



The Senate of The State of Texas

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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

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July 12, 2018

VIA U.S. Post Service and e-mail

Dear Superintendent:

Immediately following the tragic school shooting in Santa Fe, I appointed a Select Committee on School Safety and Security, chaired by Senate Education Chairman Larry Taylor, R-Friendswood, with directions to complete their work by the end of July and issue a full report. They have held two hearings and are scheduled to meet again this month.

On the day of the shooting I said we must do more to secure our schools' entrances and exits. Last week I pledged that the Texas Senate will create a new matching program that will provide funding to schools that elect to install metal detectors or purchase inspection wands. The details of the program will be decided in the upcoming legislative session. If your district decides to purchase metal detectors or inspection wands before the school year begins, you will be included in the matching program.

We know there is no 'one-size-fits-all' strategy for schools and not every school will decide to install metal detectors. Each district will need to determine the path that is best for them. However, after many discussions and the information we have received from the Governor's round tables and our own hearings, we know that improving the infrastructure of Texas schools to reduce security threats, particularly securing entry points, limiting access points, and ensuring emergency exits, is critically important.

Shortly after the shooting, I joined President Donald Trump and Governor Greg Abbott in a private meeting with the victims' families in Santa Fe. At that meeting I pledged 100% funding for schools to install emergency exit push bar doors that prevent outside intrusion but can be opened from the inside so that no child is trapped in case of fire or an active shooter. I have asked the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to audit school facilities to determine how many exit doors to the outside need to be replaced on all of our campuses so that all are push bar emergency exits.

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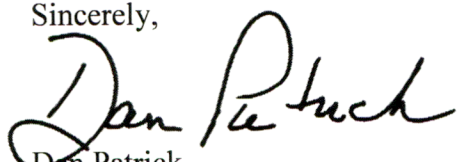
Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath will soon send out a comprehensive survey that includes a question about exit doors so we can determine how many schools need this upgrade. Once again, I will support 100% funding of these door replacements and urge you to get this information to us in order to get this done as soon as possible.

I also joined with Governor Abbott in announcing support for full funding for increasing participation in the Texas School Marshal Program for schools that choose to train and arm school personnel. Currently over 170 school districts allow personnel to be armed through their own training programs. If you are interested in the Marshal program, I encourage you to contact the School Marshal Program at the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, 512-936-7700.

I will make sure you are notified when the report by the Select Committee is released. In the meantime, if you have questions about the matching grant program for metal detectors, installing proper emergency exit doors, or the School Marshal Program, I encourage you to contact my Education Policy Advisor, Marian Wallace at 512-463-0001 or Marian.Wallace@ltgov.texas.gov.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this and for your dedication to the safety of your students and to all school personnel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Patrick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Patrick
Lieutenant Governor