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## 7 Berlin Students Face Criminal Charges

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BERLIN

Seven Berlin High School students are facing criminal charges following a school and police investigation into prescription painkillers being sold and bought on school grounds during class hours, authorities said.

Five students were arrested on warrants late last week, while two others are expected to turn themselves in soon, Capt. John Klett said today.

Except for one student who is 17, those arrested were all 16 years old, Klett said. Their names were not released because they are considered youthful offenders.

Police say the transactions happened between Jan. 27 and 29, and that three of the teens involved were sellers. One seller was a 16-year-old boy whose doctor prescribed him the narcotic Vicodin to relieve pain from a medical condition, police said. That boy then sold pills to two female students, one of whom resold the Vicodin to another student, according to Klett.

The girl who resold the pills is also believed to have obtained the drug Tramadol, which is prescribed for moderate to severe pain, from a friend in South Windsor and then selling the drug at Berlin High, Klett said. Police heard from school officials on Feb. 1, after two students who bought Tramadol pills became sick during the school day after ingesting them.

The pills were sold for "paltry" sums, Klett said -- about \$5 to \$7.50 each, with \$50 being the largest transaction.

The Berlin board of education expelled three of the students the week of Feb. 11, while four other students "have been suspended for a set period of time," Superintendent Michael Cicchetti said today.

"Unfortunately," Cicchetti said, the arrests are "probably the greatest deterrent to students who might think about becoming involved with these kinds of activities."

One 16-year-old was charged with illegally selling and possessing a narcotic, conspiracy to commit that crime, and illegally selling and possessing a prescription drug, police said. A second 16-year-old was charged with illegally selling narcotics, a third 16-year-old was charged with illegally possessing a narcotic, and a fourth student, the 17-year-old, was charged with illegally possessing a prescription drug.

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