

Fearing shooting, students leave early; Rumors fly at Western High about a gang drive-by after fight Thursday.

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DETROIT -- Dozens of students at Western High School left classes early Friday after rumors surfaced that a gang was planning to shoot up the school.

"It's mass paranoia," Principal Rebeca Luna said. "We're in crisis mode right now."

According to students and school officials, a fight broke out after classes Thursday between two rival gangs: the Vinewood Gang and the Numbers Street Gang.

Because of the fight, rumors were rampant Friday that members of one of the gangs planned to execute a drive-by shooting.

"Me and a bunch of other kids walked out," ninth-grader Melissa Rodriguez said. "I wasn't going to just sit in school and wait to get shot."

One parent, who would only identify herself as "Sheila" because she feared gang retaliation against her two daughters, said she left work early to pull her children out of classes.

"My daughter called me and told me about what was going on, and I wasn't about to let them stay here," she said as she walked out of the school.

Luna said when she heard of the rumors, she put in place the school's emergency plan.

"We've got the Detroit Police Gang Squad here, and we've put staff at every door to make sure no strangers get into the school," Luna said. "It's crazy right now -- I've got kids text-messaging their parents and calling them on their cell phones.

"These are just rumors at this point -- but we're taking every precaution."

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