



Comments from Interim Superintendent Dr. Terri Jordan News Conference Sept. 1, 2011

Thank you for being here this afternoon,

I am El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) Interim Superintendent Terri Jordan. Late [yesterday](#) afternoon, we were notified that a security breach occurred on our Intranet system and hackers illegally accessed sensitive information about our students and employees. We have been victimized as a district and this affects all of us as employees and parents. We recognize and understand the frustration and great concern this has caused our community.

The information that was accessed includes students' names, social security numbers, birth dates, addresses and phone numbers. Employees' names, social security numbers, addresses and phone numbers also were accessed. We want to assure our employees that there is no indication that the hackers accessed payroll, bank draft or health benefits information.

The District was notified by an outside organization that scans websites developed and used by hackers to communicate and brag about their successful intrusions. We are grateful for their assistance in alerting the District. Once the organization alerted the District, Technology Services began an immediate investigation and found the entry point of the breach. This point was immediately closed.

We have industry-standard security measures in place to prevent hackers from accessing our servers, but this is an example of the sophistication of these criminals in this digital age. Unfortunately, we are not the only school district or governmental agency who has been victimized in this manner; many private companies, even large multinational companies, have also been so victimized.

I can assure you we are tightening our security measures to seek to make sure this does not happen again. Our Chief Technology Officer will be addressing this shortly.

Many parents have asked why we use students' social security numbers. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires that we provide them with student data and identify students by their social security numbers. We will be discussing with TEA the necessity of identifying all students by their social security number.

I want to assure you that we are taking this breach seriously and are working with law enforcement, to include the FBI, in this investigation. Our biggest concern now is advising our parents and employees on how best to protect themselves from identity theft. We are developing a link on our webpage to provide employees and parents with guidance and links to agencies that deal specifically with preventing identity theft.

I will now turn the news conference over to EPISD Chief Technology Officer, Stephen Stiles.

Thank you