

BOOKS NOT BULLETS

One year after Parkland shooting, changes continue at OHS

By Anna Barrett
associate editor

After almost one year since the Parkland shooting in Florida, where 17 students lost their lives, high schools across the country, including Oxford High School have taken measures to prevent school shootings.

“Over the course of time, we have met with local police and law enforcement to develop a safety plan for our school,” Principal Chandler Gray said.

Junior Riley Merrell feels safe with the safety plan Oxford has in place, especially with the police and security that are stationed around the school. She believes that the safety plan is proactive in both keeping the students safe, while also teaching the students the importance of safety.

“I do feel safe, especially since adding the precautions we did in the past year,” Merrell said. “The resource officers, who are very interactive with students, help us to feel like we are protected, and simple things like extra time during the fire drill, I think, is smart.”

According to School Resource Officer (SRO) Zach Anderson, many officers have been trained and continue to train in case an event occurs.

“This past summer, myself and some other officers attended an in-depth training concerning the integrated response, and the Parkland shooting and other school shootings has put this at the forefront of everybody’s minds,” Anderson said. “There is more training

now and more officers are willing to go because this is something that we need to address.”

Gray believes that education is the most im-

portant part to keeping the students and faculty safe.

“We have worked with Mike Martin, who is the director of safety, and he has worked really well with both the schools and local law enforcement to help develop the plans we have to ensure safety. We have had drills and situations where we want the students to know what it is like to have an ac-

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Chandler Gray
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tive shooter. We have educated teachers, and we brought in someone who specializes in those situations. They trained our teachers on some triage things, and we are working with our SROs and law enforcement to provide some supplies for teachers to help them in case a situation like that occurs.”

Oxford

takes as

many precautions as possible to ensure students’ safety.

“We made some decisions on how we want our SROs to be stationed. We now moved them to the front of the school so they could see out of the front, just

kind of small safety things that help us,” Gray said. “If there is someone in the school without a pass, myself or other administrators or an SRO officer will approach them, even someone we recognize who aren’t students here or faculty here. We bring them to the office and explain to them the importance of checking in through the front office. We tell them the importance and explain to them we have to protect our kids, and most of the time they understand and are very cooperative. Generally people want to do things the right way.”

After a recent lockdown at the high school, many students’ ideas about school shootings were put into perspective. There was some information that came out quickly to the officers on their radios about a possible weapon at the school. The officers and administration acted how they felt was appropriate instead of not acting. It showed how serious things are for students even though the information was misinterpreted.

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