



THE MONITOR

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U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of Indiana
5400 Federal Plaza, Ste. 1500
Hammond, IN 46320

David Capp
United States Attorney

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Police: Gunman suspended before school shooting

By JOSH FUNK, Associated Press Josh Funk, Associated Press Thu Jan 6, 6:35 pm ET

OMAHA, Neb. — Hours before he opened fire on two principals at his high school, a Nebraska teenager calmly accepted a suspension for driving on an athletic field. He went home to speak with his father and some friends — all the while giving no hint of turning violent, police said Thursday. But after his father left to run errands, 17-year-old Robert Butler Jr. took a handgun from a closet and headed back to the school to confront the administrator who had punished him. Butler, whose father is a detective for the Omaha Police Department, asked to see the assistant principal and fatally shot her in her office with his father's service weapon. He then wounded the principal and fled before killing himself.

Authorities on Thursday outlined the events that led up to the shooting, which unfolded at Millard South High School on the first day of class after holiday break. Butler had transferred to Omaha in the fall from a school in Lincoln, about 50 miles away. On New Year's Day, he had been cited for criminal trespassing after driving his car on the school's football field and track, police said. Butler was called out of class at 8:10 a.m. Wednesday to meet with Assistant Principal Vicki Kaspar. The two talked in her office, and he was escorted out of the school at 9:23 a.m., police said. Butler remained calm after learning of the suspension. "He wasn't acting like an out-of-control student at all," Police Chief Alex Hayes said. The teen received a ride home, where he talked to his father and spoke with some friends by phone.

Butler's parents decided to transfer him to Omaha because he was having disciplinary problems in Lincoln and had not been listening to his mother, who is divorced from Butler's father and remarried, Hayes said. Butler's father didn't have any reason to expect his son would turn violent because the teen did not seem distraught about the suspension and had no history of mental illness. "He was disappointed with the discipline, but he wasn't acting angry," Hayes said.

Superintendent Keith Lutz would not say exactly how long Butler was to be suspended, except to say it would not have exceeded 19 days. Any penalty longer than 19 days is considered an expulsion in the district. Butler's father, who normally works an evening shift, left the home for about 40 minutes to run errands, Butler took his father's handgun out of a closet, posted an ominous message on Facebook predicting he would do "evil things" and broke into a locked garage where his father had stored his car since the trespassing incident.

"When we, as police officers, leave our houses, we do not expect our children to commit crimes like this," Hayes said. Butler returned to the school at 12:45 p.m., but he still did not seem upset and even took the time to sign in at the administrative office, asking to see Kaspar again. "He walked into the school just like a normal student. He was not displaying any firearm or weapons," Hayes said.

Police said he had been in her office about four minutes with the door closed before he shot her. Butler then walked across a hallway and shot Principal Curtis Case. Butler also fired at a custodian and missed, and debris hit a school nurse, who was not seriously hurt. An unarmed security officer was sitting at a desk outside the school's main offices and saw Butler walking away. Butler pointed a gun at the officer, who took cover and wasn't shot. A school resource officer who heard the gunfire called police. The security officer gave police Butler's name and described his car, and at 1:35 p.m., authorities received a report of a suspicious vehicle about a mile from the school. Officers raced to the car and found Butler inside, dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

The gun was his father's service weapon, a .40-caliber semiautomatic pistol that can fire up to 15 rounds. Butler fired seven rounds. People in the school office initially did not realize the first three shots were from a gun because there had been an earlier birthday party. They thought the noise was from balloons popping. After word of the shooting spread, panicked students took shelter in the school's kitchen and in locked classrooms while police checked the building.

Kaspar, 58, died Wednesday evening. Case, 45, was hospitalized in serious but stable condition. The superintendent said Kaspar was a dedicated professional who did her job well. "She will be missed but certainly not forgotten," Lutz said. Case was improving and had been able to speak with family members, Lutz added. Classes were scheduled to resume Friday. Butler's rambling message on Facebook described his unhappiness with the school but did not supply many details. He wrote that the Omaha school was worse than his previous one, and that the new city had changed him. He apologized and said he wanted people to remember him for who he was before affecting "the lives of the families I ruined." The post ended with "goodbye."

Source: Associated Press writers Nelson Lampe, Eric Olson, Michael Crumb, Ryan Foley and Melanie Welte contributed to this report.

District News Briefs

Man with handgun rode South Bend school buses

Published by SouthBendTribune.com on November 30, 2010

SOUTH BEND, IN | A 19-year-old man accused of taking a loaded handgun to John Adams High School Nov. 19 arrived at the school by riding two school buses posing as a new student, officials said. Dominique Williams allegedly rode a school bus and then a shuttle to Adams, and wandered the school with a semi-automatic handgun hidden in his pants before being questioned by security and escorted out around 7:30 a.m., police said.

