



John Keel, CPA
State Auditor

A Special Investigations Unit Report Regarding
**The Texas Education Agency-
Texas SkillsUSA, a Texas Association**

July 13, 2006

Members of the Legislative Audit Committee:

An investigation by the State Auditor's Office's Special Investigations Unit led to the Public Integrity Unit at the Travis County District Attorney's Office obtaining a plea agreement on April 27, 2006, with Connie Williams Little. Ms. Little was the former executive director of Texas SkillsUSA, a Texas Association (formerly referred to as the Texas SkillsUSA-Vocational Industrial Clubs of America or VICA). In the agreement, Ms. Little was required to make full restitution to Texas SkillsUSA in the amount of \$4,858 and to pay \$2,000 in investigative costs. Ms. Little pleaded no contest to disorderly conduct and was given a \$500 fine. The agreement was finalized on July 5, 2006, after Ms. Little made full restitution to the District Attorney's Office.

Texas SkillsUSA is a student organization dedicated to developing social, leadership, and occupational education programs for young people interested in careers in trade, technical, and health fields.

In September 2002, the Texas Education Agency (Agency) contacted the Special Investigations Unit to initiate an investigation into allegations that the former executive director of Texas SkillsUSA misused the organization's funds, which included federal funds administered by the Agency.

The investigation revealed that in January 2002, Ms. Little submitted false information to the Agency to receive Vocational Service Grant funds and submitted false information in a quarterly financial report. In July 2001, Ms. Little diverted funds from the sale of property belonging to Texas SkillsUSA for her personal use.

Vocational Service Grant Funds

The Texas Education Agency administers Vocational Service Grant funds. These grants are funded through the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technology Discretionary Program and are awarded subject to availability.

Examples of the entities that receive these funds include school districts, charters schools, education service centers, and local education agencies. To receive funds, organizations agree to oversight from the Texas Education Agency and are required to provide complete and accurate financial records and requests for expense reimbursements that are accompanied by original receipts.

SAO Report No. 06-048

Members of the Legislative Audit Committee

July 13, 2006

Page 2

If you have any questions, please contact Pamela Munn, Manager, Special Investigations Unit, at (512) 936-9795 or me at (512) 936-9500.

Sincerely,

John Keel, CPA
State Auditor

The Special Investigations Unit investigates reports of illegal activity involving state agencies and universities. It refers the results to prosecuting authorities.

Texas Government Code, Section 321.022, requires state agencies and universities to report suspected fraud or unlawful conduct to the State Auditor's Office if there are facts (not merely suspicion) that point to fraud or unlawful conduct.

To report suspected illegal activity, call 1-800-TX-AUDIT (1-800-892-8348), send a fax to (512) 936-9400, visit www.sao.state.tx.us, or mail information to the State Auditor's Office, Attn: SIU, P.O. Box 12067, Austin, Texas 78711.

cc: The Honorable Rick Perry, Governor of Texas
The Honorable Ronnie Earle, Travis County District Attorney
Dr. Shirley J. Neeley, Commissioner, Texas Education Agency



This document is not copyrighted. Readers may make additional copies of this report as needed. In addition, most State Auditor's Office reports may be downloaded from our Web site: www.sao.state.tx.us.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this document may also be requested in alternative formats. To do so, contact our report request line at (512) 936-9880 (Voice), (512) 936-9400 (FAX), 1-800-RELAY-TX (TDD), or visit the Robert E. Johnson Building, 1501 North Congress Avenue, Suite 4.224, Austin, Texas 78701.

The State Auditor's Office is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in employment or in the provision of services, programs, or activities.

To report waste, fraud, or abuse in state government call the SAO Hotline: 1-800-TX-AUDIT.