

For Immediate Release

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Ripon High School Student Threat

Ripon, WI - On Friday, December 22 the Ripon Area School District was made aware of a threat of a school shooting made by a Ripon High School student. Eight students were named in the threat. The threat was reported to school officials by an upstanding student. The message was shared via a group chat between two students - the one making the threat and the upstander who reported it.

During the interview with the upstander, it was determined that no students were in danger at that time. The high school principal went and removed the student making the threat from class while the assistant principal contacted the City of Ripon Police Department and the School Resource Officer (SRO). Using the [RASD Violent Risk Assessment Procedures](#), an investigation began with the student who made the threat and the Violent Risk Assessment team which included the SRO, principal, assistant principal, and school counselor.

The student's parent was contacted and came to school. The Violent Risk Assessment team continued their investigation with the student that made the threat and the student's parent. The Violent Risk Assessment team spent over 3 hours with the student that made the threat and the student's parent during the investigation and utilized a series of questions from the RASD Violent Risk Assessment Protocol document.

Through the investigation including interviews of several people and searches, the Violent Risk Assessment team determined that the suspected student had in fact made threatening comments, however, there was no evidence to support the student had the means to harm students named in the threat. At the conclusion of the investigation, the student, who was calm

and remorseful, was released to the student's parent. Juvenile Court authorities were contacted and the appropriate referrals were made. According to RASD policy, the student is subject to discipline up to and including expulsion.

Once the investigation was complete and the student making the threat was removed from school grounds, the students named in the threat were called to the office as a group where they were told of the situation. The students stayed in the office. Then, with the principal, each student individually contacted their parents. There is not an obvious connection between the eight students though the student making the threat had recently been involved in a breakup with one of the students named in the threat.

"The Ripon Area School District and the City of Ripon Police Department together have put a lot of time and energy on being an upstander, someone who says or does something about situations like threats or bullying, and it certainly paid off in this situation. The emphasis is on plans, drills, and empowering both staff and students to react to situations like these. The empowering mindset is important to recognize in this situation. In fact, the most recent high school newsletter to parents and students included information about being an upstander," commented Principal Randy Hatlen.

"The high school administration and City of Ripon Police Department deserve credit for all of their proactive work with students and staff. The upstanding student did a very brave thing by reporting information about the threat right away to school officials," noted Superintendent Mary Whitrock. "The Board has approved a document entitled RASD Violent Risk Assessment Procedures which is posted on the district's website. This is the process that was used in this situation, and it also outlines the proactive work school administrators and staff engage in with the City of Ripon Police Department to create a safe school climate."

Any comments or suggestions, please contact Dr. Mary Whitrock at (920) 748-4600.

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