

Audit: School boss spent kids' cash

By Kevin Rothstein

Friday, April 8, 2005 - Updated: 01:15 PM EST

Everett School Superintendent Frederick Foresteire has tapped a \$218,000 "slush fund" of special education money to pay for homecoming parades, chamber of commerce breakfasts, newspaper ads and dinners for teachers, the city auditor said.

"This reserve account appears to function as a 'slush fund!'" Everett Auditor Frank "Skip" Coppola wrote. "At this time, it appears that most of these expenditures are unrelated to special education."

Coppola's bombshell report, released at a Monday City Council meeting, includes records showing that in the past two years Everett school money paid for more than \$53,000 in local newspaper ads and approximately \$24,000 in homecoming parade expenses.

"It's just corruption," fumed James Castadora, father of a 6-year-old Everett first-grader. "It ends up screwing the people who need the money most."

Foresteire, who is awaiting trial on charges of receiving stolen school air conditioners at his house, maintained the expenses were legitimate. He blasted Coppola, calling him an "uncertified municipal auditor" seeking revenge for being embarrassed at a recent School Committee meeting.

"I'll quote Mayor David Ragucci, 'I've got a renegade auditor on my hands,' and knowing Mayor Ragucci, I'm sure that Mr. Coppola will be asked to resign shortly," Foresteire said.

Neither Ragucci nor Coppola returned calls.

State Auditor Joseph DeNucci, who is finishing a comprehensive audit of Everett school finances, is also focusing on the special education issue, sources said.

The money was spent out of an account with Shore Educational Collaborative, a group of 10 school districts that share special education costs. Collaborative director Anne Boothe called the auditor's accusations "inflammatory, unsubstantiated and untrue."

Stephen Smith, an Everett common councilor and Foresteire critic, accused the superintendent of diverting special education money to promote himself.

"The bottom line is he's taking money that was supposed to go to educating our special needs students," Smith said.

Foresteire defended the payments, saying, for example, that local newspaper ads helped promote undercovered events such as the drama club and orchestra.

In any case, money from Shore Educational Collaborative did not need to be spent on special needs students, he said.

"You can promote the schools, you can use it for special ed, you can use it for the things you use it for," he said.

Richard Robison, head of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, said, "The money should probably be spent on kids with special needs."

Where did it go?

Everett City Auditor Frank Coppola said most of a \$218,000 reserve account was spent over two years by the city schools for non-special education purposes.

Some of the expenses include:

- \$53,000 in newspaper ads with the Everett Independent, the Everett Advocate and the Everett Leader. The superintendent said the ads promoted undercovered student events.
- \$6,750 for Chamber of Commerce events.
- \$24,000 for the city's homecoming parade.



'It's just corruption' said James Castadora whose son James JR., 6, is an Everett first-grader. (Staff photo by Stuart Cahill)

Herald Interactive Tools



[Related articles](#)



[E-mail article to a friend](#)



[View graphic version](#)



[Post comments in the forums](#)



[Get RSS feed](#)



[Search site](#)



[Subscribe to the Boston Herald](#)

Herald Columnists

[It's April, and guess who the fools are?](#)

By Howie Carr

Trying to finish up your taxes this weekend? Well, here's something to think about, especially as yo... [\[more\]](#)



- \$3,680 for a trip to the New England Aquarium for special needs kids.
- \$1,462.50 at the Silver Fox restaurant.
- \$1,200 to Action Communication to videotape school events.

Related articles

- [Cops, Feds close alleged 'meth' factory](#)
- ['Slush fund' gets special attention from DOE: State to probe Everett super's cash handling](#)
- [Everett ed chief takes the offense](#)
- [Minority failure rate shocks child advocates](#)
- [Discipline school has everything but kids](#)

Today's most read articles Updated 9:45 PM ET

1. [Pats, Beisel make deal](#)
2. [Joan K. loses fight with kids](#)
3. [Damon hurt, stitched up](#)
4. [Sox jack Jays, move Tito up all-time list: Francona gets his 100th win](#)
5. ['Toine thinks small: Welcomes a shift to '3' spot in return](#)

Search the site

Past 7 days Archives Google

Order home delivery

Save up to 60% ordering Boston Herald home delivery online. » [click here](#)



advertisement ▼

[[contact us](#)] :: [[print advertising](#)] :: [[online advertising](#)] :: [[FAQ's](#)] :: [[News Tips](#)] :: [[Electronic Edition](#)] :: [[Browser Upgrade](#)]

[Click here for home delivery](#) or call 1.800.882.1211 for **Back Issues** call 617.619.6523

© Copyright by the Boston Herald and Herald Interactive Advertising Systems, Inc.

No portion of BostonHerald.com or its content may be reproduced without the owner's written permission. [Privacy Commitment](#)



Enterprise-level broadband service provided by **Intellispace**: [Delivering Fast & Dependable Communication Solutions](#)



Wireless broadband service provided by **Towerstream**

0.551071