Williams was arrested and bonded out of the St. Joseph County Jail five days later. He faces no criminal charges for boarding the bus and shuttle, in part because the bus driver thought he was a new student and did not ask him to get off.

Williams does, however, face a felony charge of carrying a handgun without a license within 1,000 feet of a school. He allegedly boarded two buses the morning of the incident. The first, which picked him up at the corner of Angela Boulevard and Riverside Drive, took him to one of the city's high schools, though officials did not say which one.

He then picked up a second "shuttle" that took him to Adams, said Sue Coney, the school system's spokeswoman. South Bend high school students that choose to attend a different high school than they are originally assigned are bused to their assigned high school and then shuttled to the one they actually attend, Coney said. Williams was able to board the bus at Riverside and Angela because the driver had been expecting a new student that morning, Coney said.

"So when a person came on that she did not recognize, she asked him if he was the new student, and he lied and said he was," Coney said. Coney did not know how Williams boarded the shuttle without being noticed. The school system requires bus riders to notify the school system if they will be bringing a guest onto their bus. The school system then alerts the bus driver, Coney said.

If an unrecognized person boards the bus and the driver is not aware of a guest rider or a new student, protocol requires the driver to call the bus dispatch center to check if that person is approved to ride, Coney said. Coney declined to comment on whether any disciplinary action was taken against the bus driver, since it is a "personnel matter," she said. She said the school system's transportation department is reviewing riding procedures with drivers.

"Each day, our bus drivers transport over 17,000 students to and from school," Richard Hammond, the school system's Director of Transportation, said Monday in a statement. "Whenever there is an incident involving a school bus, we carefully review the event and evaluate our procedures to ensure that the students arrive safely at school and back home again."

A typical school bus capacity is between 50 and 90 passengers, depending on its size. "I would like to reassure parents that we are taking this breach very seriously and are taking steps to make sure it never happens again," Hammond said.

Chief Deputy Prosecutor Ken Cotter said if an unauthorized person boards a school bus and is asked to leave, or if there is a sign on the bus prohibiting unauthorized riders, then that person could possibly be charged with criminal trespass under Indiana law.

Cotter was speaking generally, not specifically about the Williams case. According to charging documents and police reports, Williams entered Adams from a south side entrance near the school's gymnasium. When confronted by a police officer after being escorted out of the school, Williams said he had planned to meet with a security guard whom he knew. The officer later found a loaded .25-caliber handgun on him. Williams is scheduled to appear in court Dec. 6.

Student says teacher slammed him against wall

Published by Post-Trib.com on December 8, 2010

GARY, IN| A Lew Wallace High School student claims he was injured Monday afternoon when a teacher "repeatedly" slammed him against a wall, police said Tuesday. Chemon Alston, 16, was treated at Methodist Hospitals of Gary for pain in his shoulders and back as a result of the confrontation, a police report states.

The teen's mother told Cpl. Damon Bradshaw her son was talking to his teacher when a special education teacher intervened and asked "Why are you interrupting his class?" the report states. The teacher submitted a report to school officials stating he questioned a student he saw talking at the door of a classroom and the teen threatened him and "tried to run up on" the teacher, identified as Charles Willis.

Willis denied using excessive force, saying he needed to defend himself from an attack by the student. The incident happened between 2 and 3 p.m. Security officers responded to the scene, the report states. Gary Community School Corp. spokeswoman Sarita Stevens was not available Tuesday to comment on the incident. Gary police detectives are investigating the allegations.

Vandal tosses brick, injures Lew Wallace students

Published by Post-Trib.com November 17, 2010

GARY, IN| Bricks thrown through a school bus window injured two Lew Wallace students on Tuesday afternoon. Gregory Cole, 17, was taken to the emergency room with injuries to his head and shoulder. He was treated and released from The Methodist Hospitals Northlake. Another boy was treated at the scene for minor injuries.

Cole said the bus was traveling east on 45th Avenue, from Lew Wallace STEM Academy to the Gary Area Career Center, around noon. He takes a graphic design class in the afternoon.

"All of a sudden, I heard loud bang, and glass hit me on the side of the face and my shoulder was injured," Cole said. "I guess it was one person. I didn't see who it was because my back was turned to the window." Cole said witnesses observed the man standing on the south side of 45th Avenue at Connecticut Street. Gary Community School Superintendent Myrtle Campbell said the bus stopped and two students ran off to try to catch the assailant.

"Obviously, we don't encourage them to go after people," she said. They weren't able to apprehend him, and police are searching for a tall black man. There are two security cameras on the bus, but they only focus on the interior. Cole, who is a junior, said he was speechless moments after the incident.

