



## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

### PRESS RELEASE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### NORTH CITY SCHOOL STAFF PREVENT INTRUDER FROM ENTERING SCHOOL

ATHENS, TENNESSEE – May 1, 2019 – On Wednesday, May 1, 2019, a woman entered the lobby area of North City Elementary School. The woman, who was later identified as Tashea Gordon, was acting erratically and pacing the lobby of the school. She was screaming loudly and calling for help. When a staff member of the school attempted to talk to Ms. Gordon, she tried to force her way in to the secure area of the school, where the students and classrooms are located. Several staff members struggled with the woman to prevent her from entering the school, while another staff member called 911.

Athens Police Officer Randy Queen was dispatched to the school and arrived approximately one minute after being dispatched. Several other officers arrived immediately after Officer Queen, and Ms. Gordon was taken into custody.

During the struggle, several members of the school staff received minor injuries.

Ms. Gordon was transported to the Emergency Room and will be booked into the McMinn County Jail upon release on 3 counts of assault and 1 count of disorderly conduct.

During the aforementioned incident, the school was placed into a lockdown status. Once the situation was resolved and Ms. Gordon was removed from the scene, an assembly was conducted to discuss what had happened with the students. A guidance counselor and student resource officer were present at the assembly to help students understand what had happened and process the situation. Police personnel remained at the school for the remainder of the day in order to help reassure the students.

The Police Department is currently investigating the incident and it is not yet clear exactly why Ms. Gordon was at the school or what she hoped to accomplish.

Chief Couch, of the Athens Police Department, said "I'm proud of the quick response by our officers and the courage shown by the staff at the school that put the safety of their students above their own. While we don't yet know why this suspect was trying to force her way in the school, it's obvious she had no business being there. Nothing is more important than the safety of our children."

School Superintendent Dr. Melanie Miller said "We appreciate the quick response of our school staff and police officers. We practice lockdowns to be prepared for this exact type of situation. I'm proud of the students at North City for following our lockdown procedures."

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