

Campus Safety Concerns: Schools Invest in Security Measures

Not a day passes without media coverage of some form of school violence. School campus muggings, robberies, assaults and shootings plague newspapers and the nightly news. Less serious incidents of aggression include shoving, cursing, racist or other slurs, name calling, arguments and more. While school violence may have become the news media status quo, school officials refuse to accept attacks, fighting or aggression as normal or tolerable. Hundreds of districts are taking action by allocating portions of the school bonds on November ballots or seeking other funding for much-needed security and campus safety measures.

Campus Violence: Students & Teachers

According to the CDC, 486,400 nonfatal violent victimizations occurred at school among students aged 12 to 18 years in 2014. Students aren't the only people on campus facing violence. The CDC also stated roughly 9% of teachers report that they have been threatened with injury by a student from their school, and 5% of teachers reported that they have been physically attacked by a student from their school.

What Should Be Done?

School security expert, Paul Timm, warns against waiting for an incident before implementing security threat prevention plans and tactics. Too many school districts get caught in the pattern of after-the-fact implementation; instead, Timm urges school officials to develop a security strategy before a costly and devastating incident and make sure the plan is communicated to everyone.

Indeed, EdWeek called for all schools to heed the lessons learned from a Townsville, SC shooting at an elementary school this fall. The elementary school had recently implemented several security procedures such as self-locking external doors, visibility inside the school building, and staff members trained to respond to an active shooter. These procedures significantly limited the shooter's access to the building. Though there were still injuries and a fatality, the damage could have been much worse. This is an example of how preparation and investment in school security initiatives can reduce the fallout from any sort of violence.

Part of the school security plan must focus on notifications and communications in case of an incident. From mass school shootings to a child experiencing a medical emergency such as seizure, teachers must be able to communicate quickly and efficiently with security personnel and those who can contact the authorities. Many schools have one-way communication devices (such as PA systems) that allow those in the office to disseminate messages to classrooms. However, it's critical that teachers also have an easy way to contact the office in case of emergency.

Help Alert Emergency Response Solution is one such system. Created by RF Technologies, Help Alert features a simple device called an RTLS (real time locating system), each of which is associated with a teacher's unique ID. These pendants are worn by teachers giving them constant access to the office and security personnel via the school's existing WIFI infrastructure. The FTLS has one button and a two-part contact system. One press of the button sends a signal for help in less threatening situations. If the teacher holds down the button, this communicates a dire need for help.

School Security Funding

Many schools addressed their security funding needs in November ballot bonds. If a school missed out on this or needs more funding for safety measures, there are also grants available. Clark State Community College obtained a \$750,000 grant, which administrators will allocate to safety and security measures including an improved emergency notification system. While the funding source might not be immediately clear, it is extremely evident that funds will be well-spent on security measures to keep school campuses safe for students and staff alike.

To learn more about Help Alert or other security technologies such as surveillance systems, contact a Troxell representative today. We will put our expertise to work for you to help you choose and implement critical safety devices as part of your secure campus plan.