"Wow, I can't even describe how I felt," Cole said. "What the ... just happened." He said he might sit near the front of the bus following this incident. "Hopefully, I don't know the person," Cole said. "One student saw him and was describing him to police."

Girl, 16, hospitalized after fight at Roosevelt

Published by Post-Trib.com on November 24, 2010

GARY, IN| A Roosevelt High School freshman is hospitalized in Indianapolis with facial fractures, the result of a lunchroom fight with another student Monday, her mother said. Alisha Hardin, 16, required emergency surgery at Methodist Hospitals in Gary before she was moved to Riley Hospital for Children for reconstructive surgery on bones around her eyes, which were crushed when she fought a girl during the lunch period, Rhonda Hardin said.

The girl's grandmother was with the teen in Indianapolis on Tuesday afternoon when her condition was reviewed. "The doctor told my mom Alisha could have died from this. My heart's still racing," Rhonda said. Gary Community School Corp. spokeswoman Sarita Stevens said officials are conducting an internal investigation of the incident, which is the latest in "an ongoing situation." Stevens said Alisha Hardin was the instigator in Monday's altercation, which occurred in the bathroom "out of sight of supervision."

Both girls were arrested earlier in the school after a prior violent confrontation, Stevens said. Since then, school officials tried conflict resolution, which included bringing the girls' parents into the school to address problems between the two. The other student is 15 years old. "The police are not involved yet," Stevens said. Juvenile division detectives were attempting to obtain a report and begin an investigation into the assault Tuesday evening.

The other girl involved said Alisha threw pop on her and she may have hit Alisha with her elbow, Stevens said. "These girls are still consistently fighting," she said. Both girls have been undergoing counseling to resolve their conflict, she said.

Gary police say they have not received a report from the school in this matter. Seven security guards, some sworn Gary officers and others reserves, are assigned to Roosevelt. Rhonda Hardin said her daughter attended Charter School of the Dunes last year and had no problems like the ones she's facing at Roosevelt High School. "This has been an ongoing situation since September," she said. Alisha's mother said none of her other children attend Roosevelt. "I don't even like it there," she said.

13-year-old injured in fight at Roosevelt

Published by Post-Trib.com on December 3, 2010

GARY, IN| A 13-year-old boy suffered a gash to his head and scratches on his face during an altercation Wednesday afternoon at Roosevelt High School, police said. The teen's mother took him to the hospital for treatment of his injuries, which occurred when he attempted to intervene in a fight between two other students.

The victim was allegedly trying to protect a smaller boy when another 13-year-old picked him up and "slammed him to the ground" in a third-floor classroom. Police arrested the other 13-year-old, who was taken to the police station and faces felony battery charges. Gary police detectives in the Juvenile Division are investigating the incident.

Gun found in car of snider student

Published by JournalGazette.net on October 23, 2010

FORT WAYNE, IN| A Snider High School student was arrested Thursday after police found a loaded gun in his car in the school parking lot. The student is charged with possession of a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school. Police found the handgun under the driver's seat.

The student, whose name was not released because of his age, is also charged with reckless possession of paraphernalia, according to Raquel Foster, police spokeswoman. She said the school started the investigation and said she did not know how officials found out about the gun. According to the report, a bullet was in the chamber of the gun.

Vandalism closes Wheeler

Published by Nwi.com on December 7, 2010

UNION TOWNSHIP | Porter County police now have identified 19 students from Wheeler High School who were involved in vandalism, which forced the closure of the school on Monday. A statement released Thursday by the sheriff's department said video surveillance footage was used to identify several of the students involved.

According to police, all 19 have admitted to their involvement and are being disciplined through the school by being suspended. Police did not say how long the students would be suspended. Police said the incident was a "senior prank" and that the school will seek restitution for damage and clean-up expenses. The investigation remains ongoing, according to police.

Porter County Prosecutor Brian Gensel, who had not seen any police reports about the incident as of Thursday morning, said he intends to leave it up to the school to decide whether to handle the issue in-house or request his office get involved.



The vandals spilled syrup, liquid soap and powder in the building's hallways and hanged toilet paper throughout the building, including the school's cafeteria. Containers of fishing bait and deer urine were tied to several doors, and peanut butter was spread on the handles. Chewing tobacco containers also were used to cover the lenses of security cameras around the building, Porter County police Capt. George Gonzalez said, in an effort to conceal the mischief.

School officials said the offenders also injected some sort of substance into the locks on lockers. They also displaced furniture, knocked out ceiling tiles, wrote graffiti on the windows, overturned chairs, displaced books in the library, sprayed aerosol strings in classrooms and taped some classroom doors shut.

