



Comments from Stephen Stiles, Chief Technology Officer

El Paso Independent School District has industry standard protections of data and its supporting information network. These protections prevent malicious entry attempts every day, and have for years. School districts require sensitive data of its students, parents, and employees, and there is a criminal market for such information. There are also hacker communities that exist for the purpose of stealing such information.

EPISD's protections were penetrated by such a hacker group. This group was sophisticated enough to defeat our protections and have posted our exploitation on social network sites along with other organizations that they have victimized. We know how they achieved the penetration as well as the data that was compromised; we do not know what they will do with it. Not knowing that, we are urging parents to take precautions that protect their children's credit identity, and we are urging EPISD staff to do the same for themselves.

Three groups within EPISD's family have been victimized: all current employees, some parents, and all current students. Former employees and students were not affected. The specific information captured per group is as follows:

- Current employees:
- Some parents: These are parents who used our online student registration system, which required names, address, telephone number < list of data elements and time period exposed >. The majority of parents registered in person at one of our campuses – they are not affected by this breach.
- Current students:

Of course the penetration point has been closed, and we are taking steps to harden our perimeter security as well as key nodes within our network. Many additional technical countermeasures are being put into place as we speak, and we are also examining policies and procedures that dictate the type of data being collected and how that data is used, as Dr. Jordan referenced.

We are working with the FBI on the investigation and hoped for prosecution of the perpetrators. Special Agent Margarita Brito is with us to talk about the search for these criminals. Special Agent Brito is a member of the Bureau's Cyber Squad and coordinator of cyber crime prevention for the greater El Paso area.