

## Safety and Security at Giddings ISD

In light of the events that unfolded in Uvalde recently, citizens in our community have been asking “could it happen here?”.

While everyone holds the hope that similar events could never happen in their hometown, these tragic events are likely to happen again somewhere. The administrative staff at GISD wanted to take time to alleviate some of the fears in our community, and inform the community of the preventative safety measures we have in place to mitigate the risk of such a tragic event unfolding in our district.

Texas Governor, Greg Abbott, sent a letter to Kathy Martinez-Prather, Ph.D., Director of the Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University, informing her of expectations for the Safety Center in working with schools in Texas. ***Some of the items mentioned in the letter have already been implemented in Giddings ISD, and have been for several years.*** Updates are given regularly to the board, throughout the year, and have been given since the tragic shooting in Santa Fe ISD in 2018.

Over the last several years, GISD has committed funds to add and upgrade security measures at each campus. Some of the major safety and security improvements that we have implemented at Giddings ISD include the following:

- Numerous security cameras inside and outside of each school which have been upgraded
- All district buildings have been secured against unauthorized access with a secure vestibule. A government issued ID is required and verified for anyone who enters our buildings and they must be buzzed in through a second set of secure doors
- Staff and faculty have been trained in new procedures to counter a number of threats to the safety of our students.
- Every member of the faculty and staff have an alert app (School Guard) installed on their phone to instantly report any suspicious or threatening behavior. The reporting of such an event triggers a full district lock-down within seconds. The app also notifies Giddings Police Department, Lee County Sheriff's Office, and any DPS troopers in the area
- A redundant alert system, known as the Raptor Emergency Button, also notifies the police department, sheriff's office, and all GISD Administrators of an emergency such as an active shooter event
- In addition to outside doors being locked at all times, they have all been laminated with shatter proof film to impede access by intruders
- All classroom doors are equipped with a magnet for fast, efficient locking
- GISD implemented an easily visible numbering system for all of the campus hallways and rooms. This allows our PD and SO to locate a room on each campus much faster
- School Resource Officer (beginning 2022-2023 school year)

Training for faculty, staff, law enforcement, and students include:

- Being alert for strangers in or around the buildings
- Not allowing anyone from the outside in without going through the office or front door
- Lock Down Drills with the involvement of GPD and LCSO, followed by debriefings
- GPD and LCSO utilize GISD campuses for active shooter training during off-hours
- TASB Intruder Assessments which include a TASB employee attempting to gain access to buildings
- All GISD administrators has completed the Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events
- Select administrators completed ARIC training (Austin Regional Intelligence Center) which focuses on regional public safety data analysis and investigative support within our area of responsibility.

Additional resources include:

- a licensed social worker on-staff to assist students as they work through emotional issues
- School Safety and Security Committee, which organizes training and regularly evaluates the Emergency Operations Plan
- GISD Threat Assessment Committee, which assesses and reports individuals who make threats of violence or exhibit harmful, threatening, or violent behavior
- Anonymous Alert App for 4th through 12th grade students that provide a way to anonymously alert a counselor or administrator of anyone with a gun, drugs, or even if someone is bullying them or a friend
- Each classroom has a flip chart of procedures for various potential incidents for teachers to review on a regular basis

Although this is not the complete list of all the tools at our disposal to create and maintain a safe environment for our students, we hope it gives you a little more peace of mind for the safety of your children while they are in our care.

Roger D. Dees, Superintendent