Regional News Briefs

Wis. gunman dies from self-inflicted gunshot wound

Published by www.nypost.com on November 30, 2010

MARINETTE, WI | A 15-year-old student who held about two dozen students and a teacher hostage for several hours in a classroom at a Wisconsin high school died Tuesday at a hospital from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, authorities said.

Sophomore Samuel Hengel shot himself after police stormed a classroom at Marinette High School on Monday night, said police chief Jeff Skorik. Hengel, of Porterfield, had been holding most of the students and their social studies teacher hostage for several hours. No one else was wounded.

The teenager allowed one of his after he took over the classroom after her daughter and couldn't reach her,

Five more of his hostages were let out hours, and finally the other students Burd emerged unharmed.

The terrified high schoolers trapped in desperately to keep their captor calm with him about hunting and fishing. Campbell said the gunman seemed think he meant his classmates any harm.



hostages free a short time the girl's mother tried to call said Principal Corry Lambie.

after about six and a half and their teacher Valerie

the classroom worked by chatting and laughing Student hostage Zach depressed, but he didn't

"I didn't know really what to think. I was just hoping to get out alive," Campbell said Tuesday on CBS' "Early Show." "He didn't want to shoot any of us." Campbell told The Associated Press that six of the gunman's close friends were in that class.

Authorities also said they did not know what might have motivated the boy who made no demands or requests during the standoff. "As far as what caused this, it seems to be a mystery," Skorik said. "We have not been able to identify anything that precipitated this incident."

Skorik said the suspect fired three shots immediately before police entered the room, but he had also fired at least two or three shots before that. He shot into a wall, a desk and equipment in the room, but he was not aiming at any students, Skorik said. The shooter was carrying a 9 mm semi-automatic and a .22 caliber semi-automatic, and he had additional ammunition in his pocket and a duffel bag with more bullets was found at the scene, the chief said. A knife was also found in the room, he said.

A bomb-sniffing dog was brought in to check the building for explosives and none were found, the chief said. He said it was not clear where the boy got the weapons or how he sneaked them into school. The shooter entered the classroom, where he was a student, at around 1:30 p.m., Skorik said.

Marinette Schools Superintendent Tim Baneck said the student started class without any weapons. He then asked to use the restroom, and when he returned he was carrying the duffel bag containing the two guns and ammunition, Baneck said. It wasn't until more than two hours later that the principal learned that neither the teacher nor any of the students from the class had been seen, Skorik said. He went to investigate and was threatened by the shooter to "get out of here," Skorik said. Lambie said the classroom was dark and locked so he used a key to enter and that's when the teen pointed a gun at him and told him to leave. The principal said he left and was able to take one of the students with him.

Campbell said the class was watching a movie when the gunman shot the projector, then fired a second round. He had two handguns and refused to let anyone leave, Campbell said. He demanded everyone dump their cell phones in the center of the room. When the gunman's own cell phone rang, the boy snapped it in half, Campbell said. He wasn't interested in talking with the teacher and told her to be quiet, Campbell said. But the gunman chatted with his fellow students, who tried to keep him talking about how he hunted and about fishing. Students even got the gunman to laugh, Campbell said.

The gunman refused to communicate with officials during the standoff, Skorik said, but allowed the teacher, Burd, to speak with them by phone. "The teacher was nothing short of heroic," Skorik said. "I think she kept a very cool head. She was able to keep the suspect as calm as possible. I heard that she took the responsibility of trying to assure the other students they were going to be OK. We really give that teacher a lot of credit for being able to keep a cool head under a stressful situation."

Firefighters kept people away from the school. Anxious parents met throughout the evening with officials at the county courthouse. After several hours, the boy let Campbell and four other students out to use the bathroom. Police outside the classroom whisked them to safety. About 20 minutes later, Skorik said, officers heard three shots and broke down the door. The gunman, who was standing at the front of the classroom, shot himself as officers approached, the chief said.

Students were taken by bus to the courthouse, where they were reunited with their parents. Keith Schroeder, a former Marinette middle school teacher, said he had the gunman as a student and also knows the boy's teacher well. He said the teen's family is extremely involved in all their boys' lives.

"He's a fine young man, and I'm totally taken aback," Schroeder told The Associated Press. "Surprised, flabbergasted to say the least because this is a great family. It doesn't fit any of the things or the molds that you read about people. I couldn't say enough good things about the family."

Marinette, a city of about 12,000 people, lies about 50 miles north of Green Bay on the border with Michigan's Upper Peninsula. About 800 students attend the high school, according to its website. City Councilman Bradley Behrendt said the district spent "a whole bundle of money" on classroom doors to make them more secure, but the school doesn't have metal detectors. School was closed on Tuesday. District officials said they planned to offer counseling for students.

