



**Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller**

March 16, 2015

## **Former Wilson County Elementary School Bookkeeper Indicted for Theft**

A special investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has revealed that Shannon Williams, a former bookkeeper at Elzie D. Patton Elementary School in Wilson County, stole \$8,646.

Investigators found that Ms. Williams made unauthorized purchases using the school's Amazon.com corporate account between September 2011 and November 2013. Ms. Williams purchased at least 184 items for her personal benefit, including a \$2,099 vacuum cleaner, toys, clothing, and various art supplies. She concealed some of these purchases by adding the personal items to legitimate purchase requests, making it appear they were ordered by other school staff for official purposes.

Ms. Williams admitted to investigators that she made personal purchases using the school's Amazon.com account, and she asserted that she reimbursed the school approximately \$250. Investigators were unable to verify her assertion.

On March 10, 2015, Shannon Williams was indicted by the Wilson County Grand Jury on one count of theft over \$1,000 and one count of official misconduct.



Investigators also found that school officials failed to separate and provide adequate oversight of financial duties. The former bookkeeper had access to and control over all aspects of financial transactions. Officials with Elzie D. Patton Elementary School and the Wilson County School System indicate they have corrected or intend to correct these issues.

"I continue to stress the importance of separating money-handling responsibilities between multiple people," Comptroller Justin P. Wilson said. "Simple checks and balances prevent theft, and help ensure that dishonest people are caught."

To view the special investigation report 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) 232-5454, or file a report online at: [www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline](http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline). Follow us on twitter: [@TNCOT](https://twitter.com/TNCOT)

Media contact: John Dunn, Public Information Officer, (615) 401-7755 or [john.dunn@cot.tn.gov](mailto:john.dunn@cot.tn.gov)