



Mary Taylor, CPA Auditor of State

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Taylor Audit Reveals Superintendent Took More Than \$295,000 from School District

Sandusky County – Auditor of State Mary Taylor today released the special audit of the Clyde-Green Springs Exempted Village Local School District. The audit reveals that the district is missing \$295,767 due to elaborate fraud schemes created by former Superintendent Todd Helms.

“Special audits are a major part of my commitment to protect taxpayer dollars from fraud and theft. I am pleased that the experienced professionals in my office identified and documented the exact amount of money stolen by Mr. Helms,” said Taylor. “Our special prosecutor, who has been appointed to oversee this case, is working with our auditors and investigators to build a strong prosecution against Mr. Helms.”

The special audit reveals that Helms created fake invoices for non-existent companies, then submitted these bills to the school treasurer for payment. The district paid these invoices, totaling \$101,031, and mailed payments to post office boxes owned by Helms. He then deposited the payments into his personal bank accounts.

Helms also deceived school booster clubs and other contributors by recommending that they participate in a fictitious grant matching program. Six booster clubs and one contributor made donations totaling \$161,725. The entire amount was deposited into Helms’ bank accounts for personal use.

Further, the audit shows that Helms improperly charged the district for:

- \$3,720 in personal travel and events that he did not actually attend
- \$240 in gift certificates
- \$6,123 in personal and alcohol charges on the district credit card
- \$13,928 in travel disbursements for the Blackwell Hotel in Columbus

James Manken, an attorney in Taylor’s office and serving as the special prosecutor for this case, is working in cooperation with the Sandusky County Prosecutor. The Auditor of State’s office was assisted in its investigation by the Clyde Police Department, the Sandusky County Prosecutor, the Ohio Department of Taxation, US Postal Inspectors, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Volusia County (Florida) Sheriff’s Office.

On August 5, 2008, Auditor Taylor initiated the special audit after the review and evaluation of allegations against Helms. Helms resigned from his position on September 8, 2008. On April 1, 2009 he was indicted by a Sandusky County grand jury on 19 criminal counts and subsequently was arrested.

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As the state's chief taxpayer watchdog, Taylor is committed to rooting out fraud, waste and abuse of taxpayer dollars. Special audits are an important part of fulfilling this mission. A special audit targets a specific area of an organization and is initiated to review allegations of fraud or theft. The Auditor of State's office is currently conducting 35 special audits throughout the state.

A full copy of the audit is available online at www.auditor.state.oh.us.

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The Ohio Auditor of State's Office is one of the largest accounting offices in the nation. The office strives to ensure that all public funds are spent legally and appropriately and works aggressively to root out fraud, waste and abuse in public spending. Taylor encourages anyone suspecting fraud or misspending of public dollars to contact her office toll free at 1-866-FRAUD-OH (1-866-372-8364). Since taking office in January 2007, Taylor has identified more than \$20.6 million in public funds that were spent illegally and must be repaid.