



Mary Taylor, CPA

Auditor of State

For Immediate Release:

December 15, 2009

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Taylor: Former Cleveland Municipal Schools Administrator Accused of Stealing \$181,000

Toledo accomplice aided in alleged theft

Cleveland – Auditor of State Mary Taylor today said a former Cleveland Municipal Schools employee apparently defrauded local taxpayers and public school children out of \$181,019. Details of Taylor’s investigation are outlined in a report released today indicating that former Chief Operating Officer Dan Burns approved payments for copy machines and other services that never made it to the district.

“Our investigation uncovered a deliberate scheme by a public employee who abused his position of trust to steal thousands of dollars intended for the education of Cleveland school children,” Taylor said. “I remain committed to our fight against fraud and ensuring that those who steal from Ohio taxpayers are held accountable to the fullest extent of the law.”

Taylor’s investigation found that Burns initiated five payments totaling \$160,200 for the purchase of six copy machines and “consulting services” from Superior Offset Supplies, Inc. When questioned by state auditors, Burns was unable to locate any of the equipment.

Burns is also responsible for an additional \$20,819 paid to Corporate Intelligence Consultants for background checks and workers compensation investigations that were never provided.

John Briggie, owner of Superior Offset Supplies, and Steve Cotner, owner of Corporate Intelligence Consultants, are also named in Taylor’s report as sharing responsibility for the amounts each business received.

Burns worked for the Cleveland Municipal School District from July 2006 to December 2008. Prior to that, he worked 30 years at the Toledo Public School District before retiring in June 2006.

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An initial review of similar payments made to Superior Offset Supplies while Burns was employed in Toledo raised additional concerns. On December 17, 2008, Taylor launched separate investigations of Burns' financial activity at both public school districts. The Toledo investigation is ongoing and no additional information is available.

On December 3, Cuyahoga County Prosecutors used the information outlined in Taylor's special audit to indict Burns on eight charges including theft in office, tampering with records and engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity. Briggles was also indicted on eight charges including theft, tampering with records and engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity.

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

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