

## TELEVISION QUARTERLY ISSUES-PROGRAMS REPORT

Station: WFGX-TV  
Location: Fort Walton Beach, FL  
Quarter ending: March 31, 2018

ISSUE/description: 1. SCHOOL SAFETY. The attack at a high school in Parkland, FL, by an ex-student, killing 17 students and wounding many more, brought this issue to the forefront of the national consciousness.

### How Issue was treated (Program, PSA, etc.):

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time/Duration</u>	<u>Program type</u>	<u>Description</u>
1. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	02/15/18	09:00PM/4 minutes	News	*
* Reporter Christopher Saul profiled how School Resource Officers provide school security in Okaloosa County schools. We also interviewed officials from the Escambia and Santa Rosa county school systems about how each deals with students who bring weapons to school.				
2. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	02/19/18	09:00PM/2.5 minutes	News	**
** Vigils were held across the state Monday night for the 17 people killed last Wednesday at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Chapters of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) hosted events in 16 Florida counties, including Escambia. More than 100 people gathered at East Brent Baptist Church to pay their respects and remember the victims. Michelle Salzman, president of the Escambia County Council PTA, said the hope was to honor the victims' memory with action. She asked people to put their politics aside and agree that change needs to happen. Escambia County Schools Superintendent Malcolm Thomas said the tragedy in South Florida is simply unacceptable. Chief Deputy Chip Simmons with the Escambia County Sheriff's Office echoed that message. "Our children need to be the number one priority" Simmons said.				
3. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	02/20/17	09:00PM/2 minutes	News	***
*** Last week's school shooting has put school districts across the country on high alert, including Okaloosa County. School Superintendent Mary Beth Jackson said she would add more resource officers to schools last week. On Tuesday, she followed through on that promise. Every high school in the county will get a second resource officer, except for Laurel Hill, which has a smaller student population size than other schools. In addition, Northwood Elementary will get an additional resource officer. Jackson said the sheriff is in Tallahassee and plans to ask for additional funding to support the extra deputies in classes.				
4. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	02/21/17	09:00PM/3 minutes	News	****
**** A reported threat at Gulf Breeze High School had parents alarmed Wednesday morning. The rumor was that a student had a hit list. Officials said there was no truth to it, but word spread quickly on social media. The incident was investigated by the school district and the Gulf Breeze Police Department thoroughly. A call was put out to parents once they were able to evaluate the situation. Santa Rosa County is starting a school safety task force to make sure their schools are safe as possible. The school district is bringing together law enforcement, mental health counselors, parents, and school officials all in the same room. Santa Rosa County School Superintendent Tim Wyrosdick said they hope to tackle four key areas - how to harden every school, better safety and operational procedures, how to build the best security team, and how to add more resources for mental health. Wyrosdick said they've had two threats in the past two days. Neither were credible.				

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5. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	02/22/18	09:00PM/3 minutes	News	*****

\*\*\*\*\* In Santa Rosa County, the teachers' union opposes the idea of having guns in the classroom. The general consensus was to take a different route instead. Rhonda Chavers, president of the Santa Rosa Professional Educators, said the suggestion that teachers be armed is just a knee-jerk reaction. Chavers also said arming teachers is too much of a liability.

And as the push for more school safety continues, a Baldwin County city is using techniques on one of their campuses as a blueprint for future schools. Orange Beach Elementary installed enhanced safety measures in reaction to the Sandy Hook school massacre in 2012. The city of Orange Beach spent around \$150,000 to fund panic buttons for school staff, a surveillance system monitored by police, special safety glass as well as a remote locking system for school doors. Orange Beach city leaders have vowed to fund similar safety features on the upcoming dual Orange Beach Middle and High School building to be constructed next year. Superintendent Eddie Tyler of the Baldwin County School District is also eyeing similar upgrades on many other campuses.

6. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	02/23/18	09:00PM/3 minutes	News	*****
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\*\*\*\*\* Florida Governor Rick Scott is taking action following the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland. He released a \$500 million, three-part plan that focuses on gun law, school safety, and mental health. The governor wants to require anyone buying guns to be 21 or older and make it impossible for anyone with mental health issues to use a gun. The proposal would still have to go through the Florida House and Senate for approval. Malcolm Thomas, the superintendent for the Escambia County School District, said the plan is a step in the right direction. "The governor is proposing \$500 million. It will take every bit of that statewide." Newer schools like Global Academy already have hardened security measures built in. The governor's bill would bring older schools in the district up to those standards. Escambia County PTA President Michelle Salzman said there's a long way to go, but a future with safer schools looks promising. Under the governor's plan, faculty and students at every school will be required to perform active shooter training. The state would also establish a K-12 "See Something, Say Something" hotline, website, and phone app.