Man Who ‘Scalped’ High School Student Charged

Published by Cbslocal.com on December 6, 2010

LA GRANGE, IL | A 20-year-old Brookfield man has been charged in an incident at Lyons Township High School that left a 17-year-old girl with a large bald spot after a power drill got caught and pulled out a chunk of her hair. Shahram Beikzadeh, of the 4100 block Blanchan Ave. in Brookfield, was charged with reckless conduct following an investigation that showed the incident in a stagecraft class Nov. 30 to be an accident, said police investigator Patrick Fulla.

“Reckless conduct as defined by state statute concerns whether your actions are lawful or unlawful. If they cause injury or place someone at risk for their safety, they can be charged under reckless conduct,” Fulla said. “Had this been an intentional act, it would have been a battery.” The misdemeanor carries a maximum punishment of up to a year in jail or a \$2,500 fine. Beikzadeh is to appear Dec. 22 in the Bridgeview branch of Cook County Circuit Court.

Fulla said Beikzadeh and the 17-year-old girl were both students in the class building sets and scenery for a play at the LT North Campus for juniors at seniors, 100 S. Brainard Ave. At about 10:30 a.m. Nov. 30, Beikzadeh came up behind the girl while she was painting scenery. “He had a drill in his hand that was activated and it grabbed onto the victim’s hair,” Fulla said, adding the girl’s parents later transported her to a hospital to be checked.

Ronald Gonzalez said his daughter, Luz, is continuing her recovery following the incident. “Physically, she’s OK, but she has to wear a hat to cover the bald spot on her head 4 inches long and 2 wide,” Gonzalez said “Her hair was completely stripped, “Emotionally it’s bothering her.” Gonzalez said he was dissatisfied with the school’s response to the incident, initially giving his daughter a hard time about wearing a hat to class when she returned the next day.

On Dec. 2, friends of the older student made threats to his daughter after attention was drawn to the incident, Gonzalez said. Fulla said the completed police report doesn’t include statements about a threats made to the victim by Beikzadeh or his friends. After receiving treatment for her scalp injury, doctors warned that Luz may need plastic surgery or hair transplants to repair the damage, Gonzalez said.

Shots fired near Joliet High School

Published by Suntimes.com on December 1, 2010

JOLIET, IL | Shots were fired in a nearby parking lot just as students were leaving a basketball game Tuesday night at Joliet Central High School. Police said about four men were seen at 8:42 p.m. in the parking lot of a strip mall in the 100 block of North Collins Street when a few shots rang out. No injuries were reported.

“Nearby officers pursued the suspects to the 100 block of Casseday Avenue where they jumped a fence. (Police) set up a perimeter and a canine unit and tactical officers canvassed the area, but did not locate the gunmen,” police said. Three shell casings were recovered from the parking lot. Reports noted two groups of young men had been arguing earlier Tuesday evening at the adjacent drug store may be related to the shooting incident.

Teen had pot in glove

Published by Suntimes.com on December 1, 2010

JOLIET, IL | A student was arrested Tuesday after reportedly keeping cannabis at his fingertips. Police were called at 1:30 p.m. to Joliet Central High School after staff reportedly found Santos E. Cervantes, 17, of 1025 N. Prairie Ave., holding a glove.

“Inside the glove were 11 baggies of what later tested to be cannabis,” police said. Cervantes allegedly told police he was “holding the glove for a friend who did not want to get caught with it.” He was booked into the county jail on a charge of delivery of cannabis near a school or park.

Cops: Returning student caught with gun

Published by Suntimes.com on December 3, 2010

CHICAGO, Eutimio Rodriguez was among the few students honored for academic excellence on a wall banner at George Washington School, Chicago Public Schools staff said. But when the 18-year-old returned to his former school Tuesday, he had a loaded gun hidden in an ankle holster, police said.



Rodriguez -- who'd never been arrested before -- told detectives he had the gun for protection and claimed to be the 2010 class valedictorian, police said. In fact, he graduated third in his class, CPS spokeswoman Monique Bond said. His school smarts didn't prevent prosecutors from charging him with felony unlawful use of a weapon at a school, or keep police from citing him for having no valid FOID card.

On Wednesday, Judge Israel Desierto ordered him held on \$10,000 bail, according to Cook County State's Attorney's office spokeswoman Tandra Simonton. Rodriguez, of the 13100 block of Avenue O, allegedly told police he was visiting a teacher. But when he set off a metal detector, security officers detained him, did a "pat down" and found the .38 caliber gun, which was reported stolen from Indiana, police said.

Police allegedly later found that Rodriguez was also carrying rubber gloves and the names and photos of cops who'd recently conducted a drug bust in the Hegewisch neighborhood.

