



# Waterville Central School District Criminal History Background Checks

Report of Examination

Period Covered:

July 1, 2014 – November 17, 2015

2016M-23



Thomas P. DiNapoli

# Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>AUTHORITY LETTER</b>	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	2
Background	2
Objective	2
Scope and Methodology	2
Comments of District Officials	2
<b>CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS</b>	3
<b>APPENDIX A</b> Response From District Officials	5
<b>APPENDIX B</b> Audit Methodology and Standards	7
<b>APPENDIX C</b> How to Obtain Additional Copies of the Report	8
<b>APPENDIX D</b> Local Regional Office Listing	9

# State of New York Office of the State Comptroller

---

---

## **Division of Local Government and School Accountability**

December 2016

Dear School District Officials:

A top priority of the Office of the State Comptroller is to help school district officials manage their districts efficiently and effectively and, by so doing, provide accountability for tax dollars spent to support district operations. The Comptroller oversees the fiscal affairs of districts statewide, as well as districts' compliance with relevant statutes and observance of good business practices. This fiscal oversight is accomplished, in part, through our audits, which identify opportunities for improving district operations and Board of Education governance. Audits also can identify strategies to reduce district costs and to strengthen controls intended to safeguard district assets.

Following is a report of our audit of the Waterville Central School District, entitled Criminal History Background Checks. This audit was conducted pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article 3 of the New York State General Municipal Law.

This audit's results are resources for district officials to use in effectively managing operations and in meeting the expectations of their constituents. If you have questions about this report, please feel free to contact the local regional office for your county, as listed at the end of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

*Office of the State Comptroller  
Division of Local Government  
and School Accountability*

# Introduction

## Background

The Waterville Central School District (District) is located in the Towns of Augusta, Kirkland, Marshall, Paris, Sangerfield and Vernon in Oneida County and the Towns of Brookfield and Madison in Madison County. The District is governed by the Board of Education (Board), which is composed of seven elected members. The Board is responsible for the general management and control of the District's financial and educational affairs. The Superintendent of Schools is the District's chief executive officer and is responsible, along with other administrative staff, for the day-to-day management of the District under the Board's direction.

The District operates two schools with approximately 800 students and 140 employees. The District's budgeted appropriations for the 2016-17 fiscal year are \$17.9 million funded primarily with State aid and real property taxes.

## Objective

The objective of our audit was to determine if District officials performed proper criminal history background checks. Our audit addressed the following related question:

- Did District officials use District resources to ensure the safety of their students by performing proper criminal history background checks?

## Scope and Methodology

We interviewed District officials and staff, and reviewed policies and procedures to identify whether controls were established relating to criminal history background checks for the period of July 1, 2014 through November 17, 2015.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS). More information on such standards and the methodology used in performing this audit are included in Appendix B of this report. Unless otherwise indicated in this report, samples for testing were selected based on professional judgment, as it was not the intent to project the results onto the entire population. Where applicable, information is presented concerning the value and/or size of the relevant population and the sample selected for examination.

## Comments of District Officials

The results of our audit and recommendations have been discussed with District officials, and their comments, which appear in Appendix A, have been considered in preparing this report. District officials agreed with our report.

## Criminal History Background Checks

To protect the safety and well-being of students, New York State Education Law (Education Law) requires that all prospective employees<sup>1</sup> whom the school reasonably expects to provide services that involve direct contact (i.e., meeting in person, face-to-face communication or interaction), with students under the age of 21 must undergo a fingerprint-supported criminal history background check. Education Law requires the fingerprint-supported criminal history background checks to be submitted to the New York State Education Department (SED), which then provides the school with certification clearing the individual for employment.

