



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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**FORMER PRINCIPAL OF AUGUST AHRENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PLEADS NO CONTEST TO TWO COUNTS OF
TAMPERING WITH A GOVERNMENT RECORD**

HONOLULU – Acting Attorney General Russell A. Suzuki announced today that Florentina Smith (68), the former principal of August Ahrens Elementary School, pled no contest to two counts of the offense of Tampering with a Government Record and moved for a deferral of her no contest plea. The Honorable Patrick Border granted Ms. Smith's request for the deferral, sentenced her to a one-year deferral period, and ordered Ms. Smith to pay a \$500 fine to the state general fund as a condition of her deferral.

On June 23, 2013, Ms. Smith was charged with two counts of Tampering with a Government Record, a misdemeanor offense, for instructing a staff member to create two forms for the payment of stipends to staff members. The stipend forms were signed by Ms. Smith and each authorized payment of stipends to nine of her staff members to attend training on November 12 and 19, 2011. The staff members were each paid \$200, totaling \$1800, for training that they did not attend. Ms. Smith signed the stipend forms and authorized payments knowing that the staff members had not attended the training. The nine staff members were administratively ordered and did pay back the \$1800 they received.

Acting Attorney General Suzuki stated, "Regardless of what Ms. Smith's motivation might have been, we will not condone the falsification of government records. Principals are required to comply with the law and cannot arbitrarily authorize the expenditure of funds to staff members for work that was not performed."

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