

Ferguson strikes close to home



photo by Claire Wever

Torrence Harris, freshman, missed his first day of school because of events in Ferguson. He did not get too far behind, but said the second day felt awkward, like he was out of place.

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Due to events in Ferguson, approximately 40 KSD students from the Riverview Gardens School District were without bus transportation on the first day of school, causing many, including some freshman, to miss their first day of high school.

According to Mike Wade, associate principal, Riverview Gardens shut down Aug. 19 because of its close proximity to the Ferguson Florissant area. Riverview provides bus transportation for the transfer students to go to their respective schools (such as KHS), so when the district shuts down, so do the buses that take the transfer students to their schools.

Torrence Harris, freshman, is one of many students who could not get to school on the first day. Harris says he knew something was off when he woke up late on the 19th. Having attended Freshman Day he didn't think school could get can-

celled the following day. When he found the busses not running, he said he looked for a ride anywhere he could, asking family, friends and neighbors. Much to his dismay, he could not attend his first day of high school.

"[Starting school on the second day] I felt out of place," Harris said. "Everybody else had their first day of class and knew what to do, and I didn't know. I feel like I missed out on a lot."

Harris was able to fully catch up on what he missed, he said, and other students including D'Andre McCiny, sophomore, and Wonyell Burrows, sophomore agree that while missing the first day was not ideal, it has not been too hard to catch up.

Indya Smith, freshman, was able to make it to school on the first day by catching a ride with her mother. While she made it, the drive was about an hour long, and her mother was late to work. Smith did have to miss Freshman Day, however, and said it caused some confusion on the first day.

Smith currently lives in the Bellefontaine area, but used to live in Jennings, which is right in the heart of Ferguson. She said her friends and family in the area are safe, but she's shaken by the fact that there's unrest in a place she used to call home. Her favorite ice cream store was looted. A Quick Trip she used to go to was burned down, and even an everyday trip to run errands is no longer normal for Smith, she said.

"We went to Target to visit the pharmacy and there was a SWAT team everywhere, and helicopters," Smith said. "It made me feel like I was in a warzone, and I just looked around and asked myself, 'Is this actually happening?'"

Smith is not the only student to have been affected by the events in Ferguson. Wonyell Burrows said he lives within walking distance of Ferguson. According to Burrows, everything is returning to normal, but he and his neighbors are still picking up broken glass and debris from the looting. Throughout the looting and unrest, he said his family tried

to make the best of the situation, distracting everyone by playing a game and making it a family night, after locking the doors and shutting the windows. Despite their efforts, Burrows could not block out the sounds of yelling, glass breaking and tear gas, always hoping people would not loot houses as well.

"I felt scared, like I was trapped in a box with just mayhem going on all around me," Burrows said. "It's not that bad anymore, but at first I felt unsafe in my own house."

Smith and Harris just want peace more than anything. Smith wants justice but at the same time she thinks people should let the case rest for the time being.

"I feel like Mike Brown deserves justice, but looting is not the way to do it," Smith said. "It's not going to solve anything. It's not going to bring him back."