

Two charter school officers indicted for spending \$148K on trips, other unapproved expenditures

Posted: 03/06/2013

Last Updated: 6 hours and 38 minutes ago



By: WCPO Digital Staff

CINCINNATI - Two officers for a Cincinnati charter school are accused of taking more than \$148,000 in taxpayer dollars from school coffers.

Cincinnati College Preparatory Academy Superintendent Dr. Lisa Hamm and contracted treasurer Stephanie Millard have been indicted on 26 counts of theft in office, unauthorized use of property, tampering with evidence and tampering with records.

Money spent from the school included trips to Chicago, sightseeing tours through California and Europe, and a trip to Boston to see Oprah, Ohio Auditor of State Dave Yost reported.

"The audacity of these school officials is appalling," Auditor Yost said. "The good work by our auditors and investigators has built the strongest possible case to ensure they can never use the public treasury as their personal travel account again."

Details of the indictment include nine of the most egregious trips, the auditor's office reports. In total there were more than 20 trips Hamm took with staff and family members.

Among the trips that were part of the indictment included a \$20,000, 10-day tour through California in a rental car with a hired driver, meals and hotel stays. Other details include a proposed trip to see Chicago charter schools where Hamm and other staff saw Tina Turner in concert, according to the report, and a trip to Europe with staff where Hamm was supposed to secure residency.

According to the charges brought against Hamm and Millard, most trips were listed as taken for either training purposes or "best practice visits" to other schools that often exceeded the time and spending limit set by the school's board.

Millard also paid school credit card bills without the board's knowledge.

The investigation, and indictments, were the result of an anonymous tip sent to the Auditor of State's office in November 2006 and ensuing audits that occurred from July 1, 2006 through May 31, 2010. A special audit is ongoing.

Copyright 2013 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.