

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**GADSDEN ISD**

**Feb.23, 2018**

The topic of the recent tragedy at Margory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla, last week impacted the discussion of the Gadsden ISD Board of Trustee Thursday and focused on the efforts of the district in continuing to bolster security efforts for all its schools.

Superintendent Travis Dempsey reported to the board that as a result of the Florida shooting, districts throughout the state of New Mexico also experienced a rash of anonymous threats which have not proven to be of a credible nature.

“We have focused our efforts to maintain a great relationship with local law enforcement from the Sunland Park Police Department to the Dona Ana Sheriff’s Office. Those officers continue to provide such a quick and effective response when our schools have an incident that require their assistance. And I can’t underscore the importance of the presence of Border Patrol in various areas of our district and resource they provide for our security.”

Dempsey referred to the recent incident which was posted on Snapchat last week showing a Santa Teresa High student posing with what appeared to be a large caliber pistol. The posting, which advised students not to go to school, was initially on the web last week but reported to the school late Monday.

“Because of our principal’s quick reaction, Sunland Park Police identified the student and was able to interview him in little over an hour after being called. The threat, like many copying a incident or shooting, proved to be not credible.”

That incident also brought up the system GISD uses to notify parents through the automated system use by all schools.

“Invariably parents say they didn’t get notified but we try to improve that constantly. Because of the Board comments we will also look to notifying parents via text message. Bottom line, we will always continue to improve that chain of communications.”

The Board also discussed the challenges in providing secured access to middle and high school campuses because of their size and the number of buildings accessible to the public.

Gadsden ISD high schools continue to maintain security guards to the entrance of their campuses and panic doors that are locked on the outside but can be opened from the inside. And all GISD elementary campuses have secured front entrances which require any visitor to use a buzzer before they are checked and cleared by front office personnel.

“We are looking to continue to upgrade our security procedures and look for the cooperation of our students and our parents. Students are experts in the social media and as such are a great resource when they see or read something on the various social media platforms that require our attention,” added Dempsey.

“If you see something, say something,” that’s what we want our students to practice. And parents have an important responsibility in monitoring their students use of social media,” Dempsey added.

Thursday GISD Board meeting also discussed a long list of bond related projects, a significant portion of which includes the upgrade of security doors on all GISD campuses.

As part of the bond activity that will soon be initiated, all campuses, especially high schools, are scheduled to be reviewed and the identification of those metal doors that need replacing.

“I have asked our board to give us their input on this important issue so that our safety initiatives are realistic and are aimed at safety of our students and staff at all our schools. They the most important often because our community gives them feedback on important issues and this is the most important.”