b>	<b>Public Health Event with continuity of learning provided</b>	<b>All students are expected to be engaged in the continuity of learning provided.</b>
Non-Instructional Day	Teacher only day	Teacher only day	
	Holiday	Holiday	
	Weather	Weather	
	Emergency day	Emergency day	
	Strike	Strike	
	Rgnts No Attendance	Regents- attendance not taken	Only students who are taking the exam are expected to be in attendance
	Super Conf Full Day	Superintendent Conference full day	
	Other	Other	
	<b>Pub health/no inst</b>	<b>Public Health Event with no continuity of learning provided</b>	<b>No instruction was provided</b>

## **SIRS Student Daily Attendance Codes**

In normal circumstances, a SIRS Daily Attendance Code is utilized for reporting **SIRS student daily attendance on an instructional day in the SIRS Day Calendar** and indicates the type of student absence. Daily Attendance must be reported by any reporting entity required to take attendance. In the case of out-of-district-placed students, attendance must be reported by the entity where the student is attending. While LEAs, BOCES or schools may collect attendance information at different frequencies for elementary, intermediate, or high school students, only daily attendance is required to be reported via SIRS to the Department.

In normal circumstances, a student who was absent **at any time** should be reported with the appropriate existing SIRS Student Daily Attendance Codes.

<b>SIRS Student Attendance Codes and Descriptions</b>	
<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
E	Excused
ISS	In-School Suspension
OSS	Out-of-School Suspension
T	Tardy
U	Unexcused

During COVID-19, when an LEA, BOCES or school uses either an Instructional SIRS Day Calendar Type Code (“Pub health/inst”) or a Non-Instructional SIRS Day Calendar Type Code (“Pub health/no inst”), no SIRS Student Daily Attendance Code is to be reported for any student for that day.

Possible Aggregate and Aggregate Attendance in SAMS is collected separately. Further guidance will be forthcoming from the Office of State Aid.

### **LEAs must report SIRS Daily Teacher Attendance**

Likewise, in normal circumstances, a teacher is absent if he or she is not in attendance on any day in the regular school year when the teacher would be expected to be teaching students in an assigned class.

Teacher absence includes both days taken for sick leave and days taken for personal leave. Personal leave includes voluntary absences for reasons other than sick leave. Teacher absenteeism does not include administratively approved leave for professional development, field trips, or other off-campus activities with students. Teachers on leave for the entire school year do not need to be reported. If a teacher is on leave of absence for a portion of the school year, this must be reported in the other SIRS staff and course templates with the assignment they are responsible for teaching.

Days on which an LEA, BOCES or school are closed (e.g., snow days) do not count as an absence for teachers. Therefore, on days when an LEA or school is closed due to COVID-19 (i.e., SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes “Pub health/inst” or “Pub health/no inst”) no teachers are to be reported as absent where there is continuity of learning provided.

The Department reports teacher attendance rates on the annual Student and Educator Report on

data.nysed.gov as an element of State reporting. Many stakeholders are interested in teacher attendance data. Therefore, Teacher Attendance Rates is publicly reported as requested by the Board of Regents.

**How to Report SIRS Day Calendar and SIRS Student Daily Attendance**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Scenario 1:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>All Schools or Select school building(s) or locations are closed due to COVID-19</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Scenario 2:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Individual student(s) absent due to COVID-19</u></b></p>
<p><b>SIRS Day Calendar</b></p>	<p><b>SIRS Day Calendar</b></p>
<p>The SIRS Day calendar should be reported with one of the following codes as applicable:</p> <p><i>Instructional Day:</i> Report with code “<b>Pub health/inst</b>”</p> <p><i>Non-Instructional Day:</i> Report with code “<b>Pub health/no inst</b>”</p>	<p>If school/district is in regular session and no officially declared Executive Order is in effect for a Public Health Event, no changes to the SIRS Day calendar are necessary.</p> <p>The SIRS Day calendar should be reported as an Instructional Day with the appropriate code.</p>
<p><b>SIRS Student Daily Attendance</b></p>	<p><b>SIRS Student Daily Attendance</b></p>
<p>During a Public Health Event, students are considered present on an Instructional Day.</p>	<p>Individual student absences should be reported with the appropriate applicable SIRS Student Daily Attendance Code.</p>

Additional examples and other types of individual situations are also available in our FAQ.

We sincerely appreciate the work every person is involved in every day and want you to know we are here to provide support. Should you have questions about the use of SIRS Day Calendar Type Codes and SIRS Student or Teacher Attendance Codes, please reach out to your [Regional Level 1/Big 5](#) center. Questions about SIRS or SIRS data reporting may be directed to the Office of Information and Reporting Services at [Data Support](#) or 518-474-7965. For further guidance regarding §175.5 and special conditions, please contact [180days@nysed.gov](mailto:180days@nysed.gov). Questions about [State Aid Management System](#) (SAMS), or SAMS data reporting may be directed to the [Office of State Aid](#) or 518-474-2977 or by emailing [OMSSAMS@nysed.gov](mailto:OMSSAMS@nysed.gov).