



Office of General Services

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FREE TOURS OF THE NEW YORK STATE CAPITOL & EDUCATION BUILDING TO BE OFFERED EVERY SATURDAY

Expanded Schedule to Start October 7; Online Registration Now Available

State Office of General Services Commissioner RoAnn Destito and State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia today announced that visitors to Albany will have the opportunity to take free tours of both the State Education Building and the Capitol on every Saturday, beginning on October 7, due to the overwhelming popularity of Saturday tours that were being offered once a month.

Tours of the Education Building will be offered at 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., and tours of the Capitol will be given at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Each of the tours can accommodate 25 people and reservations are required. Reservations can be made at: www.ogs.ny.gov. Visitors can choose to register for either the State Education Building tour and/or the New York State Capitol tour.

“The popularity of our combined Capitol and Education Building tours became apparent very quickly when we began offering them earlier this summer,” State Office of General Services Commissioner RoAnn Destito said. “We are very pleased to continue our collaboration with the State Education Department to now offer these tours every Saturday so that that weekend visitors will have even more opportunities to see and learn about these amazing historic buildings.”

“The Education Building is full of impressive art and rich history and we’re honored to now share the building with the public during weekly Saturday tours,” said Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa. “I encourage people of all ages – adults, children, families – to register for a tour and learn about this grand, historic building.”

“There’s been such great interest in the State Education Building tours that we’re honored to offer the Saturday tours weekly now,” said State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia. “The building is an architectural gem that the public deserves to see and appreciate. We’re pleased to work with the State Office of General Services to offer visitors more opportunities to spend an afternoon exploring both the historic State Capitol and State Education Building.”

The award-winning hour-long State Capitol tours conducted by the State Office of General Services on Saturdays begin at the Empire State Plaza Visitor Center, located underground on the North Concourse level of the Plaza between SEFCU and the tunnel to the Capitol. Highlights of the tour can include the legislative chambers, Hall of Governors, Governor's Reception Room, Hall of New York, historic staircases and carvings.

Sitting atop Albany's State Street hill, the New York State Capitol has served as the seat of government for New York since the 1880s. The building is a marvel of late 19th century architectural grandeur, built by hand of solid masonry over a period of 32 years.

New York State Museum staff lead the 45-minute Education Building tour, and visitors will have the opportunity to explore the historic Chancellors Hall, Regents Room and the Rotunda adorned with murals by Albany native Will H. Low. The tours start outdoors on the front steps of the State Education Building, which is located at 89 Washington Avenue, Albany. This year marked the first time the building has been made available for regular public tours since the State Museum and Library were moved from the Education Building to the Cultural Education Center in the 1970s. When the monthly State Education Building tours were announced to the public in July, all available reservations were booked within 24 hours.

The New York State Education Building was designed by renowned New York City architect, Henry Hornbostel, one of 63 architects to submit plans, and was constructed by the Rochester firm R. T. Ford and Company. Construction began in 1908 and the building was dedicated in 1912. At the time, the cost to construct the building amounted to approximately \$4 million and covered everything from the purchase of the land to building construction. The Education Building was the first major building constructed in the United States solely as a headquarters for the administration of education. In addition to State Education Department staff, the Education Building housed the State Library and State Museum—now currently in the Cultural Education Center.

More information on the history of the State Education Building is available here: <http://www.nysed.gov/nysed-building>.

Photos of the State Education Building are available here: <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/about/press/kits/new-york-state-education-building-photos>.

Visit the Office of General Services website for more information about weekday tours, special exhibits and the history of the Capitol, Empire State Plaza, and the Empire State Plaza Art Collection: www.ogs.ny.gov.

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