



# City of Ridgecrest Police Department

100 W. California Ave. • Ridgecrest, CA 93555 • 760.499.5100 • fax 760.371.1674

**RONALD N. STRAND, Chief of Police**

## Press Release

### Joint Statement from Sierra Sands Unified School District and RPD.

**Dear Parents, Staff, and Community:**

**We would like to address a situation that occurred before school hours at Pierce Elementary School on January 4, 2017. We would like to present additional facts so as to eliminate questions and concerns you may have. A press release provided by the Ridgecrest Police Department stated the following:**

City of Ridgecrest  
Police Department  
100 W. California Ave. □ Ridgecrest, CA 93555 □ 760.499.5100 □ fax 760.371.1674  
Press Release  
DATE OF EVENT: 01/04/ 2017  
TYPE OF EVENT: Suspicious Subject  
LOCATION: Pierce School 674 N. Gold Canyon St.  
CHARGES: PC 488 Petty Theft  
PC 602(m) Trespassing  
PC 32310 Possess large capacity magazine  
PC 25400(a)(1)(m) Concealed firearm in a vehicle  
PC 30605(a) Possess illegal assault weapon  
PC 626.9 Possess firearm at public school  
SUSPECTS: Brian Coats age 30

On 01/04/17 at about 0700 hrs. Ridgecrest Police Department Officers were dispatched to the desert area south of Pierce School regarding a subject yelling. When Officers arrived at the scene, they met a subject identified as Brian Coats, age 30, who is from Louisville Kentucky. During the investigation it was found that Coats possessed a concealed pistol, AK47 rifle, and Bushmaster rifle in his vehicle. Also located in the vehicle were numerous large capacity magazines for both rifles some of which were loaded. Surveillance video at Pierce School shows Coats pulling his vehicle up to the front of the school and taking landscaping rocks. Coats then entered the school using an axe to pry open the gate. Once inside the school Coats took a small desk, table, and trash can. Coats then climbed on top of the school library. Coats was also seen running in front of classrooms and at one point a hand gun fell off his person onto the sidewalk which he retrieved. This was the handgun found in his vehicle. Coats was booked and transported to CRF Bakersfield where he was held.

End of Press Release - RONALD N. STRAND, Chief of Police. Prepared by: Sgt. Ron Bell

**Sierra Sands Unified School District and the Ridgecrest Police Department would like to assure you that the events listed above occurred before any students were on campus. The subject entered the campus at 3:00 a.m. and departed before 5:00 a.m. At 5:59 a.m., the Ridgecrest Police were alerted by a district staff member that a subject could be heard yelling in the school parking lot. Police were dispatched and could not locate the subject at that time. At 6:59 a.m., Sierra Sands staff notified RPD that the subject had returned to the desert area across from the school. Ridgecrest Police were again dispatched and the subject was arrested in the desert over ¼ mile from the campus.**

**If you have further questions, please feel free to call the Superintendent's Office at 760-499-1600.**

**\*\*\*This statement was prepared jointly with Sierra Sands Unified School District and the Ridgecrest Police Department.**