



### Withrow Family Statement

We the family of Cole Withrow are very happy to have this matter settled so that we can move forward. We are very proud of Cole and love him dearly. On May 16th we consented to a public statement to be released by the Johnston County District Attorney, Susan Doyle, and in return the felony charge was reduced to a misdemeanor. We admit that there was an inaccuracy in the statement Cole made to School Resource Officer Adam Davis as to when he found that he had not removed the guns from his truck after shooting skeet on the previous Friday afternoon. Cole frequently shoots skeet with his friends and is an avid duck hunter and it is not uncommon for him to transport his guns. Is it really inconceivable that he forgot his guns were in the truck? That he did not realize that they were in his truck until after he was on school property and he went to get his book bag. Cole did make that statement after knowing that he was being suspended from school and he was going to be arrested. Cole did in fact go to the office to call his mom. He never tried to hide it.

We are thankful that Dr. Croom, Johnston County School Board Superintendent modified the suspension allowing Cole to graduate at the alternative school. We only appealed because Cole wanted to graduate with his friends, most of which had been together all 13 years. We had many hesitations about allowing Cole to go to the safe school as it is known around here. We had heard many unwarranted stories of how bad it was. Cole started school there on May 15th

and was very impressed with the school and staff. We look forward to him completing his high school and getting his diploma.

To address all of the media and social media attention, we did not start all of the Twitter and Facebook traffic regarding Cole. That was done by his fellow classmates. We did read many of the post and most were very supportive of Cole, some were not and, some directed at the Johnston County School Board. Mr. Denning, Johnston County District Attorney, Susan Doyle, and even Sheriff Bizzell were very ugly. At no time did we support the negative comments and our neighbors worked diligently to keep those remarks removed. After our neighbors made many attempts to ask all to keep their remarks positive without success we ask that it be shut down. We are sorry for any harm that those that were not respectful has caused.

We have learned a lot about the law and in Cole's case we feel it was handled properly. We do believe that there were many hurt feelings due to all of the negative attention. It is our opinion that the attention was triggered by Cole's case but that all of the anger from the public was related to the handling of the previous case with the Assistant Principal versus the handling of Cole's. All of the publics efforts should be focussed on making changes to these laws that do not allow consideration for circumstances surrounding the violation.

Johnston County District Attorney, Susan Doyle did make one statement in Court on May 16th that we are very thankful for, that Cole is a good person and never meant any harm to anyone.

David and Lisa Withrow,

Parents of Cole Withrow