Zero Tolerance Has Unintended Consequences, Beaten Student Says

Published by Chicago.cbslocal.com on October 25, 2010

GRAYSLAKE, IL | A suburban girl says she was beaten at school and no one would help her. Why? Because of zero tolerance, she says. Schools use zero tolerance as a means for disciplining any student involved in a fight, regardless of who started it. Investigator Dave Savini found the policy can leave would-be helpers helpless. Christie Paulick, a former Grayslake North High School student, says she was bullied and attacked in the hallway last May.

She suffered a broken nose, cuts to her mouth, nerve damage and an eye injury so severe she had to have reconstructive surgery. Paulick said one teen-aged girl held her while another repeatedly struck her. She and her mother say more than 30 students watched the fight, but no one helped, even after Christie fell to the floor and blacked out.

Her mother, Nancy Paulick, says the beating went on for four minutes, in part, because of a school-wide fear of zero tolerance. She believes the beating lasted longer and the injuries were worse because other kids were afraid to step in and help.

"If one kid stepped in, she wouldn't have the pain she has now, every day," Nancy Paulick said. Grayslake North school policy states that "students receive a consequence regardless of who initiated the fight." Christie Paulick says that policy means any student getting involved, even to break up her attack, could have been suspended or even expelled. "And no one wanted to take that risk," she said.



Any school using zero tolerance should change their policy says Shannon Sullivan, executive director of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, a non-profit group. Sullivan says zero tolerance policies were first created to stop gun violence but have now spread into other areas, including bullying and fighting. "They're afraid to get involved because it could impact them substantially," says Sullivan. "Suspension or expulsion are huge consequences."

Nancy Paulick also wants all schools using zero tolerance to get rid of the policy so that young people will not be discouraged from helping. Paulick says her daughter needed the other students to help because school security

guards failed to do so. She says the fight took place in front of security cameras that are supposedly monitored, but no security came to her daughter's aid.

Grayslake North officials refused to talk about Christie Paulick's attack and whether zero tolerance made it worse. Denise Kindle, assistant superintendent for personnel services, students are encouraged to get an adult to intervene when their peers fight. She said students sometimes intervene "informally." "There is certainly no discipline meted out for students stepping up to help each other," she said in a statement. "On the contrary, our students are very other-minded and often prevent each other from making bad choices."

For video coverage of this story, visit: <http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2010/10/25/zero-tolerance-has-unintended-consequences-beaten-student-says/>

Burglars as young as 8 caught on tape in Leo High break-in

Published by SouthTownStar.com on November 2, 2010

CHICAGO, IL Children who appear to be as young as 8 are responsible for a burglary at Leo Catholic High School last Sunday afternoon, video footage shows.

Detectives viewed videotaped footage Thursday that shows "five or six offenders who appear to be aged from 8 to their mid-teens," Chicago Police spokesman Daniel O'Brien said. Donations of more than \$20,000 have poured in for the school at 7901 S. Sangamon Street.

National News Briefs

What if the Wis. gunman's school had an SRO on campus?

Published by PoliceOne.com on December 1, 2010

A 15-year-old Wisconsin student brought two handguns to school on Monday and held his Social Studies class hostage for six hours before shooting himself in the head as a SWAT team entered the classroom. One of Sam Hengel's hostages was his teacher, Valerie Burd, who later described the teen as an excellent student with many friends.

The six-hour standoff came to an end after Hengel fired three rounds inside the classroom, striking a telephone and a computer. Hengel dropped one of the guns as SWAT busted down the door and then picked the other up off a podium and pointed it to his head. As a SWAT officer grabbed his arm, he squeezed the trigger.

School Resources Officers

Based on the reporting we've read, and the fact that cops were first alerted of the situation through the principal's 911 call, we assume that Marinette High School did not have a School Resource Officer. By sheer coincidence, PoliceOne Columnist Dan Marcou wrote a story last week about the value of having SROs on campus, in which he makes a compelling case for the role of cops in the lives of students.

Because SROs are on campus throughout the entire school day, they are often "told of impending fights, incidents of abuse, and the location of drugs and guns in the school," Marcou writes. "School Resource Officers are being contacted by students all over the country daily, not only because of their convenience, but also because of the relationship they have established based on respect and trust."

Hengel's motivations are still either unknown, or they have not been released to the public. Initial comments from students and the teacher make him out to be a well adjusted kid with no obvious issues. Having an officer on campus could have served several purposes in Monday's tragedy:

- Be a role model – SROs are tasked with building relationships during this critical developmental period in life. Students can confide in the officers about troubles they are experiencing at home or in school.
- Discover the handguns – A sworn officer on campus has the time, skills, and resources to track down firearms because of his/her law-enforcement background and daily proximity to students.
- End the threat – If an SRO was on campus at the start of Monday's hostage situation, he/she may have been able to

end the threat before it elevated to a six-hour standoff. There's also the possibility that in a 700-student school like Marinette High School, the SRO could have known the student personally, which would have been a valuable tool in negotiation.

