



## State of Tennessee

Justin P. Wilson, State Comptroller

July 29, 2014

### **Former Wayne County School Staffers Took Nearly \$320,000 in Public Money**

Four former employees of the Wayne County School Department are to blame for a \$319,134.58 shortage in school accounts. The Comptroller's Office, in conjunction with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Internal Revenue Service began investigating after comptroller auditors discovered discrepancies during their annual audit.

Investigators confirmed the former grants coordinator and three former bookkeepers received \$183,474.25 in unauthorized payroll payments and classified them to teacher salary account codes. These payments were in addition to their budgeted salaries.

Investigators also uncovered personal purchases on the School Department's Wal-Mart credit cards. These purchases included more than \$77,176.69 in gift cards and related fees, as well as \$58,483.64 in groceries and personal items. The credit cards were assigned to the former General Purpose School Fund bookkeeper.

The investigative report outlines several concerns with the school system's money-handling practices. Managers should ensure that no employee has complete control over payroll duties, and managers should regularly review credit card purchases.

School leaders indicate they have implemented new checks and balances to prevent a recurrence.

"There is no place for fraud, waste and abuse of taxpayer money in government," Comptroller Justin P. Wilson said. "While these findings are troubling, I am hopeful that changes are being made to correct the problems we've identified, and restore trust in the School Department."

To view the investigation online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse of public money in Tennessee, call the Comptroller's toll-free hotline at (800) 232-4343, or file a report online at: [www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline](http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline). Follow the Comptroller's Office on twitter: [@TNCOT](https://twitter.com/TNCOT)

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