



03 October 2014



J. Michael Clára
Salt Lake City School Board
District Two

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HAND DELIVERED

Salt Lake City Police Department
Public Safety Building
475 South 300 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104

*Assigned
SLCPD Case # 14 - 172664*

Re: Providing False Information to Law Enforcement Officers

Dear SLCPD,

I have reason to believe that on **March 6, 2014**, Janet Roberts, Business Administrator for the Salt Lake City School District, knowingly gave or caused to be given false information to a peace officer which is a violation of Utah Code 76-8-506: Providing False Information to Law Enforcement Officer.

According to SLCPD Offense Report 14-37341, Janet Roberts summoned Officer K. Olsen to her office in order to report Child Nutrition Manager Shirley Canham as a suspect in financial criminal activity.

According to the report, Janet Roberts informed Officer Olsen that Ms. Shirley Canham was shuffling lunch money between parent/student accounts.

The report also states that Janet Roberts reported that

"...fruit and milk lunch is given if a student is unable to pay for lunch or if the account is negative. Uintah had given out 1138 Fruit and Milk lunches since the beginning of the year. The rest of the schools have only given out approx. 200 for the year".

The police report goes on to state that Officer Olsen used this information on May 21, 2014 when he interrogated Ms. Shirley Canham at the police station:

"We then asked her about the Fruit and Milk lunches (free lunches) and why there were so many at Uintah (over 1100) and why the rest of the schools in the district were around 200?"

The information provided to Officer Olsen by Janet Roberts was false.

"Local school boards are the bedrock of our society, yet they are invisible to the public"

Señor Florez -Deseret News

Meadowlark Elementary School had 1,053 Fruit and Milk lunches recorded for the same time period, Wasatch Elementary recorded 657 for the same time period (See: Report of Special and Independent Investigation to the Board of Education of the Salt Lake City School District -Prepared by Thompson Ostler & Olsen Attorneys at Law p 13).

Moreover, Janet Roberts failed to inform Officer Olsen that the principal at Uintah Elementary school:

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"...had established a clear policy with Ms. Canham at the beginning of the school year that no student would ever be denied a complete lunch and provided a fruit and milk..." (See: Report of Special and Independent Investigation to the Board of Education of the Salt Lake City School District - Prepared by Thompson Ostler & Olsen Attorneys at Law p 6).

Additionally, Janet Roberts failed to inform Officer Olsen that Meadowlark Elementary School had a high number of Fruit and Milk for the same reason:

"We have been informed that Meadowlark had a high number of fruit and milk because the Principal had directed the Nutrition Manager to just hit "fruit & milk" [button] until parents could fill out a Free and Reduced Lunch form. Given the high percentage of free and reduced lunch indicated, we determined that Meadowlark was unlike Uintah." (See: Report of Special and Independent Investigation to the Board of Education of the Salt Lake City School District -Prepared by Thompson Ostler & Olsen Attorneys at Law p 13).

Furthermore, Janet Roberts failed to inform Officer Olsen that Wasatch Elementary School had a high number of Fruit and Milk for the same reason:

"In our interview with her, Principal Miller stated that she had a policy that no child would ever go without a lunch." (See: Report of Special and Independent Investigation to the Board of Education of the Salt Lake City School District -Prepared by Thompson Ostler & Olsen Attorneys at Law p 10).

The interrogation question to Ms. Shirley Canham was based on false information given to the police by Janet Roberts:

"We then asked her about the Fruit and Milk lunches (free lunches) and why there were so many at Uintah (over 1100) and why the rest of the schools in the district were around 200?"

In fact, almost a full month prior to Janet Roberts involving the police department, the Superintendent sated the following at the **February 4, 2014**, School Board meeting:

"The boards two employees [Superintendent & Business Administrator] did make a unilateral decision last Wednesday the first moment we were informed that all of this was taking place and that unilateral decision was that no student would ever have his food taken from them again in this district...sorry if that appears to be overly assertive but advocating for young people is our primary mission, children will always come first..."

The minutes of that meeting reflect the following:

"Superintendent Withers restated that no student would ever have food taken from them again in the district."

Here we see the Superintendent aligning himself and Janet Roberts with the practice of giving every child a full lunch even if their account is in a negative balance.

Yet, when Janet Roberts presented this already established practice to the police officer being carried out by Ms. Shirley Canham, it is labeled as “free lunches”, “fraud” and “embezzlement”. The fact of the matter is, pushing the Fruit and Milk button and giving students a full meal was the common practice among child nutrition managers and principals throughout the school district. Yet, Janet Roberts presented this practice to the police, as exceptional to Ms. Shirley Canham and as an indication of illegal behavior.

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Janet Roberts is appointed by the Salt Lake City Board of Education (Utah Code 53A-3-302).

One of her responsibilities by virtue of state statute is to “be custodian of all district funds, be responsible and accountable for all money received and disbursed, and keep accurate records of all revenues received and their sources” (Utah Code 53A-3-303 (2)).

The School Board had reason to question Janet Roberts’s ability to carry out the duties of her office. At the **March 4, 2014**, Board meeting the Board of Education instructed Janet Roberts to hire the external accounting firm, Squire & Company to review the financial activities at Uintah Elementary School Lunchroom. The minutes of that school board meeting reflect the following:

“...consensus was made in light of the feelings of distrust, questions that have been raised, and issues surfaced as a result of the [internal] investigation, that an outside investigation would provide validity to the findings”.

Since obtaining the police report on September 26, 2014, I have (twice) asked Janet Roberts via email why she called the police three days after the Board of Education instructed her to hire the accounting firm Squire & Co. to conduct a review of Uintah Elementary School lunchroom finances. I have also asked why she gave the police false information on March 6, 2014. Janet Roberts has refused to answer. Sadly, Janet Roberts manipulated the Salt Lake City Police Department into making Ms. Shirley Canham feel like she was a criminal for following the established practice of the Salt Lake City School District. This manipulation was a contributing factor Ms. Shirley Canham resigning her position with the Salt Lake City School District.

Sincerely,

J. Michael Clára
Board Member, District 2

cc: The Honorable Sim Gill, Salt Lake County District Attorney

