



Former Indianapolis Teachers Union President Pleads Guilty to Embezzlement

By Educator Barnes – July 23, 2019

November 2018, Rhondalyn Cornett resigned as union president of the Indianapolis Education Association (IEA) after being accused of mismanaging more than \$100,000. Cornett has now pleaded guilty to embezzlement. According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Cornett could spend up to 20 years in prison and pay a fine up to \$250,000.

The joint FBI and Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department investigation revealed Cornett had written checks from the union's account and used the union's debit card for personal needs. Instead of looking out for the best interests of teachers in Indianapolis Public Schools, Cornett used her position of power to serve herself.

For the next two years, the Indiana State Teachers Association will manage the finances of IEA. This scandal rocked IPS and led two IPS teachers, LaMeca Perkins-Knight and Lori Elliott, to attempt to bring a new union, The Indianapolis Teachers Society, to the district. Due to an application error, this group was not able to move forward to challenge and potentially replace IEA.

IPS teachers who paid dues are the victims of Cornett's crime. A current IPS teacher said, "I don't know if I can trust the union again under anyone's leadership." IEA will have to work hard to regain their members' trust and to convince more teachers to support the union again.