



Release of Public Information

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Student Arrested for Arson at BelleVue Middle School

Today at approximately 7:25am the Tallahassee Fire Department responded to BelleVue Middle School in reference to a fire in a boy's bathroom. The fire was contained in the boy's bathroom, extinguished quickly with minimal damage and no students were injured. TFD advised that the fire's origin was a soap dispenser and that it was an act of arson. Leon County School Resource Deputy Pat Austin began an investigation in to this arson and after reviewing surveillance video, identified student Shakar Whitaker (DOB: 06-30-97) as a suspect. After being interviewed and confronted with the video evidence, Whitaker stated he set the fire. Whitaker was arrested, charged with Arson and booked into the Juvenile Assessment Center.

Leon County School Safety and Security Director John Hunkier said "the installation and utilization of surveillance video systems in each school has proven to be an invaluable tool for law enforcement and school officials. Not only do these cameras deter criminal activity, they help identify suspects who may otherwise not be caught".



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