



Gov. PHILIP D. MURPHY | Lt. Gov. SHEILA Y. OLIVER | Dir. JARED M. MAPLES

NJOHSP

INTELLIGENCE NOTE

AUGUST 10, 2018

Teen Accused of Plotting School Violence at a Graduation Ceremony in Ocean County, New Jersey

On June 21, authorities arrested a 19-year-old accused of plotting to shoot fellow students and staff at a high school graduation ceremony in Plumsted Township (Ocean County).

Matthew Vanderbeek of Upper Freehold Township (Monmouth County) threatened school violence at New Egypt High School's graduation and attempted to purchase a gun in order to carry out the attack, prosecutors said. An investigation into the threat on June 19 revealed that Vanderbeek used social media to state his intentions to conduct the shooting. Further investigation revealed that he sought to buy a firearm, but a friend driving Vanderbeek to a nearby sporting goods store told him to leave the car after learning of his intentions. Vanderbeek expressed interest in James Holmes, who killed 12 people and injured 70 in a shooting at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, in July 2012. Vanderbeek proceeded to dye his hair red to emulate Holmes.



Vanderbeek is being held at the Ocean County Jail and is charged with making terroristic threats with a threat to kill and attempting to possess a firearm for an unlawful purpose. He is facing 30 years in state prison after the State Attorney General's Office approved the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office request to charge Vanderbeek with terrorism.

SAR Success: Multiple students made school administrators aware of Vanderbeek's verbal and online threats. They, in turn, immediately reported the threat to police. Due to this swift notification of authorities, as well as a climate of openness among school staff, students, and police, a deadly school shooting in New Jersey may have been averted.

In March 2018, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal issued a [Directive](#) requiring all law enforcement agencies in New Jersey to immediately report threats of violence against schools. Plumsted Police submitted a suspicious activity report (SAR) to the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office and to NJOHSP, which resulted in the investigation and arrest of Vanderbeek.

We encourage all partners to report suspicious activity to local and county law enforcement, and to NJOHSP's CTWatch by calling 866-4SAFENJ (866-472-3365) or emailing tips@njohsp.gov.

"SEE something, SAY something"

Report Suspicious Activity 1-866-4-SAFE-NJ | <https://www.njhomelandsecurity.gov>