

Four EMSB students viciously attack another in Rivière des Prairies

Video filmed in a McDonald's parking lot after school on Tuesday has surfaced online and shows the horrifying events.



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It's hard to say what's more shocking — that four high school students viciously attacked another in broad daylight, kicking the Grade 9 student in the head repeatedly, or that 20 to 30 other youths watched and filmed the brutal beating on Tuesday and never even called for help.

Video filmed in a McDonald's parking lot in Rivière des Prairies after school on Tuesday surfaced on several media on Wednesday. It shows four students surrounding another, talking to him, before one of the students suddenly throws a first, hard punch to the side of the victim's head. The victim, a student at Lester B. Pearson High School in Montreal North, falls to the ground, at which point the four students immediately start kicking him in the head, over and over again.

Before the video ends, one boy jumps on the victim with both feet.

It was only Wednesday morning, however, that a parent went into a police station in RDP to show police the 45-second video and asked if they were aware of it.

None of the students present — at least two of whom filmed the beating, many of them in their school uniforms — called 911, said Montreal Police commander Serge-Dany Marin.

"We see on the video there are between 20 and 30 youths, the same age or younger who watched and did nothing," Marin said. "Some were filming. Unfortunately this is what happens with social media."

Marin's team called around to other police stations and found out the English Montreal School Board had the video and had also alerted police. The principal of another EMSB school saw the video himself on Wednesday and recognized the students.

Mike Cohen, a spokesperson for the EMSB, would not say what schools the attackers attended. Three of them were in the alternative school system in the east end, for kids with behavioural or

social problems, or who are under the care of the youth protection department. A fourth was in a mainstream EMSB school. But he won't be going back to a mainstream school, Cohen said.

All four have been suspended indefinitely.

"The evidence couldn't be more clear with this video," Cohen said. "We have zero tolerance for violence and this is bullying at its highest degree. In my 19 years (with the EMSB) I have never witnessed something this bad. ... It doesn't matter that it was off school grounds."

As for the victim, he made his way home after the attack and his parents took him to the hospital, Marin said. He had bruises but no other injuries, and will be back at school Thursday, Cohen said.

"The principal said this kid is made of steel," Cohen continued. "When you look at the video you think someone could have been killed. You see this in a violent movie and think 'thank God it doesn't happen in real life' — but this time it did."

Both Cohen and Marin lament the fact that the students themselves did nothing to help or alert police to give the injured boy first aid, although one of the witnesses must have shown his or her parents after the fact. Only one of the bystanders is heard yelling "hey!" and "stop!" then "OK guys, that's enough!"

"We try to teach them they can't just be bystanders," Cohen said. "There's bullying and then there's people who encourage the bullying by not doing anything. They should have called for help. But it happened and everyone walked away."

Marin said the four attackers would be arrested either Wednesday night or Thursday and charged with assault or aggravated assault. If any of them had a history with the Quebec youth justice system he would likely be detained.

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