



Bexar County Fire Marshal
San Antonio, Texas 78222

Press Release
May 7, 2021

Contact: Tom Peine
210.335.0073/o
210.420.8694/m

Suspect in Pearce Elementary School Arson Investigation Arrested

On April 17, 2021, Bexar County Fire Marshal's Office (BCFMO) investigators responded to the scene of a commercial structure fire at William Pearce Elementary School, located at 19190 Hwy 281 S #3, San Antonio, TX. Firefighters had extinguished a fire in a detached classroom building on the school's campus. The building was typically used for arts and crafts instruction.

Deputy Fire Marshals began their thorough investigation of the scene. In the affected structure, they noted signs of a possible forced entry. Over the course of two days, Deputy Fire Marshals conducted their on-scene investigation, including the deployment of a specialized K-9 trained in the detection of accelerants.

Items located at the scene indicated that the suspect had set multiple fires at the time of the arson. Southside Independent School District (SISD) Police Department investigators obtained video surveillance footage, which led to the identification of the suspect, Kody J. Mengden, 30 years old.

The investigation became a joint effort between BCFMO and SISD Police Department. The BCFMO obtained an arrest warrant for Mengden for 1st Degree Felony Arson of a Place of Assembly.

Yesterday, May 6, 2021, officers with the Schertz Police Department took Mengden into custody. He was booked into the Bexar County Adult Detention Center.

The investigation is ongoing.

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