People in Pensacola who live near where school threats were made last week say the governor's plan is only one way to fix the problem. Lyndsey Austin's son attends Washington High School, where last week a student was charged with disrupting schools after claiming he had a gun. Austin says there should be more focus on mental health issues than guns. 26-year-old Sami Kara moved to Pensacola when he was seven years old. "Where I'm from in Algeria we actually have two military personnel guarding all schools' entrances," Kara said. Kara believes more officers are needed to keep students safe.

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7. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	02/26/18	09:00PM/6 minutes	News	*****

\*\*\*\*\* Governor Rick Scott revealed his plan to reduce gun violence and school shootings in the Sunshine State on Friday. It includes adding officers to schools, raising the minimum age to buy a gun, and a focus on helping the mentally ill. The governor's plan calls for almost half-billion dollars to increase protections inside schools across the state. Governor Scott's plan, at least parts of it, have been in place in Okaloosa County schools for some time now, said Superintendent Mary Beth Jackson. "In 2012, 2013, ... after the Sandy Hook shooting happened, I said we needed to do our own assessment" Jackson said. Since then, they've added more school resource officers and made single points of entry in some schools, steps the governor suggested. Although they will get a piece of the almost half-billion-dollar pie, Jackson predicts it won't be enough to make the necessary changes. "We're the only county in our area that doesn't have a half-cent sales tax. If we had that, we would be able to meet all those guidelines that he is presenting to everyone," Jackson said. She plans to ask to put the half-cent sales tax on the ballot this November. The governor has also asked the House to mandate each school district have a safety plan submitted to their county's sheriff's department by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Scott's plan to fortify schools and increase school security has the support of most law enforcement agencies in the state. One local sheriff has a plan of his own and involves the use of his SWAT team officers. SWAT team members are trained to respond to the most dangerous situations. Santa Rosa County Sheriff Bob Johnson is supplementing those specially trained officers with the county's School Resource Officer (SRO) program. SWAT team members will be close by and readily available during school hours. More than two dozen Santa Rosa County schools currently don't have a resource officer. Johnson said it's unclear how the new officers will be funded, and cautions that hiring, training, and deploying officers won't happen overnight. He also plans for deputies to randomly visit schools and walk the hallways. He said that has already started.

There is mounting criticism over how deputies responded to the deadly school shooting in Parkland. President Trump has also said that arming teachers with guns would be effective in stopping school shooters. It's an idea that local teachers' unions oppose. Local law enforcement officials wouldn't comment on specifics, but every department has policies in place. Dr. Richard Hough, a criminology professor at the University of West Florida, said authorities are trained to move in and stop the gunman, and it's a policy most departments have.

8. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	02/28/18	09:00PM/2.5 minutes	News	*****
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\*\*\*\*\* Governor Rick Scott spoke in Northwest Florida Wednesday to discuss his action plan to make major changes to help keep students safe. This includes a \$500 million investment in school safety and mental health. His proposal, announced last week, followed the emergency meetings he organized with law enforcement, school administrators, teachers, mental health experts, and state agency leadership, as well as meetings with students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The 3-point plan targets gun safety, school security, and mental health. The proposal calls for an armed officer in every school and raising the age to buy a gun in Florida to 21. He said metal detectors, steel doors, and bullet-proof windows are a few of the improvements that will be added to schools, and the proposal would increase collaboration between local law enforcement, schools, the Department of Children and Families, and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

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9. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	03/01/18	09:00PM/2.5 minutes	News	*****

\*\*\*\*\* This week Walmart and Dick's Sporting Goods announced they're changing their gun sale policies. Enforcing stricter regulations could cause some to buy guns elsewhere. The Pawn Shop and Tax Services only began dealing in firearms eight months ago. Now, assistant manager Jon Boccia said they sell about 18 a month, and it's their second largest income. The Escambia County Sheriff's Office enforces pawn shop regulations, but Pensacola Police Detective Marcus Savage said PPD works with pawn shops almost weekly. In order to buy and sell guns, pawn shops must follow strict federal and state laws. Detective Savage said they have to have paperwork accounting for every gun brought into and leaving their stores. They're also subject to audits and inspections by local law enforcement, the ATF and other state and federal agencies. "They still have to have the infrastructure and the means to do background checks," said Savage.

10. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	03/01/18	09:00PM/3 minutes	News	*10
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\*10 In an effort to make Florida schools safer, the Escambia County Commission wants to reallocate money seized in drug busts and other illegal activities to help fund school resource officers. They will ask the governor to set aside Law Enforcement Trust Fund (LETF) money to supplement the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. The commission and local law enforcement support the governor's school safety plan to fortify schools. That plan would require every school to have one SRO for every 1,000 students. Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan said he would have to hire 34 additional SROs. He doesn't want the governor's plan to become an unfunded mandate the county would have to absorb. Sheriff Morgan said it will be hard to meet the governor's requirements because of recruitment and pay structure issues.

11. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	03/01/18	09:00PM/3 minutes	News	*11
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\*11 A child advocacy organization is reaching out to parents in hopes of making the community safer. On Thursday, the Gulf Coast Kid's House held a parent forum in response to the tragedy in Parkland, Florida in February. "It's really high on people's minds, and knowing how to talk to your child about unsafe events and doing it in a non-threatening way is really important," Executive Director Stacey Kostevicki said. She said community involvement and support for families is a protective factor for kids, and that starts with frequent open conversations with kids and other adults. Gulf Coast Kid's House has Five Safety Rules for keeping kids safe:

1. Know What's Up: Talk to your child and listen to them.
2. Spot Red Flags.
3. Make a Move: If you suspect a child is being hurt, report it to law enforcement or a hotline.
4. Talk It Up: Let others know you are here to help.
5. No Blame/ No Shame.

This was the first time Gulf Coast Kid's House held a forum like this. Their hope is to get some feedback and hold others in the future.

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12. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	03/02/18	09:00PM/6 minutes	News	*12

\*12 Senator Marco Rubio announced a plan for school safety and gun control on the Senate floor Thursday. Rubio stated he will be joining Senator Orrin Hatch in introducing the Stop School Violence Act, a six step plan to combat gun violence by strengthening school security, providing training to identify threats, and creating school threat assessment and crisis intervention teams. Secondly he wishes to present a new law the will lead to the creation of a Gun Violence Restraining Order. This law could give law enforcement, and close family members the power to obtain a court order to remove guns from the individual. Thirdly, Rubio says he wishes to change the federal youth PROMISE program, so threats are not delayed to law enforcement. Rubio also said he wishes to strengthen background checks, and is pushing for the immediate passage of the Fix NICS Act. His fifth step suggests the prosecution of people buying guns who are not allowed to do so. Rubio says he will continue to explore additional reforms involving age limits, and potentially magazine capacity.

School threats create anxiety, frustration, fear, anger and other emotions for school districts, students, teachers, parents and everyone involved. Today Escambia County School District (ECSD) Superintendent Malcom Thomas told us what prompts a lockdown at a school, the district's methods for communicating with parents, and parent protocol during a lockdown.

There has been no shortage of threats or perceived threats in our area; Okaloosa County is no exception. At the Lewis School in Valparaiso, it wasn't an actual threat, but a text message chain passed around by some parents which caused a stir. The message essentially said a child who was Baker Acted would be released soon, would shoot people, and parents should keep students home. The district had to make a call out Thursday night telling parents there was not a real threat to the school. Since the beginning of the year, gun threats have flooded the news. First at Ruckel Middle School and Plew Elementary on the same day, then several threats which resulted in at least one lockdown at Pryor Middle School, since the beginning of the new school year. Okaloosa County has since added an additional resource officer in their larger schools. In Santa Rosa County, Sheriff Bob Johnson's school resource officers dealt with a threat on social media directed at Navarre High School. In Escambia County, Superintendent Malcolm Thomas has dealt with several threats against schools as well. He agrees with Sheriff Johnson, that the reduction of threats must start at home and warns bad choices have consequences.

13. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	03/05/18	09:00PM/3 minutes	News	*13
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\*13 The Florida Senate passed a school safety bill that would place new restrictions on rifle sales, allow some teachers to carry guns in schools and create new school mental health programs. The Senate voted 20-18 Monday for the bill that's a response to the school shootings in Parkland. Many Republicans don't like the idea of raising the minimum age to buy rifles from 18 to 21 or creating a waiting period to purchase the weapons. Many Democrats think the bill didn't go far enough because it doesn't include a ban on assault-style rifles or large-capacity magazines. The Senate amended the bill to put limits on which teachers could participate in a proposed program to carry guns in schools. Florida's House has not yet taken up its version of the bill.

Holley-Navarre Middle School now has a deputy patrolling the halls. It's part of a push to get more school resource officers in Santa Rosa County. Deputy Liem Chau is a former teacher and coach. He got into law enforcement after a ride-along with a friend, who also happened to be a school resource officer (SRO). The sheriff's office plans to have the second new SRO position filled within a matter of weeks.

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14. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	03/14/18	09:00PM/3.5 minutes	News	*14

\*14 On the one-month anniversary of the Parkland High School shooting, students across the country walked out of their classrooms for National 'Walk-Out' Day. The Escambia County School District warned students that they would be in trouble if they decided to walk out, but some did so. Four students walked out of Pensacola High School holding signs that read: 'fear school' and 'thoughts and prayers don't save lives'. Meanwhile, hundreds of students decided to work with administrators by piling into their gymnasium for a 17-minute ceremony to honor the 17 lives lost. Lauren Hagy, a Pensacola High School senior who organized the event, told Channel 3 that after the horrific shooting in Parkland, school does not feel safe anymore. Hagy said the ceremony focused on school safety, mental health, and helping students be aware of each other's well-being.

Just like students in school districts across the country, students from Okaloosa County walked out of their classrooms for 17 minutes today- if they wanted to and if they had their parents' written permission. While some students walked out, student leaders met with the Okaloosa County School District administration and members of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department (OCSO). Bussed in from the four corners of the county, students came to talk school safety. There was plenty of discussion at the meeting, from limiting access to schools, to bomb threats on campus, to who will pay for teachers to get their concealed carry permit and the guns they would carry on campus. Deputies told students threats against schools in Okaloosa County quadrupled since the Parkland shooting. And suggestions, like making deputies into man-woman teams so they are more approachable for students, were well worth the time spent. The superintendent agrees. "Students never cease to amaze me. Their insight, their thoughtfulness, their perspective, is something we need to listen to; I believe more than we do," Superintendent Mary Beth Jackson said.

15. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	03/15/18	09:00PM/1.5 minutes	News	*15
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\*15 The Escambia County School Board will meet Friday to discuss whether to put Pensacola Police Officers inside the city's seven elementary schools. Pensacola Police Chief Tommi Lyter said "Right now it will be as an extra duty- an off-duty assignment. The school board will pay the officers." The school board will meet Friday to sort out all questions, including funding, and is expected to take a final, official vote Tuesday.

16. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	03/16/18	09:00PM/2.5 minutes	News	*16
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\*16 Starting on Monday Escambia County schools will have additional security. It's all part of Superintendent Malcolm Thomas' plan to have armed security officers on every school campus. Traditionally, the district has had officers in middle and high schools, but this new plan aims at adding elementary schools too. To do that, they need more officers and funding. Currently, the district works with the Escambia County Sheriff's Office and the Pensacola Police Department, but neither agency has the manpower to supply an armed officer every day. To bridge those gaps, Thomas wants to hire a private security company, called Securitas. He's asking the board to approve his plan to increase the amount of money allocated to adding extra armed security officers for the remainder of the school year. School board vice chair, Patty Hightower, estimates it will cost about \$303,000 in additional funding. Hightower says the money is already in the budget and the district is just getting a jumpstart on new legislation which will mandate every school district in Florida to either hire security officers or arm teachers. "We have chosen to go this route," said Hightower. "Instead of arming our teachers, because we don't believe that teachers need to be armed."

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17. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	03/20/18	09:00PM/1-minute	News	*17

\*17 Governor Rick Scott announced appointments to the Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission today, nearly five weeks after the mass shooting in Parkland. Scott selected Okaloosa County Sheriff Larry Ashley to join the commission. He joins two fathers of shooting victims, the Brevard County superintendent, and the Miami Shores Police chief. "Since the shooting in Parkland, our number one focus has been to make our schools safer while doing everything possible to ensure a tragedy like this never happens again. I'm confident that these appointees will continue the work that has already started in our state to keep our students safe," Gov. Scott said.