

MANAGE YOUR RISK

Layering - The Secret to Effective Access Security

With annual school budgets under great pressure to protect against expanding security threats, it's important to realize that layering multiple security techniques and control measures provides affordable and effective access security protection. This bulletin outlines some areas of consideration when constructing a layered security approach for your school district.

Software

Access security now begins at connectivity. School enterprise management software functions as a technological security method unlike physical front-desk visitor check-ins and screenings. Assigning each user dedicated login credentials confirms identity for gaining entry and further monitors usage and activity down to the nanosecond.

Bus & Curb

Access also refers to the point of transfer, as in the bus stop, curbside drop-off or by other means a student, staff member, or visitor may enter a campus. Today's options include student mobility tracking software where the student scans their ID at pick-up or curbside drop-off. Digital visitor screening and tracking systems have also gained in popularity to screen and track all outside entrants. Some more sophisticated systems are capable of quickly analyzing personal data in real time to verify identity and provide additional security checkpoints, such as state and national crime databases.

Parking Lot

Parking lot design, lighting, and video monitoring are common security features that first come to mind. However, it's important to examine your district's security plan further. Consider the following questions.

- Does your school have a policy for identifying and addressing extended-stay vehicles?
- Does your school's security policy prohibit parking within 400 feet of occupied buildings or outdoor assembly areas?
- Do you conduct routine sweeps by security personnel or drug, alcohol or explosive sniffing police dogs?

Surveillance

School video surveillance has extended beyond the hallways to buses, sidewalks, parking lots, classrooms, playgrounds and parking lots, to name a few. Becoming more broadly affordable, intelligent video technology is a critical security component. This indispensable investigative and instructional tool helps to bring clarity and resolution to costly risk events like vandalism, bullying, student-teacher relations, and unwitnessed accidents/ injuries.

DISCLAIMER: This is a sample guideline furnished to you by Glatfelter Public Practice. Your organization should review it and make the necessary modifications to meet the needs of your organization. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing risk exposure to the public, personnel and property. For additional information on this topic, you may contact your Glatfelter Public Practice Representative at 888.855.4782

Building Envelope

While newly constructed buildings include the latest security products, technology, and techniques blended-in seamlessly with the facility and environment, the majority of districts have a heavier mix of older school buildings, where any upgrade is most likely a retrofit. In these cases, it's best to narrow down the risk to access points. Every door and window presents an intrusion risk.

- Does the construction of school doors and windows deter or delay intruders?
- Are blind spots, unoccupied areas and unsupervised doors or windows monitored or alarmed?
- Are ceilings open with exposed beams as opposed to suspended ceilings and tiles where weapons or contraband may be hidden?
- Are stairwells wide, open, and the same size as hallways to avoid bottlenecks?
- Are building alarm panels installed in secure areas with individual alarm pull stations, equipped with tamper covers, and under continuous surveillance?

Entrance(s)

Advancements in school entrance security over the last decade have been so successful in deterring active shooter and intruder incidents that we rarely see the person(s) using the front door. This highlights the importance of balance to ensure investments made in entrance security extends beyond the hardened front-entrance security vestibule to include all identified access points. As recent active shooter incidents have shown, unsupervised doors and windows can easily be blocked in the open position to retrieve staged weapons and allow for reentry. Affordable products like magnetic contacts, locks, alarms, and motion sensors provide a variety of new options to extend supervision to all doors and windows.

Security Force

Every district should consider implementing an internal safety/security team comprised of general administration and school personnel assigned to carry out the actions and responsibilities of emergency and disaster preparedness plans. Additionally, a security force refers to employees or contractors whose sole responsibilities are to provide full-time security or law enforcement services for safety and crime prevention at an individual school or districtwide. A dedicated security force can truly provide next level safety and security protection, planning, training, monitoring, and quick response to physical threats.

Fencing/Gates

Probably the most primitive of all security layers, fencing can channel access and shrink the overall campus footprint into manageable zones. This maximizes the financial return on any security investment as more expensive layers of protection may be directed and employed far more efficiently.

Summary

A top priority for all school districts is to ensure the safety of students, teachers, staff, and others within the school premise. It is critical that school districts have a comprehensive security plan in place that includes effective access security controls. Layering multiple security techniques can help your district find the right balance of security and flexibility required in uncertain times.

Additional Resources

Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) | <https://www.cisa.gov/school-safety-and-security>