Plenty of administrators don't like the idea of having armed police officers on campus, but others that are struggling with youth violence are welcoming the help.

SRO: An important job you can love

Published by PoliceOne.com on December 1, 2010

"If you want to get into law enforcement and make a difference in kids' lives, being a School Resource Officer is the way to do it," says Officer Avrie Schott of the La Crosse (Wisc.) Police Department. Schott is a ten-year police veteran. Five of those years have been spent as a School Resource Officer (SRO) at Lincoln Middle School in La Crosse, Wisconsin. She describes the school as a "little city," where she walks the halls and makes many positive contacts in a day, while she attempts to get to know as many kids as possible.

Making a Difference

"This pays off when they are in crisis. They trust you and will come to you," reasoned Officer Schott. For example there was the time a girl came into her office on the first day of school. It was a girl, who Schott had developed a rapport with and the middle school student sat down and confided that she had been experiencing repeated sexual assaults by a guardian. Officer Schott conducted an investigation and was able to arrest the suspect, ending the torment the young lady was enduring.

Opportunities to Be Proactive

As a School Resource Officer, Schott has found an opportunity to be proactive. She has been able to teach Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) to sixth graders, educate seventh graders on over the counter drugs and prescription drugs as well as Constitutional Law to eighth graders. She explains to them why police have the authority to do what they do and how they should react appropriately when stopped by the police.

"I have given presentations on inappropriate touching and 'sexting'." This, as we sadly now know, is the current practice of kids sending nude and semi-nude photos of themselves from cell phone to cell phone. Many kids do not know that when they send a nude picture of themselves over the internet that they can be charged with distributing child pornography," explained Officer Schott.

Real Police Work

Officer Schott says that some people think that being an SRO "is not real police work." She has found this opinion to be untrue. She explained that schools are like "little cities." The halls and lots are her streets and she has had to break up fights, investigate crimes, and respond to incidents where an officer is needed; much like working as a patrol officer. She also has been able to address the root problems of kids at a critical age, when they are "apt to listen," as she puts it.

Instead of just writing a truancy ticket, she will often go to the home and find out why the child is truant. She has discovered that at times it has been because there have been problems directly related to the parents such as violence and abuse.

A School Resource Officer's daily contacts are powerful — the SRO is not only a protector and provider of safety, but a role model for many kids who sometimes have no other positive role models in their lives.

One ethics instructor who does an exercise in his Academy Ethics Classes where he asks recruits to name role models in their life says, "In nearly every class I have done this exercise in, someone has named a School Resource Officer. Some of those recruits confided later that they had come from a violent home and the school resource officer had made the difference in their life."

A Dangerous World

School Resource Officers are being contacted by students all over the country daily, not only because of their convenience, but also because of the relationship they have established based on respect and trust. During these contacts, they are told of impending fights, incidents of abuse, and the location of drugs and guns in the school. In September of 2006, a student became concerned and reported information to the Vice Principal and School Resource Officers at the Green Bay East High School. Three students were ultimately arrested and during search

warrants police found their rifles, their sawed off shotgun, 20 "rudely constructed explosive devices," gas masks and their plans written out in detail predicting a blood bath at the High School, which was thwarted.

The 2010 graduating senior class of Bridgewater-Rariton High School in New Jersey gave an appreciation award to their School Resource Officer Arthur Akins, who is a 16-year veteran of the Bridgewater Police Department. They felt some of their class may not have made it to graduation if Officer Akins would not have followed up on a text message, brought to his attention by a concerned student. He immediately located the student, who sent the message.

During an interview the student told him, "I want to commit a Columbine." The student had purchased chains and locks for the school exits to increase the victim count in his planned attack. The student even admitted that a part of the plan was to cut Officer Akins' throat. The student was taken into custody and has been sentenced to three years in the New Jersey School for Boys in Jamesburg. Officer Schott explains that this is an example of what can happen when a School Resource Officer and educators "work as a team." Schott says about the position of School Resource Officer, "It's not for everyone," but confirms that if the job suits you, "it is one job you can love!"

In The News

Teachers find crack in Boston preschooler's shoe

Published by PoliceOne.com on November 16, 2010

BOSTON, MA | After a 3-year-old Boston girl complained that her foot hurt, her preschool teacher took off her sneaker and found 17 small plastic bags containing crack cocaine. Police say teachers at the Walnut Grove preschool were adjusting the girl's sneaker Monday when they found the individually wrapped bags of crack. The teachers told police the girl said her mother had put "candy" inside her sneaker.

