



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: AUTOMATED DHHS SUPERINTENDENT LETTER**

### ***What is a DHHS Superintendent Letter?***

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Children and Family Services (DHHS-CFS) originally developed the *DHHS Superintendent Letter* to notify public school districts when any of their students become State wards and their current status in the child welfare system. In August, 2016, additional versions of the *Superintendent Letter* were developed to notify school districts when their students are admitted or released from the DHHS-operated Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTCs) in Geneva or Kearney.

Historically, a *DHHS Superintendent Letter* was mailed or faxed to the Superintendent and Principal at the school district and school building where a State ward was enrolled. In April, 2016, superintendents began receiving the letters electronically via the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Portal. This automated process is designed to ensure the timely, secure and accurate delivery of the *DHHS Superintendent Letter*.

### ***Who sends a DHHS Superintendent Letter to whom?***

The DHHS-CFS Case Manager sends a *DHHS Superintendent Letter* to the Superintendent of the public school district where a State ward is currently enrolled. In Douglas and Sarpy Counties, the *DHHS Superintendent Letter* is sent by the Family Permanency Specialist at Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC). The Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers also send a *DHHS Superintendent Letter* to the Superintendent at the student's school district of residence.

### ***When is a DHHS Superintendent Letter sent?***

A *DHHS Superintendent Letter* is sent within one (1) business day of the following occurring:

- The child is placed in the legal custody of DHHS-CFS;
- The child changes school districts due to out-of-home placement;
- The child moves to a different out-of-home placement within the same school district;
- The child enters or exits the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center at Geneva or Kearney;
- The parent's education decision-making rights for the child are relinquished or terminated, and a surrogate parent is appointed to make those decisions for the student;
- The parent(s) relinquishes parental rights or those rights are terminated by the Court;
- There is a change in the DHHS or NFC Case Manager assigned to the child's case; or
- The child is no longer a State ward in the legal custody of DHHS-CFS.

Additionally, at the beginning of each school year, *DHHS Superintendent Letters* are sent to superintendents statewide to provide an update on the current status of any of their students involved in the child welfare system. For those school districts receiving multiple *New School Year Letters*, the Superintendent will be sent only one e-notification at the end of each day rather than an e-notification for each letter. However, when any of the other events listed above subsequently occur, the Superintendent will also be sent the appropriate version of the *DHHS Superintendent Letter* that reflects that status change.

**DATE:** December 1, 2016

**SOURCE:** Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska Department of Education, and Nebraska Crime Commission

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**What should a Superintendent do after receiving an e-notification that a DHHS Superintendent Letter is available in the Nebraska Department of Education's (NDE) Portal?**

When the Superintendent receives an e-notification that a *DHHS Superintendent Letter* is available in the NDE Portal, he/she (or designee) should access the portal to view, download and print the *Letter* as soon as possible. After 90 days, the *DHHS Superintendent Letter* will be deleted from the portal.

**What happens if a Superintendent doesn't access the DHHS Superintendent Letter in the NDE Portal?**

After 90 days, the *DHHS Superintendent Letter* is deleted from the NDE Portal.

**What should a Superintendent do if the State ward named in the DHHS Superintendent Letter is not currently enrolled in that school district or building?**

The Superintendent (or designee) should reply via the *E-Response Form* in the NDE Portal, advising the DHHS or NFC Case Manager that the school district and/or building indicated in the *DHHS Superintendent Letter* is not where the student is currently enrolled. If the Superintendent knows where the State ward currently attends school, that information should be included in the *Comments* section of the *E-Response Form*.

**What should a Superintendent do if his/her email address changes?**

The Superintendent should update his/her *Identification Profile* in the NDE Portal with the new email address as soon as possible.

**What should a public school district do when the Superintendent changes?**

The new Superintendent should register in the NDE Portal as soon as possible. Once the new Superintendent has registered, he/she will create an *Identification Profile* which includes a current email address. Additionally, the school district will need to assign an *Activation Code* to the new Superintendent, allowing access to *DHHS Superintendent Letters*.

**Who should a Superintendent contact with questions about using the NDE Portal to access a DHHS Superintendent Letter or updating his/her Identification Profile information?**

The Superintendent should **contact the Nebraska Department of Education's Help Desk**, using one of the following options:

- Submit a "Helpdesk Request" from your portal account (located in the upper right corner of the *Collection Announcement* page in the portal)
- Email [nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov)
- Call the Voicemail Line at (888) 285-0556

**Who should a Superintendent contact with questions about a DHHS Superintendent Letter or the student's status in the child welfare system?**

The Superintendent should **contact the DHHS or NFC Case Manager specified in the DHHS Superintendent Letter**. If unable to reach the DHHS or NFC Case Manager, please contact:

- **In Douglas and Sarpy Counties:** Sarah Hayek (NFC) at (402) 492-4285
- **Outside of Douglas and Sarpy Counties:** Tricia Kingsley (DHHS-CFS) at (402) 440-6120

**To report suspected child abuse or neglect**, immediately contact the *Child Abuse / Neglect Hotline* at 1-800-652-1999.

**Who should a Superintendent contact with questions about a DHHS Superintendent Letter from a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center or the student's school status at the YRTC?**

The Superintendent should **contact the accredited Special Purpose School at the appropriate Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center**:

- **YRTC-Geneva for Girls:** Geneva North School – Brenda Towns at (402) 759-3164, Ext. 222
- **YRTC-Kearney for Boys:** West Kearney High School – Teresa Barnes at (308) 338-2011