There is a typo in the SED1278F Tech Manual.

If you look at the 8th page of the SED1278F tech manual (the bottom of the page says 9-6), it shows RS low for an address read. RS=0 is consistent with the HD44780 data sheet. This is correct.

There is a typo on the 11th page (the bottom of the page says 9-9), which indicates that RS should be high for a Read Busy Flag/Address Counter instruction. This is incorrect.

RS should be high only for a Write Data or Read Data command.

RS=1 refers to the data register inside the LCD controller. RS=0 refers to the instruction register inside the LCD controller.