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Two new school threats follow Fair Haven lockdown

By **Xander Landen**
Feb 20 2018 3 Comments



Schools in Colchester and Fairfax this week confronted threats amid the fallout from last week's arrest of a teenager in Fair Haven, who is now facing charges that could carry a life sentence.

On Monday, Colchester High School student Alex Cardosi, 18, allegedly told another student he was going to "shoot up the school," according to the Colchester Police Department.



A mugshot of Jack Sawyer. Photo courtesy Vermont State Police

Cardosi was cited by police for disorderly conduct and is scheduled to appear in Chittenden Superior criminal court on Thursday, the department said in a statement on Facebook.

"A police presence was in place at CHS and adjacent Colchester Middle School and Malletts Bay School as acknowledgement of the added anxiety this situation had placed on our affected students, parents and staff," it said.

In Franklin County on Tuesday, Bellows Free Academy Fairfax went into "lockdown" and sent students home early after administrators were informed of a threatening message sent to a student via Facebook.

Police officers were informed of the threat to the school and "secured" the person suspected of sending of the message, according to a [recorded message](#) from BFA Principal John Tague sent to parents in the morning.

"As the investigation continues and questions remains, we feel it is necessary to send students home. We are currently in a lockdown situation. Students were dismissed around noon," he said.

Both schools were expecting to be open on Wednesday, though officials in both cases said the investigations were ongoing.

Last week, police arrested Jack Sawyer, 18, for [allegedly plotting](#) a mass shooting at Fair Haven Union High School. Police say he had recently purchased a 12-gauge shotgun along with ammunition and wrote down his preparations for carrying out his plot in a notebook titled "The Journal of an Active Shooter."

Sawyer is facing charges of attempted aggravated murder, attempted first-degree murder and attempted aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and if convicted could face life in prison.

Colchester Police Lt. Douglas Allen said Cardosi received only a citation because there was no evidence of anything beyond a verbal threat.

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“A general statement of ‘I’m going to do a bad thing’ — there’s not a lot of laws that cover that,” Allen said.

Another student who made more than a dozen threats of violence that shut down South Burlington High School last year was [sentenced on Tuesday](#) to five years probation. Prosecutors said they had found no indication that Josiah Leach, 19, intended to carry out his threats.

Rob Evans, the safety liaison officer for Vermont’s Agency of Education, said his department doesn’t keep data on the number of threats schools act on each year.

But in the current climate of fear caused by ongoing high-profile acts of violence around the country, he said, Vermonters are more attuned to possible threats.

“I think we see after any tragedy or horrific event that for a period of time there is this heightened awareness,” Evans said. “People for all the right reasons are now really, really paying attention to all the things that we are seeing on social media.”



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About Xander

Xander Landen reports on business and the economy for VTDigger. Before he moved to Vermont in 2018, he lived in New Hampshire and covered crime, courts and local government for The Keene Sentinel. Xander got his start in public radio, writing and producing stories for NPR affiliates including WBUR in Boston and WNYC in New York. While at WNYC, he contributed to an award-winning investigation of how police departments shield their misconduct records from the public. He is a graduate of Tufts University and his work has also appeared in PBS NewsHour and The Christian Science Monitor.

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