

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Ashland high school student linked to threatening text takes own life

By [Molly Duffy](#), [Sarah Ng](#)

September 10, 2013 | 6:50 p.m. CDT



Ashland Police Department Chief Lyn Woolford and Major Tom Reddin of the Boone County Sheriff's Department addressed the media during a press conference Tuesday at the Boone County Sheriff's Department. | [Kevin Cook](#)

MoreStory
Related Media

ASHLAND — Southern Boone School District schools were closed Tuesday after the superintendent learned of a text message Monday night that contained a threat to Southern Boone High School and police decided the threat was credible.

The student connected to the text message, identified as 17-year-old Jacob Meadows, died at an area hospital Tuesday after he shot himself in the chest early Tuesday morning when police attempted to take him into custody at his home.

An Ashland police officer and a Boone County sheriff's deputy arrived at the house in Ashland shortly before 2 a.m. Tuesday. Boone County



A Boone County Deputy Sheriff's car sits outside Southern Boone County school buildings on Tuesday on East Liberty Lane and Old 63 South. Classes and activities at all Southern Boone County schools were canceled Tuesday after a threatening text was sent to the district superintendent.

Sheriff's Department Maj. Tom Reddin said that Meadows was in pajamas and that the shooting occurred while he was retrieving other clothes, before he had been interviewed about the text message.

The handgun was a firearm that "had been in the home," Reddin said. He did not know specifically to whom the gun belonged; he said Meadows lived with his father and stepmother.

"He was being very cooperative with the law enforcement that was there on the scene," Reddin said. "He was giving no indication that this was on his mind or that he might act in this way at this time."

The text message in question was sent to another student, Southern Boone School District Superintendent Chris Felmlee said. When Felmlee became aware of the threat about 10:30 p.m. Monday, he reported it to law enforcement.

Felmlee decided early Tuesday morning to close school. He said he treated the text like a bomb threat.

"At that point in time, the only motive we had in mind was to ensure the safety of the student body," Felmlee said.

Sheriff's Department Sgt. Brian Leer said Tuesday that law enforcement agencies "have been investigating since yesterday."

Ashland police, the Boone County Sheriff's Department, the MU Police Department, Missouri Capitol Police, the Mid-Missouri Bomb Squad, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives searched the high school thoroughly. They then continued to search other school district campuses.

Law enforcers did not find "devices of a threatening nature" on any campuses, according to a joint news release from Ashland police and the Sheriff's Department.

Twitter users around Ashland mentioned bullying in connection with Meadows' death, but Felmlee said he did not know whether bullying was a factor.

"There is a lot of speculation going on," said Gary McKinney, whose son was in the high school band with Meadows. "But I still think it is still a great community to raise a family. We will rally together as a community to help the family."

School is expected to reopen Wednesday morning, and resources and counseling will be available to all students. The school plans to speak to the deceased student's classmates at the high school.

"It's a community process," Felmlee said. "It's not just the school; it's the whole community that's going to go through this and need time to heal. It's a tragic, tragic loss what occurred."

[Click here to view the news release on Document Cloud.](#)

Supervising editor is [Stephanie Ebbs.](#)