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Superintendent Statement Regarding Theft of Funds

The alleged theft of funds by the former chief financial officer of the Grand Prairie Independent School District was a reprehensible act of selfishness and greed. The school board and I stand in strong support of the law enforcement and criminal justice community in this process, and if these allegations are true, we urge that Carolyn Foster be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. That someone serving in a position of authority of an organization whose job is to educate and nurture the children of our community would violate that sacred trust is unconscionable. We will work with authorities to retrieve every penny that was allegedly stolen, and we will work to make sure that such a despicable act will never happen again.

We are very proud of the two finance department employees whose commitment to public service and diligence in doing their jobs helped uncover Foster's apparent misdeeds just one day after she left the district. GPISD accountants Edie Ellis and Becky Harris told a superior in the finance department on September 1, 2015 about their questions about these funds, and thanks to their work, we reported this matter to the Grand Prairie Police Department for investigation right away.

Carolyn Foster apparently abused her authority as CFO to gain access to a vault in the GPISD administration building, and over a period of nearly a year, she apparently stole \$600,000 in cash. She allegedly ordered this money be withdrawn from the bank ostensibly to use for cash settlements on non-existent lawsuits and for special cash awards for teachers for school supplies. If these allegations prove true, they represent a terrible betrayal of the trust placed in a public official.

We have developed new operating procedures for handling any cash in the district, with multiple backups and redundancies to make sure that never again can a single person, even a high-ranking executive, on his or her own authority, gain access to money that belongs to our schools.

All of us at GPISD deeply regret this apparent violation of the public trust by this former official. We thank our community for their strong and ongoing support of our schools and our children, and we will work hard every day to continue to earn that support.