

'I know that this is a bad thing that I've done'

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The 10-year-old defendant was sentenced to three to five years in a juvenile detention facility. The other defendant, an 11-year-old boy, is expected to appear in court May 28.

A 10-year-old boy who plotted to kill a classmate at Fort Colville Elementary School in Colville was sentenced to three to five years in a juvenile detention facility last Wednesday by Stevens County Superior Court Judge Allen Nielson.

The boy plead guilty just before the start of his trial in April. He was charged with conspiracy to commit murder, juvenile in possession of a firearm and witness tampering.

The boy's attorney, Helen Dee Hokom, indicated they plan to appeal.

Stevens County Prosecutor Tim Rasmussen asked for an exceptional sentence that would have put the boy in custody until at least the age of 16.

The second defendant in the case, an 11-year-old boy, remains in custody.

The two fifth-graders were arrested Feb. 7 after officials discovered them trying to sneak a gun and knife into Fort Colville Elementary School. Police interviewed the boys, who confessed they had been planning on attacking a female classmate that same day. They planned to kill the girl because "she was really annoying," court records said. A fellow student stymied the plot by telling a teacher he saw them with a knife.

Dangerous today

The boys were expelled from school and taken into custody by law enforcement.

The 11-year-old boy is currently having his mental competency evaluated by doctors at Eastern State Hospital. The tests will evaluate the boy's sanity and his fitness to stand trial.

Dr. Kevin Hyde addressed last Wednesday's sentencing hearing by phone, saying that he had met the 10-year-old boy for three sessions and felt he was not a high risk to commit violent acts. Hyde said he thought the prosecution sentencing recommendation was inappropriate.

"I think it would be wrong to incarcerate this child until the age of 16. We don't need to ruin this child's life," Hyde said.

The mother of the girl who was the target of the boys' attack said she and her daughter forgave the boys, and asked for a sentence of longer than two years.

Rasmussen, in asking for an exceptional sentence, said the boy "was dangerous on Feb. 7, and he's dangerous today."

"He doesn't think in terms of how his actions affect other people. There's something missing in him," Rasmussen said, adding that the boy's thinking was "like a video game. There's someone in your way, you kill them."

The 10-year-old boy cried when he told the judge: "I know that this is a bad thing that I've done."

The 10-year-old pleaded guilty to his charges last month.

The mother of the targeted girl described her daughter as funny and energetic. She loves horses and the color pink, she told the court. "If the boys had their way, she would have never grown up," she said. "Those dreams would have been taken away." The boy's father apologized for the trouble his son had caused.

"Mostly, for the past eight years, I have been unavailable to be there for my son," the father told the court. "If I had any idea that something like this would happen, I would have done something totally different."