



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Teen Charged in Connection with Pineville School Fire

Pineville, LA – Late Thursday, State Fire Marshal investigators arrested and charged a 16-year-old student at J.S. Slocum Learning Center in Pineville with having intentionally set fire to the school last week. The student is charged with one count of Aggravated Arson.

Last Tuesday, October 21st, just before 6:00 p.m., Pineville fire crews were dispatched to the school for a reported fire in the school's gymnasium. J.S. Slocum Learning Center is an alternative school serving approximately 70 students, grades 8-12, and is one of 50 schools in the Rapides Parish School District.

Upon arrival, firefighters entered the school to find the stage curtains in the gymnasium smoldering from a fire that had been partially extinguished. There was minimal damage to the facility.

State Fire Marshal investigators determined the fire to have originated on the stage floor directly beneath the hanging stage curtain. Investigators also noted two (2) other locations near the fire's origin where someone had attempted to set additional fires. Two (2) butane lighters were located in a nearby trash receptacle. Both were collected by investigators as evidence in the case.

Working with school officials, investigators developed the 16-year-old as a suspect early on in the investigation. However, it was not until yesterday that the student returned to school giving investigators the opportunity to question him. After conferring with a parent, the student provided investigators with a complete account of his actions that day, admitting to setting fire to the gymnasium.

The 16-year-old is currently being held in the Renaissance Home for Juveniles in Alexandria.

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