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## Ex-school employee embezzled \$63,000

A woman who worked in the Chichester district admitted creating a bogus account and then writing herself checks.

By Mari A. Schaefer  
Inquirer Staff Writer

A former Chichester School District employee responsible for paying district bills pleaded guilty to embezzling more than \$63,000 in school funds yesterday.

Jennifer Patricia Wilson, 33, of Bear, Del., was an accounts-payable specialist for the district, which serves 3,700 students in lower Delaware County.

"Other than salary, everything went through her," said Roberta Gruber, business-operations adviser for the school district. Gruber said the discrepancy was discovered during a routine audit.

According to court papers, Wilson created a fake vendor account using the name of a real company she found on the Internet, Wilson Sports of Fleming, N.J. She processed false transactions and then put her own name on the checks that were issued. Wilson then cashed the checks at various Commerce Banks.

Between October 2005, and September, when the problem was spotted, Wilson cashed 11 checks totaling \$41,750. Another five checks totaling \$21,977.92, originally issued to utilities, were also altered.

A single mother of two, Wilson resigned her position in the district in September when Upper Chichester police were contacted about the incident. She had been employed since May 2003 with an annual salary of \$26,320.

The case involved a "violation of public trust and a diversion of monies sorely needed to educate children here in the county," said District Attorney G. Michael Green, who added that his office would seek jail for the defendant.

"Thankfully, we discovered it when we did and put a stop to it," said Gruber, who said the district had further tightened the internal controls used to prevent further fraud. Gruber said it had never had any problems in the past. She said Wilson said she used the money to "help her family."

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Contact staff writer Mari A. Schaefer at 610-892-9149 or [mschaefer@phillynews.com](mailto:mschaefer@phillynews.com).