Agudath Israel of America Letter in Opposition to the Proposed New Substantial Equivalency Regulations

June 1, 2022

Among the 250,000 opposing comments to the NYS equivalency of instruction Regulations, was a letter submitted by Agudath Israel of America’s executive vice president, Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, on behalf of the organization. The letter forcefully articulates the dangers inherent in empowering Local School Authorities to “oversee” yeshivas, particularly as it relates to sensitive religious freedom issues.

The letter also details the flawed approach of broadly omitting significant portions of yeshivas’ curriculum in any review; SED’s incorrect read of the law, as described in case law (359 F. Supp. 3d 215, 224 (E.D.N.Y. 2019)); how to significantly improve the registration and accreditation pathways; and the deep concern of the Regulations explicitly allowing any “persons considering themselves aggrieved” to appeal a substantial equivalency determination, even if they have no connection to, or knowledge of, the school.