



COUNTY OF SISKIYOU
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

J. KIRK ANDRUS, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

January 29, 2018

For immediate release

Sentencing in South Siskiyou County School Embezzlement

Yreka. On Wednesday, January 24, 2018, Shannon Starr Neuman 38, of Dunsmuir, California, was sentenced for the felony charge of Embezzlement by Agent, in violation of Penal Code §508. Neuman had pled guilty to the felony charge on December 6, 2017.

In late 2015 staff from Castle Rock Elementary School in Castella contacted the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office to report possible embezzlement. An audit by the school had revealed transfers from the Castle Rock Student Body account to a personal account set up by the defendant. Investigation into the bank records involved confirmed the transfers. There were 11 transfers made over 2 months, totaling \$4,560.

Ms. Neuman had been a teacher of young children at the school, charged with making sure that the students' money would be held for the use of the young students. One of these former students spoke in open court at her sentencing hearing. This young student, in a poignant moment in the courtroom, taught her former teacher a lesson she should have known, declaring that "You must have the worst intentions to steal from a place of learning and from children. We work very hard on all sorts of things and it's wrong to steal money from children, or anyone else. Ms. Neuman was our trusted teacher in preschool. Shannon we all loved you but what you did was unacceptable."

The Court noted the letters of support which had been received from many people in the Dunsmuir community. It was evident that the defendant had made many positive impressions and had done many things well in her profession as an educator. Noting these factors, however, Chief Deputy District Attorney John Quinn, in consultation with District Attorney Kirk Andrus, required a felony conviction for Ms. Neuman due to the serious violation of trust that this crime represented. This felony conviction may result in the suspension of her license to work as a teacher in the future.

Autumn M. Funk, Castle Rock Union Elementary School Superintendent/Principal stated, "I'm grateful that our students saw justice served. In a time when schools struggle to find funding to support and enrich students it is unfortunate that this occurred. It's nice to see that the system in place to ensure student body funds are used to benefit students is working to prevent such criminal activities and that our legal system is working to recover the costs associated with this type of a crime. As much as I wish this hadn't occurred I am grateful to Siskiyou County law enforcement for giving our student government members a real life lesson in criminal justice."

According to Mr. Andrus, “This theft from the children of Castle Rock was fortunately discovered through an annual audit. It gives a measure of comfort to know that safeguards in place revealed the truth and will allow us to finally return these funds to the victims. It also stands as a sad warning that the temptation to misappropriate funds entrusted to any employee is wrong and can result in serious sanctions that can change lives.” Ms. Neuman was sentenced to 18 months of formal, felony probation with numerous restrictions and conditions including 120 hours of uncompensated community service. A check for the full restitution amount of \$4,560 was to be made available to the victims on January 29, 2018.