



Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury

March 23, 2021

Columbia Central Cheer Coach Indicted for Theft

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in the indictment of Melissa Todd, the cheer coach at Columbia Central High School in Maury County.

The investigation revealed that Todd directed that \$905.03 of school funds be used to pay for her family member to attend a cheer competition in Orlando, Florida. Todd's family member was not an approved assistant or volunteer affiliate of the cheer program, and the family member's trip was not eligible to be paid with school funds.

Additionally, Todd could not account for \$1,672.74 of cash that was collected during fundraisers or through other sources. Due to the disarray of the cheer team's records for collections and disbursements, investigators could not determine if all cheer funds were accounted for properly.

Finally, investigators reported that Todd concealed information related to a \$44,029.09 debt owed to Varsity Spirit from the school. The cheer coach used this vendor for uniforms, supplies, and equipment.

Todd received bills for the entire \$44,029.09 debt by October 2019, but the debt was not revealed to investigators and school officials until July 2020. Todd could not provide a full accounting for the purchases. Columbia Central has since paid the amount owed to Varsity Spirit.

On March 11, 2021, Melissa Todd was indicted by the Maury County Grand Jury on one count of theft, one count of forgery, and one count of tampering with or fabricating evidence.

"Our investigators have pointed to a number of weaknesses on the part of school officials who are responsible for ensuring all internal school accounting rules are followed," said Comptroller Jason Mumpower. "School leaders have indicated they are working to correct issues such as complying with collection, expenditure, and deposit policies."

To view the investigative report, go to: <https://comptroller.tn.gov/office-functions/investigations/find.html>

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