If an individual is arrested subsequent to providing fingerprints to SED, the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services will provide notice of the arrest to SED. SED notifies the school of the individual's name, the date of arrest and the court of jurisdiction. Individuals previously fingerprinted may not need to be fingerprinted again when seeking employment at another school. However, officials must request the clearance for employment for the prospective employee to ensure that SED's records are current and the prospective employee is cleared to work at a new or additional location. If a school fails to file the appropriate employee background checks and updated clearance requests with SED, the school may not be notified of an arrest, either prior or subsequent to the employee's hire, which may compromise the safety of students.

District officials properly performed criminal history background checks, which helped ensure the safety of their students. The Board adopted a policy entitled Fingerprinting and Criminal History Record, which states that the District "shall not employ or utilize a prospective school employee unless that person has been granted a clearance for employment by SED or an emergency conditional appointment has been made in a manner consistent with this policy and applicable regulations of the Commissioner."

---

<sup>1</sup> The term "prospective employee" generally includes individuals seeking a compensated position with the school district and not currently employed by the district or an employee of a provider of contracted services to the district who is to be placed within a covered school, and who will reasonably be expected by the school to provide services which involve direct contact, meeting in person, face-to-face communications or interaction with students under the age of 21 (8 NYCRR Section 87.2[k]).

We tested 10 full-time employees and five sports officials to determine if District officials performed fingerprint-supported criminal background checks and received certification from SED clearing these individuals for employment or contracted services. We found that District officials ensured these employees were properly cleared.

We commend District officials for properly obtaining fingerprint-supported criminal history background checks of prospective employees and requesting the clearance for prospective employees already fingerprinted from SED.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **RESPONSE FROM DISTRICT OFFICIALS**

The District officials' response to this audit can be found on the following page.

# Waterville Central Schools

WATERVILLE NY 13480



Phone: 315-841-3900

Website: [www.watervillecsd.org](http://www.watervillecsd.org)

Fax: 315-841-3939

Email: [districtoffice@watervillecsd.org](mailto:districtoffice@watervillecsd.org)

## Administration

*Charles Chafee • Superintendent of Schools*

*Tracy Leone • School Business Official*

*Maureen Gray • Elementary Principal*

*Julie Tangorra • Assistant Principal/Director of Special Programs*

*Nicholas Rauch • Secondary Principal*

*Matthew St. Peter • Assistant Principal/Athletic Director*

## Board of Education

*Russell Stewart • President*

*Jamie Crandall • Vice-President*

*Jennifer Neff*

*Roberta Williams*

*Susannah Quayle*

*Steve Turner*

*Thomas Zenon*

December 6, 2016

Office of the State Comptroller  
Public Information Office  
110 State Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Albany, NY 12236

Dear Sir/Madam:

On behalf of the Waterville Central School District's Board of Education, I would like to thank your office for the thorough audit conducted on our fingerprinting policy and procedures. We are especially pleased with your positive findings and your statement commending District employees for following policy and thus "...ensuring the safety of their students."

We also greatly appreciated the professional manner as to how your auditors approached their work during their time "in-district." The Waterville Central School District agrees with the findings of this audit.

Sincerely,

Charles G. Chafee  
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Russell Stewart, School Board President  
Howard Mettelman, District Superintendent, OHM BOCES

381 Madison Street • Waterville, New York 13480



## **APPENDIX B**

### **AUDIT METHODOLOGY AND STANDARDS**

To achieve our audit objective and obtain valid evidence, we performed the following procedures:

- We interviewed District officials and reviewed the District's policies to gain an understanding of the District's fingerprinting policies and procedures for both prospective employees and independent contractors.
- We randomly selected 10 District employees from the 149 employees who were hired after July 1, 2001 from an employee listing and traced to supporting documentation, such as the SED clearance forms, to determine if they were properly fingerprinted.
- We judgmentally selected a sample of five sports officials from the list of all those who provided services at the District from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015. We traced the sports officials' names to the list of officials with cleared background checks to determine if they were properly fingerprinted.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with GAGAS. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

## APPENDIX C

### HOW TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THE REPORT

To obtain copies of this report, write or visit our web page:

