

ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Sheriff Clovis Watson, Jr.
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For Immediate Release:

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MEDIA ADVISORY:

I, Sheriff Clovis Watson, Jr., would like to share this important message with our community regarding the recent threats to the schools in our area. Today, I met with representatives from the Gainesville Police Department, University of Florida Police Department, Santa Fe College Police Department, High Springs Police Department, Alachua Police Department, School Board of Alachua County and the State Attorney's Office in what will be the first of many collaborative efforts to address the terrorism, shootings and other violent crimes which have recently greatly affected our county and disrupted the education of our students. We cannot and will not allow these criminals to hold our community hostage.

Preston Powers, 17, who is the defendant in the Buchholz High School bomb threats will be adjudicated as an adult by the State Attorney's Office, transported to the Alachua County Sheriff's Office Department of the Jail and prosecuted as an adult. Charges as serious as this warrant prosecution as an adult. Mr. Powers is facing up to fifteen years in prison. This is not a game. These are felonies and they will be handled as such. Additionally, the cost of restitution will be sought for the amount of time, energy, money and assets that have been expended in investigating these incidents. I am immensely grateful to my team of stellar employees at the Alachua County Sheriff's Office whose tireless efforts have contributed to the success of the mission of bringing this to a successful resolution.

The same promise is made for those involved in the other bomb and gun threats made at other schools. Investigative efforts in the other bomb threat incidents in Newberry High School and Oak View Middle School have been fruitful. Several search warrants have been executed and I expect arrests in these cases will be made very shortly. Students and parents should understand that choices to engage in criminal activity as exemplified in these recent cases will affect and have the potential to ruin your life. For those who decide to pursue criminal and terrorist activity, I will devote the time, resources and energy need to successfully solve and prosecute these types of crimes to the fullest extent of the law. To the public and leaders involved in our collaborative effort to stop the violence, I thank you for your commitment in joining me to make and keep our community safe.

Sheriff Clovis Watson, Jr.

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