

NEWS

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Michael Drewniak, Public Information Officer FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Former Business Administrator and Superintendent at Delaware
Valley Regional High School Pleads Guilty To Embezzlement

(More)

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CAMDEN – A former business administrator who later became superintendent at Delaware Valley Regional High School in Hunterdon County pleaded guilty today to embezzling more than \$90,000 from the school district, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

Robert P. Walsh, 43, of Forks Township, Pa., pleaded guilty to a one-count criminal Information charging embezzlement before U.S. District Judge Renee Bumb. Under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Walsh faces a probable sentencing range of between 12 and 18 months in federal prison.

Walsh is free on a \$100,000 unsecured bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for April 20 at 11 a.m.

At his plea hearing, Walsh admitted embezzling funds totaling more than \$90,000, between September 2005 and September 2007, from the Delaware Valley Regional School District while he was serving as the school's business administrator and later as superintendent. The high school is based in Alexandria Township and receives students from several mostly rural municipalities.

Walsh admitted that he embezzled the funds in three different ways. First, Walsh admitted that he embezzled approximately \$68,000 from the school by diverting checks made payable to the school's general bank account and depositing those checks into the school's food services account to conceal cash amounts he stole from the cafeteria and kept for his personal use.

Walsh also admitted that he embezzled funds from the school by collecting reimbursements for unauthorized personal expenses including home improvements. In addition, Walsh admitted that he embezzled more than \$19,000 from the school by receiving tuition and life insurance premium reimbursements that exceeded those authorized by the high school district.

“This was a top school official, well-compensated, whose charge and duty was to protect the interests of the school district and its students,” said Marra. “Instead, he acted as a petty thief who had no qualms about literally stealing lunch money from the cafeteria.”

“The level of greed on the part of Mr. Walsh is disgraceful,” said FBI Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun. “It is an incredible act of selfishness to steal from school children, in this case, literally stealing food from their mouths by embezzling from the school food services account. Through the cooperative efforts of the FBI and the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's office, the public can rest assured that Mr. Walsh will have time set aside for him to consider the weight of his actions.”

Walsh admitted that he embezzled these funds during his tenure as Delaware Valley Regional High School's business administrator and later as the school's superintendent. Walsh admitted that, while serving in those positions, he was responsible for managing the finances of the school, included approving reimbursements and endorsing checks to be deposited into Delaware Valley Regional High School bank accounts.

The charge to which Walsh pleaded guilty carries a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. However, in determining an actual sentence, Judge Bumb will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors, including acceptance of responsibility. The judge, however, has discretion and is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, with the investigation leading to today's plea. Marra also thanked the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of J. Patrick Barnes, with initiating this investigation and working with the FBI to its completion.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jenny Kramer and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney William McGovern, who is on assignment from the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office for purposes of this case.

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Defense Counsel: Joseph Afflitto, Sr., Esq., Wayne.