But the girl's mother told police she knew nothing about the drugs. Police arrested 19-year-old Demare Gary, a friend of the mother's, after he allegedly told police the crack was his. The mother was not arrested, but police said the investigation is continuing. Gary's attorney, Lauren Redmond, was in court and couldn't immediately comment.

Juvenile Convicted in First Fenger Beating Death Trial

Published by NbcChicago.com on December 8, 2010

CHICAGO, IL | Jurors deliberated for a little more than 30 minutes Wednesday before convicting a 15-year-old boy of murder in the beating death of Fenger High School student Derrion Albert.

A relative ran out of the courtroom when the verdict was announced, screaming "Oh Lord, oh Lord, oh Lord," while tears streamed down the boy's face. But for Albert's family, the verdict clearly brought some measure of comfort.

"I'm pleased. I'm relieved. Justice was served," said Albert's grandfather, Norman Golliday. "The facts are the facts. Right? These are the facts and the prosecutor did a great job. I expected it to be just what it was."



Albert's mother had less to say, but in her brevity may have said a great deal. "We've got a long way to go," she said as she brushed passed reporters at Cook County Juvenile Court.

The teen, charged as a juvenile and not publicly identified because of his age, was the first of five people charged in the Sept. 24, 2009 beating to go on trial. Defense Attorney Richard Kloak said he was disappointed with the verdict, which came just after the second day of testimony. "We're going to appeal and keep fighting. He's only 15 years old. he's got his whole life ahead of him," he said.

Earlier in the day, pathologist Dr. Hilary McElligott told the jury that the single punch the teen threw at Albert contributed to the honor student's death. McElligott said Albert died of brain trauma after being stomped on, kicked and hit in the head with boards. Kloak acknowledged the boy hit Albert but said that didn't cause the other teen to die. McElligott testified that all the blows contributed to Albert's death.

The defendant "put Derrion in a position he could never recover from. When he's in that vulnerable position, that's when the others beat and stomped Derrion to death," said Assistant Cook County State's Attorney Matthew Howroyd during his closing statements.

Albert's beating was captured on cell phone video and shown around the United States, providing the most vivid example of the escalating violence that in a six-month period claimed the lives of more than 20 Chicago public school students. That video was shown to jurors on Tuesday.

Drugs & Alcohol

Sex, Drugs More Common in Hyper-Texting Teens

Published by Foxnews.com on November 9, 2010

ATLANTA, GA | Teens who text 120 times a day or more -- and there seems to be a lot of them are more likely to have had sex or used alcohol and drugs than kids who don't send as many messages, according to provocative new research. The study's authors aren't suggesting that "hyper-texting" leads to sex, drinking or drugs, but say it's startling to see an apparent link between excessive messaging and that kind of risky behavior.

The study concludes that a significant number of teens are very susceptible to peer pressure and also have permissive or absent parents, said Dr. Scott Frank, the study's lead author. "If parents are monitoring their kids' texting and social networking, they're probably monitoring other activities as well," said Frank, an associate professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

Frank was scheduled to present the study Tuesday at a meeting of the American Public Health Association in Denver. The study was done at 20 public high schools in the Cleveland area last year, and is based on confidential paper surveys of more than 4,200 students.

It found that about one in five students were hyper-texters and about one in nine are hyper-networkers -- those who spend three or more hours a day on Facebook and other social networking websites. About one in 25 fall into both categories.

Hyper-texting and hyper-networking were more common among girls, minorities, kids whose parents have less education and students from a single-mother household, the study found. Frank's study is billed as one of the first studies to look at texting and social networking and whether they are linked to actual sexual intercourse or to other risky behaviors.

"This study demonstrates that it's a legitimate question to explore," said Douglas Gentile, who runs the Media Research Lab at Iowa State University. The study found those who text at least 120 times a day are nearly three-and-a-half times more likely to have had sex than their peers who don't text that much. Hyper-texters were also more likely to have been in a physical fight, binge drink, use illegal drugs or take medication without a prescription.

Compared to the heavy texters, the hyper-networkers were not as likely to have had sex, but more likely to have been involved in other risky behaviors like drinking or fighting. A Kaiser Family Foundation study found that about half of children ages 8 to 18 send text messages on a cell phone in a typical day. The texters estimated they average 118 texts per day. That study also found that only 14 percent of kids said their parents set rules limiting texting.

Other studies have tied teen texting to risky or lewd behavior. A Pew Research Center study found that about one-third of 16- and 17-year-olds send texts while driving. And an Associated Press-MTV poll found that about one-quarter of teenagers have "sexted" -- shared sexually explicit photos, videos and chat by cell phone or online.



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**United States Attorney's Office
C/O L.E.C.C. Program
5400 Federal Plaza, Suite 1500
Hammond, IN 46320
Phone: (219) 937-5500
Fax: (219) 937-5537**



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