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Thursday, May 8, 2008

2nd student expelled in brutal attack

By Jean Laquidara Hill TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

HOLDEN— The second Wachusett Regional High School student allegedly involved in the beating of a student after school on April 14 has been expelled. .

The Wachusett Regional School Committee voted late Tuesday night, after a closed-session disciplinary hearing to expel the 16-year-old boy, Superintendent of School Thomas G. Pandiscio said yesterday.

The other Wachusett Regional High School student allegedly involved in beating a student and the friend who tried to help him was expelled earlier Tuesday night. That student, a 15-year-old boy who lives in Holden, was granted the right to have his expulsion reviewed in September 2009.

The 16-year-old boy who was expelled later the same night does not have the possibility of case review, according to Mr. Pandiscio.

The 16-year-old attended Wachusett Regional High School as a junior for part of this academic year. He was admitted to the school under the state School Choice program that allows school districts to accept students from communities outside the district. The home school district pays tuition to the other school district.

Neither the 16-year-old nor a parent or legal representative attended the disciplinary hearing. Mr. Pandiscio said they had been notified. He said the school board conducted the hearing, reviewing all the information from police and other sources, and determined the boy had been involved in the assault. The board then deliberated over the appropriate action.

The boys may each appeal the school board's decision to Worcester Superior Court. The fight took place on a side street near the school promptly after school ended April 14. A student used his cell phone to video-record the fight, then transmitted it to a news station and to police.

The fight was posted on the Internet showing teenage boys ganging up on one student, beating, kicking and jumping on him when he was down, and striking another student across the face with a metal pipe when he tried to help his friend.

Using the videotape to help identify suspects, police arrested the 15-year-old and 16-year-old, and another

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16-year-old from Worcester who did not attend Wachusett Regional High School, whose names are not being disclosed publicly because they are minors.

They also arrested 17-year-old Brendan M. Simpson of Worcester, who was not a student at Wachusett Regional High School and has pleaded not guilty in Leominster District Court.



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