



United States Attorney's Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, September 12, 2008

Channing Phillips (202) 514-6933

Web Address: www.usdoj.gov/usao/vae

**Local contractor sentenced for paying more than
\$49,000 in bribes to two D.C. Public School officials**

Washington, D.C. – Charles J. Wiggins, a contractor who performed work for the District of Columbia Public Schools, has been sentenced to paying bribes to two D.C. Public School (DCPS) officials, U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor, Joseph Persichini, Jr., Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, and District of Columbia Inspector General Charles J. Willoughby announced today.

In 2006, Wiggins, 64, of Temple Hills, Maryland, admitted during a guilty plea proceeding to making bribe payments to the two officials in return for obtaining work at various D.C. Public Schools. Today, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the Honorable John D. Bates sentenced Wiggins to 2 years of probation, conditions of which required Wiggins to perform 150 hours of community service and to perform 50 days in jail on weekends. Judge Bates granted Wiggins a downward departure from the sentence he faced under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines because of his cooperation with the government involved in this bribery scheme.

According to the government's evidence, with which Wiggins agreed, between 2001 and 2003, Wiggins operated a business known as Wiggins Telecommunications out of his home in Maryland. Wiggins Telecommunications was a computer company which installed and maintained computers. Through his company, Wiggins sought and received work with the DCPS. Two individuals whom Wiggins dealt with were employed by DCPS. One individual, Lorelle Dance, was employed as a business manager with DCPS and was responsible for buying goods and services for various elementary schools within the DCPS system. Until December 31, 2002, a second individual, George Smitherman, was employed by DCPS as a principal of Moten Elementary School. Part of Smitherman's responsibilities as a principal was to manage the use of government-issued DCPS purchase cards and approve requests for the purchase of goods and services by Dance.

Wiggins, through Wiggins Telecommunications, agreed to perform computer installation services for DCPS. Dance and Smitherman were responsible, in their respective positions with DCPS, to approve work by Wiggins and his companies, and to approve payments to him. In or about the Fall of 2002, Wiggins, with the assistance of Dance, also created a shell company, Motts Sales and Services, through which Wiggins fraudulently billed DCPS, at the instruction of Dance, for custodial and computer-related goods and services.

Between 2001 and 2003, Wiggins received, through Wiggins Telecommunications, more than \$300,000 from DCPS in exchange for computer related work that he reportedly performed for the DCPS system. Between the Fall of 2002 and the Spring of 2003, Wiggins also received, through his shell company, Motts Sales and Service, more than \$60,000 for services and goods allegedly provided to DCPS. During this same time period, Wiggins paid to Dance and Smitherman approximately \$38,332.47 and \$11,000, respectively, in return for maintaining the defendant's lucrative work arrangement with DCPS.

Dance previously pled guilty to a bribery charge in this scheme and was sentenced in August 2006 by Judge Bates to 18 months in prison. Smitherman was charged with accepting gratuities, but was acquitted on those charges at trial in July of 2008.

In announcing today's sentence, U.S. Attorney Taylor, Assistant Director Persichini, and Inspector General Willoughby praised the hard work of FBI Special Agents Julie Lenkhart, Jared Wise, and Sean Ryan and Special Agent Bryan Chase of the Inspector General's Office. They also acknowledged the efforts of Paralegal Specialist Jeanie Latimore-Brown, Legal Assistants Lisa Robinson and Priscilla Hutson and former Legal Assistant Teesha Tobias, as well as Assistant U.S. Attorneys Julieanne Himmelstein, Renata Cooper and Daniel P. Butler, who prosecuted these matters.

###

[Washington Field Office
Home Page](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[FBI Home Page](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)