

## A hard week at school

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 19 November 2021 09:33

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*Chief Manuella Middle School - Gallup, NM*



## GPD investigates student behavior in three local schools

Gallup Police responded to three different area schools, two of them part of the Gallup McKinley County Schools District, concerning disruptive student behavior in a period that spanned Halloween and Día de los Muertos.

Three people were interviewed about an incident Oct. 28 at Gallup Middle School, 1000 S.

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Grandview in Gallup. One of those was school principal Lindsey Smith-Mingus, who called Metro Dispatch that day saying a student was discovered with several knives and ammunition, but no firearm. She said the school did not want to press charges.

Smith-Mingus told police that some of the students that were interviewed said the student in question did show them a firearm while in class. The first search revealed nothing, but a second search turned up three throwing star knives, a single stainless steel throwing knife and 34 bullets for a .357 Magnum.

The principal told Officer Matthew Strandy that students told her there was a plan in place for a school shooting at the end of the day.

Strandy and Smith-Mingus locked the school down and sheltered students and staff in place until they were sure there was no firearm on campus.

The mother of the student in question talked with him in the principal's office, where he repeatedly said he had no gun and told her he brought the items to school to impress his friends and gain acceptance. He said he couldn't explain why anyone said they saw him with a gun.

Two classrooms were searched and no firearm was found. Students and their belongings were not part of the search.

Gallup police believe the youth. The knives and bullets were collected and documented and forwarded to Juvenile Probation for further evaluation. The school lockdown was lifted without further incident.

## ***THE NEXT DAY***

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The father of a student at Rehoboth Christian High School at 7 Tse Yaaniichii Ln. in Rehoboth, N.M. contacted Gallup police Oct. 29 about an incident he learned about from his son.

He said his son told him about something that happened Oct. 25.

The student said he had heard other classmates talking about a student who was talking about having a gun. He did not see a gun.

The father told Officer Norman Bowman that his son said the school staff did not investigate the incident until Oct. 28.

Bowman and Sergeant Matthew Graham visited Rehoboth High School and spoke with Executive Director Bob Ippel.

Ippel said the student said he was simply reciting a song lyric he was listening to out loud.

Ippel said the student and his parents were advised that he needed to get counseling before returning to classes to address personal issues. The student was not in school at the time of the visit.

## ***FIVE DAYS LATER***

A report of a battered teacher reached Gallup Police Officers Patrick Largo and Jared Albert on Nov. 3 from Chief Manuelito Middle School at 1325 Rico St. in Gallup.

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Principal Randy Crisler told the officers the incident occurred inside the seventh grade computer lab around 10 am. He said the student involved had also been a part of previous incidents at the school.

The teacher said during a lesson she noticed the student falling asleep at his computer in the back row of the classroom. She walked to the back of the room and after she had told the student to wake up, she saw him talking to someone next to him. She instructed him to be quiet and follow the lesson. He called her a name and flipped her a bird.

The teacher said she ignored him. He said he did not want to be there. She told him he was welcome to go down to the office. He did not respond, so she stepped out of the classroom to find a security guard, because she felt the incident was beginning to escalate.

As she stepped out, she heard a loud crash inside the room. When she looked inside, she noticed the student had pushed the desktop computer off the table. She said her memory of the incident was somewhat blurry, but she believes he stood up from his seat and began to physically challenge her. She said he walked toward her and she was shoved backward one time.

She said a security guard walked by as she called for help.

Then she said the student lunged at her and choked her. She said she could not breathe or talk, and that after she backed away, the student threatened to kill her family.

The principal arrived and told her to exit the classroom with the rest of the students. The teacher said as she turned, the student again tried to lunge at her, but was held back by Crisler.

Crisler said he grabbed the student's arms and turned him to face the wall, but the student tried to kick him, and then banged his own head against the wall. Crisler placed his right back hand underneath the student's chin and upward to prevent self-harm to the boy. Crisler said the

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student was placed gently on the floor without harm, but he did not calm down until he was placed on his belly.

Metro Dispatch and the boy's parents were called.

After conducting interviews and collecting witness statements and viewing visible injuries, Largo determined the student had committed aggravated battery, a fourth degree felony, on a member of the school staff. The juvenile probation/parole officer was contacted to conduct a risk assessment. After the assessment, it was determined that the student did not meet the criteria to be placed on a detention hold, so he was released to his parents and suspended from school indefinitely.