



10 students face vandalism charges

WRHS property spray-painted
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MMCKEON@HOLDENLANDMARK.HOLDEN — Ten Wachusett Regional High School seniors face felony charges in Leominster District Court after officials found spray-painted messages and obscene drawings on school property on April 1.



Special Section Archive



WRHS seniors Cameron J. Brigham, 18, 5 Ivernia Rd., Worcester; Bryan F. Bunker, 18, 41 Central Tree Rd., Rutland; Keith E. Chestna, 19, 78 Main St., Princeton; Brian R. Conrad, 18, 55 Cook St., Holden; James M. Coulombe, 17, 6 Tanglewood Cir., Rutland; Steven Drohan, 18, 31 Bigelow Rd., Princeton; Justin D. Hayes, 18, 1689 Main St., Jefferson; Christopher Hazelton, 18, 24A North Calamint Hill Rd., Princeton; Sean P. Phelan, 18, 1690 Wachusett St., Jefferson, and Sean P. Quinlivan, 18, 5 Colonial Dr., Rutland are all being charged with vandalizing property.

The charges carry the possibility of jail time, a fine, restitution or a combination.

Holden officials say they're definitely looking for restitution for the damage they estimate at more than \$10,000.

The arrests are the result of a Holden Police investigation after students and staff arrived at school on April Fool's Day to find graffiti painted on pavement, fences and the high school dugouts last week. The school recently completed an \$82 million renovation, including the athletic area.

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The graffiti could not be scrubbed off and may require resurfacing.

Holden Police Chief George Sherrill lauded the investigative work of WRHS resource officer Rocky Himmer and Detective Chris Carey in solving the case. The officers used the evidence of bar codes on discarded spray paint cans and surveillance videos from the chain store where the spray paint was purchased, as well as statements from students, to solve the case.

Seven of the students were arrested at the high school Monday, two others turned themselves in Tuesday; one was arrested at the high school Tuesday morning.

"The school, the town and the police department want to send out a message that this will not be tolerated," Sherrill said.

While some of the messages were typical of senior pranks, like "Seniors '09," many of the others had obscene drawings and some had sexual messages as well.

WRSD Superintendent Thomas Pandiscio said the students have been suspended under the school's discipline code.

"We'll wait for the criminal proceedings to move forward and decide what approaches we would take, if any, for further discipline," Pandiscio said. The options could include expulsion, he noted.

As for the vandalism itself: "It's clearly the worst case of vandalism we've seen."

Pandiscio said it's difficult at this point to commit to a cost estimate; insurance companies and contractors are still surveying the damage.

"There are varying estimates depending on how we remediate it," Pandiscio said. "If neither maintenance nor remediation work, it could come to resurfacing."

Efforts have been made to remove the graffiti with power washing and detergents, to no avail.

"My feeling is that the taxpayers just purchased brand new parking lots, so we should return the parking lots to a brand new condition," he said.

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