

# NEW BEDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## PRESS RELEASE

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See Also: 2008-21478

2008-21527

2008-21772

2008-23292

### CHARGES SOUGHT AGAINST (4) NEW BEDFORD WOMEN FOR EMBEZZLING FROM PTO

The New Bedford Police Department concluded a several week investigation today culminating in criminal charges of felony embezzlement being sought against (4) New Bedford women who were employed at or parents of students in New Bedford Public Schools who embezzled over \$55,000.00 from PTO funds at four different New Bedford Schools from 2003 until the present time.

New Bedford Police School Resource Officers originally learned of the allegations and immediately initiated an investigation with the full cooperation of Dr. Patricia Bonner, Superintendent of New Bedford Public Schools. The New Bedford Police School Resource Officers then forwarded their preliminary findings to the New Bedford Police Major Crimes Division where the case was investigated by Detective Sergeant Paul Demers.

Detective Sergeant Demers brought felony charges against the defendants as follows:

- 1) Kathryn Laroche (43) of New Bedford, a high school teacher, was charged with **Larceny by embezzlement over \$250.00** for stealing \$12,830.00 from PTO funds from the Roosevelt Junior High School
- 2) Tracy Carreiro (26) of New Bedford, a secretarial assistant, was charged with **Larceny by embezzlement over \$250.00** for stealing \$2,593.96 from the PTO funds at the Congdon Elementary School
- 3) Dedra Leandre (33) of New Bedford, a parent, was charged with **Larceny by Embezzlement over \$250.00** for stealing \$1,800.00 from the PTO funds at the Gomes Elementary School
- 4) Judith Souza (42) of New Bedford, a former parent-teacher liaison who later became a substitute teacher, was charged with **Larceny by Embezzlement over \$250.00** for stealing \$38,596.00 from the PTO funds at the Pulaski Elementary School

Each instance of theft is punishable *individually* or *collectively* depending on how the defendants are arraigned and *each count* of **larceny by embezzlement over \$250** carries a penalty of up to (5) years in state prison and a fine of up to \$25,000.00.

The defendants will be notified to appear in New Bedford District Court in the days that follow. As a result of the above findings, the New Bedford Police Department will continue to work very closely with Dr. Bonner and the School Department to make certain that there are no other irregularities in any of the other PTO accounts throughout the school system and credit our outstanding relationship with the School Department through our School Resource Officer program as an integral part of this investigation.

**Report A Crime Tip** (1) [www.newbedfordpd.com](http://www.newbedfordpd.com) (2) [tip@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:tip@newbedford-ma.gov) (3) 508-99-CRIME