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## **City of Arlington and Arlington Public Schools Joint Media Statement**

**For Immediate Release**

**October 22, 2019**

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### **Arlington Public Schools and Arlington Police Respond to Incident at Arlington High School**

(Arlington, WA) – A 16-year-old student is in custody for his involvement in an emergency situation at Arlington High School that occurred shortly before 8:30 a.m. today. Initial reports were that a homemade smoke device was set off in a bathroom in the high school.

Arlington High School staff and the Arlington Police School Resource officer responded to the second floor of the D-Wing and put out a small fire in a bathroom. Arlington Police and Fire Departments were also dispatched to the high school to fully extinguish the fire and secure the facility.

Arlington High School immediately placed the school in a lock out to protect all students and staff, who were then directed to shelter in place. All students and staff were safe throughout the entire incident.

In an abundance of caution, Arlington Public Schools made the decision to evacuate all students and staff from the facility and initiate the school's student reunification plan. This evacuation allowed the Snohomish County Regional Bomb Squad, comprised of members from the Washington State Patrol, Everett Police Department, and the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office, to thoroughly search Arlington High School for any devices. No additional devices were located in the search.

After a cursory examination, the device has now been identified as a homemade explosive device. The Seattle office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms is assisting Arlington Police in the on-going investigation.

Arlington Police and Arlington Public Schools greatly appreciate the community's patience as we worked together on this incident, from the initial call out through the reunification process.

“I would like to thank the students, families and staff of Arlington Public Schools for their understanding during this emergency situation,” said Dr. Chrys Sweeting, Arlington Public Schools Superintendent. “The safety of our students and staff is a top priority for our district. The student reunification process took an extended amount of time but our families were incredible, waiting patiently to pick up their children.”

“We greatly appreciate everyone’s patience as we worked to reunite each student with their parents. Our priority is the safety of your child and it is essential for us to account for each one during every step of this process,” stated Arlington Police Chief Jonathan Ventura.

Arlington Police Chief Jonathan Ventura also praised the actions of Arlington High School staff member Jim Eldridge for his role in the incident. “Jim’s quick action in initially extinguishing the fire, provided the opportunity for the school to release students and staff as safely as possible.”

Parents and students are reminded that if they observe any unusual or concerning behavior of a student they can anonymously report it through the link on the Arlington Public School’s website or via the SafeSchools Alert app.

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