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Teen shot to death at Tacoma's Foss High School

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TACOMA, Wash. (AP) - A teenage boy was shot to death Wednesday in a high school hallway as classes were about to resume after winter break. Police arrested a fellow student found wandering nearby, but were still trying to determine a motive.

The Pierce County medical examiner's office identified the dead boy as Samnang Kok, 17. A relative said he is the father of a two-year-old boy.

The arrested student was Douglas Chanthabouly, 18. According to Pierce County Jail booking records, he was booked for investigation of first-degree murder shortly before 1 p.m. Sheriff's Detective Ed Troyer said the teen is on suicide watch, which is common in high-profile cases, and the Tacoma Police Department said he has no known criminal record.

Shooting victim Samnang Kok is shown in this updated photo provided by his family.

"It's not a very fun situation, especially when I was right there," Foss High School Principal Don Herbert said Wednesday. "What can you say? What can you do about it? I was 20 feet away. The only thing I could have done was taken the shot instead. But it happened very fast."

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The shooter and victim knew each other but detectives did not immediately know a motive, Police Chief Donald Ramsdell said. He said the arrested boy was cooperative, and the shooting does not appear to be gang-related or racially motivated.

It was not immediately known if Chanthabouly had obtained a lawyer.

No one else was hurt in the 7:30 a.m. shooting. About two hours later, a neighbor a few blocks from the school called police to say that someone matching the suspect's description was in the area; officers arrested the youth without incident, Ramsdell said.

"Today we lost a nice young person in a Tacoma public school in an act of senseless violence," Ramsdell said. "We'll be working with the school district ... so we can prevent this type of situation in the future."

An armed school resource officer was on the scene within seconds and radioed police for help as teachers herded students into classrooms and the gymnasium, said Detective Chris Taylor. Three teams of about six officers, each armed with rifles, swept the school to ensure the gunman had left.

Two 15-year-old sophomores, Malcolm Clark and Josh Wilber, said they witnessed the shooting and were questioned by police afterward.

Clark and Wilber said three shots were fired. The shooter was about five feet from the victim, and didn't appear to target anyone else, the boys said.

"He got shot - bang - and he just fell," Clark said. "He just froze and he fell backwards into the lockers."

"He didn't scream or nothing. He didn't move when he hit the ground," Wilber said.

The gunman fled through nearby double doors, Clark and Wilber said.

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