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Press Release

On Thursday January 26, 2017, a 13 year old male student, and a 14 year old male student from The Villages Charter Middle School were arrested after law enforcement and school officials learned of, and intervened in a plot to initiate a mass shooting at their school.

On January 24th 2017, after school hours, school officials and the schools resource officer became aware of rumors circulating between students at the school. The rumors indicated that a student was planning a mass shooting on Friday January 27th. Witnesses indicated that some students had been warned not to come to school on Friday.

On January 25th 2017, the 13 year old student alleged to be planning the attack was intercepted by authorities as he attempted to arrive for school. At that time, he acknowledged conversations involving the plot and referenced the mass shooting at Columbine High School. During this conversation, officials learned of a second student's potential involvement and quickly located the 14 year old male student on campus. No weapons were found on either of the students or in their bags or lockers.

The 14 year old student acknowledged his involvement in conversations with the 13 year old student again referencing the Columbine shooting. The student informed officials that the two students had planned an attack which included what they would use as a signal to open fire.

On January 26th 2017 both students were arrested at their homes during the service of search warrants. The 13 year old student was arrested by the Lake County Sheriff's Office on a juvenile order at his home in Fruitland Park. The 14 year old student was arrested by the Sumter County Sheriff's Office at his home in Wildwood, Florida. Both students are charged with Conspiracy to Commit Murder and placed into the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice. Firearms were recovered from both suspects' homes during the search warrant service.

There is scheduled to be an increased deputy presence at the school on Friday; however, no additional arrests are anticipated.

The Sumter County Sheriff's Office is grateful for those students brave enough to speak out about the plot. Their heroic actions may have prevented a deadly tragedy and loss of precious lives.



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