Office of the State Comptroller  
Public Information Office  
110 State Street, 15th Floor  
Albany, New York 12236  
(518) 474-4015  
<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/>

**APPENDIX D**  
**OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER**  
**DIVISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**  
**AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY**

Andrew A. SanFilippo, Executive Deputy Comptroller  
Gabriel F. Deyo, Deputy Comptroller  
Tracey Hitchen Boyd, Assistant Comptroller

**LOCAL REGIONAL OFFICE LISTING**

---

**BINGHAMTON REGIONAL OFFICE**

H. Todd Eames, Chief Examiner  
Office of the State Comptroller  
State Office Building, Suite 1702  
44 Hawley Street  
Binghamton, New York 13901-4417  
(607) 721-8306 Fax (607) 721-8313  
Email: [Muni-Binghamton@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:Muni-Binghamton@osc.state.ny.us)

Serving: Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware,  
Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan, Tioga, Tompkins Counties

**BUFFALO REGIONAL OFFICE**

Jeffrey D. Mazula, Chief Examiner  
Office of the State Comptroller  
295 Main Street, Suite 1032  
Buffalo, New York 14203-2510  
(716) 847-3647 Fax (716) 847-3643  
Email: [Muni-Bufferalo@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:Muni-Bufferalo@osc.state.ny.us)

Serving: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie,  
Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming Counties

**GLENS FALLS REGIONAL OFFICE**

Jeffrey P. Leonard, Chief Examiner  
Office of the State Comptroller  
One Broad Street Plaza  
Glens Falls, New York 12801-4396  
(518) 793-0057 Fax (518) 793-5797  
Email: [Muni-GlensFalls@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:Muni-GlensFalls@osc.state.ny.us)

Serving: Albany, Clinton, Essex, Franklin,  
Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer,  
Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington Counties

**HAUPPAUGE REGIONAL OFFICE**

Ira McCracken, Chief Examiner  
Office of the State Comptroller  
NYS Office Building, Room 3A10  
250 Veterans Memorial Highway  
Hauppauge, New York 11788-5533  
(631) 952-6534 Fax (631) 952-6530  
Email: [Muni-Hauppauge@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:Muni-Hauppauge@osc.state.ny.us)

Serving: Nassau and Suffolk Counties

**NEWBURGH REGIONAL OFFICE**

Tenneh Blamah, Chief Examiner  
Office of the State Comptroller  
33 Airport Center Drive, Suite 103  
New Windsor, New York 12553-4725  
(845) 567-0858 Fax (845) 567-0080  
Email: [Muni-Newburgh@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:Muni-Newburgh@osc.state.ny.us)

Serving: Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange,  
Putnam, Rockland, Ulster, Westchester Counties

**ROCHESTER REGIONAL OFFICE**

Edward V. Grant, Jr., Chief Examiner  
Office of the State Comptroller  
The Powers Building  
16 West Main Street, Suite 522  
Rochester, New York 14614-1608  
(585) 454-2460 Fax (585) 454-3545  
Email: [Muni-Rochester@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:Muni-Rochester@osc.state.ny.us)

Serving: Cayuga, Chemung, Livingston, Monroe,  
Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates Counties

**SYRACUSE REGIONAL OFFICE**

Rebecca Wilcox, Chief Examiner  
Office of the State Comptroller  
State Office Building, Room 409  
333 E. Washington Street  
Syracuse, New York 13202-1428  
(315) 428-4192 Fax (315) 426-2119  
Email: [Muni-Syracuse@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:Muni-Syracuse@osc.state.ny.us)

Serving: Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison,  
Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, St. Lawrence Counties

**STATEWIDE AUDITS**

Ann C. Singer, Chief Examiner  
State Office Building, Suite 1702  
44 Hawley Street  
Binghamton, New York 13901-4417  
(607) 721-8306 Fax (607) 721-8313