



Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury

September 22, 2023

Former Elementary PTO President Pleads Guilty to Theft

Money stolen from Indian Springs Elementary PTO in Sullivan Co.

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in Misty Ritchie, the former PTO president at Indian Springs Elementary in Kingsport, pleading guilty on two counts.

Investigators determined that Ritchie misappropriated at least \$11,016.63 in PTO funds while she was serving as the president from February 2020 through November 2020.

Ritchie employed two schemes to perpetrate her theft. She misappropriated \$10,016.63 by using PTO funds to make seven payments toward her husband's personal credit card account balance. She also wrote a \$1,000 PTO check payable to "Cash" and used the proceeds from this check for her personal benefit.



Investigators also noted additional questionable PTO checks with no supporting documentation totaling \$3,750; however, without adequate documentation, investigators were unable to determine whether the funds were used for appropriate PTO business purposes.

In April 2023, Ritchie told investigators she misappropriated PTO funds because she was unable to work in 2020 and needed financial help. She left her position with the PTO in May 2022.

Based upon this investigation, on September 13, 2023, Misty Ritchie pled guilty to one count of theft of property over \$10,000, and one count of forgery and was granted judicial diversion relief and placed on supervised probation for a total of six years. Ritchie was also fined \$100 for each count, and restitution was paid in full prior to the entry of the plea.

"All school support organizations, such as PTOs, are required by law to ensure funds and property of their organizations are safeguarded," said Comptroller Mumpower. "In addition to not providing adequate oversight, PTO officers should also ensure invoices, vendor receipts, and other supporting documentation are acquired and retained to prevent the opportunity for misuse."

To view the investigative report, go to tncot.cc/doireports. To view a map depicting Comptroller investigations, go to tncot.cc/mappinginvestigations.

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