

## Teachers, Parents and Students Commend School Alert System & Improved Safety

Dozens of pedagogies and thousands of schools make up the diverse landscape of the American education system, but they all have something in common: the desire for their schools to be safe for students and educators.

Security is of utmost concern to school districts, especially in recent years as the onslaught of school shootings dominates the media. Luckily, most schools will never deal with such an act of extreme violence. However, chronic, less severe incidences of violence and conflict occur frequently in schools, including verbal abuses, cursing, name calling, shoving, disputes, disagreements, interpersonal conflict and more.

When one of these issues begins to escalate or when a medical emergency arises, how can teachers summon additional staff for intervention such that the conflict or concern is mitigated and class disruption is minimized?

### District & Teacher Security Needs

Safety is crucial, but school funding is limited. Schools and districts need a security option that won't break the bank and won't require lengthy installation.

When teachers are under duress, they often don't have the ability to leave the situation in search of help or even to call back-up via a phone. They need to be able to summon help immediately.

Furthermore, not all issues require the same level of response. With a panic button style system that only recognizes one level of emergency, teachers may be less inclined to use it for more minor, yet still problematic events. A two-tier system would empower teachers to send a minor alert to request minimal assistance or a major alert for health crises such as seizures or situations of serious threat to student or staff safety.

### Enter: RF Technologies

RF Technologies meets both district and teacher needs with its revolutionary system called Help Alert. The Help Alert system works with existing infrastructure, thereby eliminating the need for expensive hardware and costly installations. Help Alert works with a school's current Wi-Fi access points. If necessary, RF Technologies may install battery-operated wireless reference tags to improve location detection. RF Technologies calls its system "IT-lite" meaning it can be installed quickly and operated with little insight from IT.

The system is two-fold and exquisitely simple. Teachers receive RTLS (real time locating system) pendants, each of which is associated with their unique ID. Pendants may be kept on the teacher or in an easily accessible place. The pendant measures 2.7" by 2" and features an LED indicator and a one-press button that produces a silent alert.

For less severe incidents, a teacher may quickly press the button for assistance. In more serious events, a teacher may press and hold the button, which communicates a dire need for help. When the call for help has been received, the LED light turns green, indicating to the teacher that assistance is on the way.

Nicholas Falcon, Principal of WIU Crossroads School, discusses the benefits of implementing Help Art at his school. He says his staff is thrilled with their ability to work to neutralize the conflict while also calling for help. "They love it," Falcon states. "They're happy to know they have a direct line of support if needed. I think it helps with morale."

On the receiving end of alerts is the Help Alert software, which can be run on a computer or on mobile devices via an iOS or Android app. The software is personalized to each school's exact floor plan. When an alert is issued, the Help Alert software emits an audible alarm and indicates the teacher's name and location on the map.

Falcon discussed the time saving benefits of Help Alert, "When we talk about logistically trying to communicate a need from a classroom, I would say we've cut that down to seconds, where it used to be minutes." Especially in a medical emergency, that could be the difference between life or death.

### **Parents, Children and Educators at Ease**

Learning inherently contains both risk and reward. Students may fear failure, yet they crave knowledge and understanding. The push-pull of risk and reward of learning should be the only aspect of education that involves fear. A safe environment is conducive to learning, and schools have a responsibility to provide the most safe settings possible. This is possible with a two-tiered and easy to use system like Help Alert.

At the same time, parents bestow an extraordinary trust on school staff when they leave their children each morning. This is even more true for parents of children with special emotional or physical needs. Knowing their children's educators have immediate recourse in an event of a medical emergency, physical violence or emotional outburst creates peace of mind for parents.

Lastly, educators deserve to know that if a situation with a student or multiple students gets out of hand, they are not alone. Especially in upper grades when teenagers - who are dealing with physical, psychological and socio-emotional changes of adolescence and all that comes along - began to grow larger than some teachers. About 34 percent of Portland teachers surveyed felt their school environment was unsafe, according to the Portland Association of Teachers union. It's a comfort to teachers, particularly female educators, to know that they have ready back-up in the face of potential student intimidation. Providing such an alert system to teachers is sure to increase job satisfaction and loyalty among staff.

Alert systems like Help Alert by RF Technologies help ensure the safety of everyone on campus. Falcon agrees, "It's something I would definitely encourage other schools to look at as an option."

To learn more about how Help Alert could improve your school security? Speak to a Troxell Account Executive in your area today.