

GUNFIRE AT 3 SCHOOLS WOUNDS 3 STUDENTS DETROITERS LAMENT SPREAD OF WEAPONS

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Gunfire wounded three students **at** three Detroit public **schools** Monday, shattering a fragile peace and forcing police and **school** officials to reckon again with the troubling fact that too many kids carry guns.

Superintendent David Snead said Monday was the worst day for **school** violence since Nov. 4, 1992, when shootings **at** three **schools** left 11 students wounded.

"Feels that way," a dispirited Snead said outside Denby High, where 15-year-old Elijah Stokes was found shot in the head.

"I don't feel good about it," Snead said. "We don't want it to occur, but you have to face reality. This is an urban area with urban problems.

"There's too much guns, too much violence. We have to find a way to get the guns off the street. We have to find a way to teach kids to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence."

By late Monday, two students were in critical condition in Detroit hospitals:

* Antwan Plummer, 16, was in Detroit Receiving Hospital after being shot four times in the chest about 2 p.m. **at** Pershing High **School** .

* Stokes was in critical condition **at** St. John Hospital after being shot in the head about **3** p.m. He is a freshman **at** Denby.

Relatives and friends said Stokes was shot over his gym shoes.

"How can they learn if every time you turn around, they're shooting somebody over some gym shoes or a jacket?" his uncle, Dion Stokes, asked as the family waited **at** the hospital.

A third student, Nakila Tillman, 15, was home with her family Monday evening after being treated **at** a hospital for a gunshot wound to her right knee **at** Redford High.

She was shot in a hallway shortly before 10 a.m. An 18- year-old student was removing his gun from a locker when it fell and fired. Police arrested the youth and said they expect to charge him with felonious assault.

Police were interviewing witnesses in connection with the Pershing and Denby shootings.

"It's tragic," said Deputy Detroit Police Chief Benny Napoleon. "I've been to too many scenes like this. Our kids are shooting and killing each other **at** an alarming rate."

According to a Free Press tally of police records, **at** least 50 youths age 16 and under have been shot so far this year, **at** least four fatally. Monday's shootings **at** Redford High and Pershing High bring to three the number of shootings inside Detroit public **schools** this **school** year, said Inspector Harold Cureton, who heads the Gang Squad.

Dion Stokes said his nephew wasn't involved in any gang activity.

"Elijah is quiet. He stays off to himself," he said. "It was not gang-related. My nephew is not that type of person."

Several students said Monday that they were dissatisfied with **school** security guards, metal detectors and video monitoring systems that don't keep violence out.

"They don't do anything," said Caribe Sanford, a 17-year-old senior **at** Pershing. "I got in a fight last week and was hurt, and there's nothing being done about that," he said.

But Charles Mitchell, the district's director of public safety, said that kind of statement is an unfair assessment of what the district is doing.

"We take this seriously, and we're doing what we can," Mitchell said. He said the district has metal detectors **at** every high **school**, but can't put them **at** every door or legally search every student that comes through the detectors. The district also has video cameras in several **schools** and has several police and volunteer patrols.

"We can't guarantee anything," Mitchell said. "What today tells me is that we have a violent society."

Tiffany Foster, an 18-year-old Redford senior asked: "They have all the equipment but what are they using it for? It doesn't make sense if people have to go to **school** in danger."

Police said the young man held the Redford shooting said he bought the .22-caliber handgun in concern for his safety. He has confessed to police and is expected to face felonious assault charges. The young man was arrested inside the **school** but he told police he had disposed of the gun. It has not been recovered.'

Redford senior Darice Ward, 17, said her locker is next to the one where the gun was kept.

"Right when I put my books in my locker, all of a sudden we heard this big old pow," said Ward. Some students thought it was a firecracker. Then came yells.

"My knee!" Tillman shouted.

Some students hovered around Tillman while a teacher came to her aid. A few students went to get a **school** security guard. Other students ducked into classrooms.

Ward's sister, Doris Ward, 15, said Tillman was crying.

"She was like, 'I was shot,' " Doris Ward said outside **school** where throngs of students left **school** for the day following the shooting.

Some Redford students said they left for the day out of fear. Others said the shooting reminded them of the October 1993 shooting death of Redford student Frank Miles III. The 15-year-old was shot while **at** a bus stop a half-block from the **school** . One suspect was convicted in the death. Three were acquitted.

Miles' father, Frank Miles, who works for Save Our Sons and Daughters, went to the **school** upon hearing of Monday's shooting.

"This stuff has got to stop," Miles said. "It's got to stop. We have to tighten up and get the message out to our young folks. You have to start promoting peace now!"

SIDEBAR

How Detroit parents can help

To report violent incidents or other **school** problems, call 871-HELP (871-4357) anytime.

To get involved with district qc 1red28efforts to stop violence in **schools** , call the Clean, Safe & Healthy **Schools** Task Force **at** 494-7903, weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Caption: Photo Color JOHN LUKE

: Margie Williams rushed to Denby High on Monday when she heard news reports about a shooting. Her son Kenneath Redd is **at** left. Left: Detroit Police search an area around the **school**.

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