

Update: New Board Members Awaiting Background Check Results May Be Sworn in—NJDOE

On Dec. 18, 2014, the New Jersey Department of Education's Criminal History Review Unit verified that new board members-elect may be sworn into office pending the results of the criminal record checks. Local school board organization meetings in districts with November elections take place during the first week of January.

As a result of the December clarification, the procedure instituted by NJDOE in January 2014 remains in effect:

"Any board member who can truthfully swear or affirm that he possesses the qualifications of membership prescribed by law, including a specific declaration that he is not disqualified as a voter pursuant to R.S. 19:4-1 and a specific declaration that he is not disqualified due to a conviction of a crime or offense listed in N.J.S.A. 18A:12-1, may take the oath of office notwithstanding that results of the criminal history background investigation required by N.J.S.A. 18A:12-1.2 are not yet available. Members who have not submitted fingerprints to the Commissioner should be reminded of their statutory obligation to do so."

A 2011 state law requires newly-elected or newly-appointed board members and charter school trustees to complete criminal background checks within 30 days of election or appointment. Anyone who has a current or past conviction for any of the crimes that, under existing law, would disqualify a person from working in a public school is also disqualified from serving on a school board.

For additional information, the NJDOE Criminal History Review Unit may be reached at (609) 292-0507.