



HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Paul Blackman

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School shooting threat leads to arrest of LPHS student

SEBRING -- A 15-year-old Sebring High School student was arrested Friday, April 28 on charges that he made a threat about a Columbine-like shooting at Lake Placid High School.

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office was notified through a 911 call about an Instagram post that made reference to Columbine, the 1999 mass shooting at a Colorado high school. In light of the threat, security was increased at all Lake Placid schools -- with a focus on Lake Placid High School -- as well as at Sebring High School as extra uniformed law enforcement officers were assigned to patrol school grounds and surrounding areas.

School Resource Deputies, along with HCSO detectives and school employees, worked quickly to identify the suspect, who was located at Sebring High School and admitted he made the threat. He was taken into custody at and charged with making a written threat to kill (a second-degree felony) and disrupting a school function (a second-degree misdemeanor).

Around 11 a.m. Friday, a rumor about a possible bomb on the campus of Avon Park High School prompted a brief evacuation while the school was checked. Nothing was found and students were allowed to return to their regular class schedules within an hour.

"We always take any kind of threats against our schools very seriously," Sheriff Paul Blackman said. "I am proud of the way our deputies and detectives worked together with school staff to uncover the source of this threat and make sure that any potential danger to our students was neutralized."

"We want to thank the Highlands County Sheriff's Office and the Lake Placid and Sebring police departments for their quick response to this potential threat," Superintendent of Schools Brenda Longshore said. "The safety of our students is our utmost priority, which is why the working relationship we have with the sheriff's office and other law enforcement agencies in the county is so important."

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information regarding this case can contact Det. Lars Kirkegard with the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Special Victims Unit at 863-402-7357.