

Former DPS employee charged in computer theft

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FBI says surveillance video shows ex-warehouse worker took \$70,000 worth of new equipment **in** 2005.

By Paul EganThe Detroit News

DETROIT — A Detroit Public Schools warehouse **employee** used a school forklift to load about \$70,000 worth of new **computer** equipment onto a **DPS** truck and drive it away, a criminal complaint filed Thursday **in** federal court alleges.

The **employee** , Robert C. Williams, 48, did not get caught for months, despite the fact he used his **employee** access card to enter the gated warehouse yard after business hours, was recorded taking the **computers** by video surveillance cameras, and a school contractor identified him by name as the perpetrator, according to an FBI affidavit.

The contractor, Allen Boots, who worked for Aramark, told the FBI "he had made a report to security and had identified Robert Williams as the person **in** the warehouse" when the **thefts** occurred at the Warren Avenue facility on Feb. 4-5, 2005, the affidavit says.

"Mr. Boots said he did not understand why **DPS** security did not take action with regards to the **computer theft** , given the amount of evidence that was compiled."

Former DPS Superintendent William Coleman reported the **theft** to the FBI **in** May 2005.

Williams, who no longer works for the school district, appeared Thursday on a **theft** charge and was freed on bond until Nov. 26, when he is to return to court. The Federal Defender's Office was appointed to represent Williams, who could not be reached for comment.

At least one other **former DPS employee** , who has not been **charged** , admitted to helping Williams with the **thefts** and selling some of the stolen **computers** for about \$250 each, the FBI affidavit says.

That **employee** told the FBI others were involved and " **thefts** continued ... until the responsible parties were terminated."

District spokesman Steve Wasko said he had no information about how many **employees** were fired **in** connection with the **thefts** or why Williams was not caught sooner.

Coleman told the FBI that **in** a separate incident, about \$49,000 worth of new laptops were stolen **in** November 2004 from a **DPS** warehouse on Mt. Elliott.

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