PHYSICAL SECURITY INSIGHTS FOR K-12 SCHOOLS

School Districts and Administrators focus on creating great environments for learning and achieving. In order to attain this, a strong foundation of safety must exist. This comes from designing and deploying security solutions that are robust, responsive, and flexible. An ideal solution is one that is comprised of a layered approach including access control systems, video surveillance, lock down measures, electronic/mechanical door locks, and other third-party applications like gunshot detection, vape sensors, and visitor management.

While there are a lot of case studies, white papers and reports that share expert opinions and best practices for making school safe, this publication is designed to help schools quickly identify and prioritize the most important factors for security systems in their schools and provides only the essential and relevant philosophies for security planning & technology choices.

The information detailed here will provide useful insight that is independent and does not endorse a particular manufacturer or technology.

Schedule a Discovery Call. We are eager to help you make better-informed security decisions.

(800) 216-0805

ivelah

THE MOST COMMON MISTAKE

Let's begin with the first misstep that often leads to a school being very disappointed with the performance of their access control or video surveillance.

Poor design, vague performance scopes, & non-itemized pricing will result in:
- Very inconsistent pricing submissions
- Vastly different designs and technologies
- Difficult to compare the pitfalls and merits of different technologies
- Budget overspends
- Poor system performance
- Unusable, with no measurable benefits
- Lack of future proofing
- No system integrations/unable to integrate
- Limited system growth and expansion potential

It is understandable that not every school district has the technical resource or in-house skill sets to understand a complex security system deployment and the implications that will have regarding lock-down and egress from their schools, but having a broad brush idea of security objectives and expectations will enable school districts and buyers to select a provider and technology format that is aligned to your mission and purpose.

1. Set some expectations
2. Identify key areas for security
3. Have some informed decisions about technology types
4. Develop a brief strategy that can be expanded upon

TIP:
Share your expectations for security systems with providers, however brief.

Here is the tool you need to make a better decision & road map for your security system provisioning. Refer back to it when preparing bid documents, scopes & communications with your security provider.

THE COMPONENTS

ACCESS CONTROL
Access control systems manage who enters school buildings and when. Gaining entry can be facilitated with key cards and/or biometric readers, and/or PIN codes. These solutions aim to prevent unauthorized individuals from gaining access and potentially causing harm. Access control systems can also be used to track who enters and exits a building, which can be useful for monitoring and reporting purposes.

TIP:
Select a system that can integrate with your video surveillance for seamless and easy operation at a single user interface. Involve your IT department and explore how Active Directory integration can simplify the process of typing in information and manage card holder data as part of your school/District security plan.

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VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Video surveillance is the most important component in a school security program. Cameras are installed at key entry points to monitor who enters and exits buildings. Coverage is expanded to general footfall locations and particular focus given to key security areas. Identify exactly the picture and video you want to see. Without the correct and use case specific cameras, you will not have the proper detail in the footage if you try and cover very large areas of coverage.

Be specific about the target area requirements for video and ensure cameras are NDAA-compliant and your company network is not vulnerable to attack. *This is a government requirement.* **Click here to learn why video surveillance systems under-perform & fail to deliver the definition needed for investigations.**

TIP:
Ask your provider to provide a sample image of the detail that you will have when zoomed into to a particular area. Request a pixels per foot metric and review.

LOCK DOWN SYSTEMS

Lock down systems will immediately secure the school buildings in the event of an emergency. Once initiated, lock down protocols can include the use of alarms, intercoms, telephony systems, texting and announcements. Lock down technology is maximized to its fullest potential when integrated to access control and video surveillance systems.

TIP:
A lock down system is a very reliable and incident-reactive solution. However, problems can occur because the usage, protocols, and responses have not been properly communicated to the faculty and students. Be sure to build a notification strategy that everyone is aware of, including your local first responders.

DOOR LOCKS

The importance and type are often overlooked by schools when thinking about physical security. Locks may be the least expensive part of your system but will govern and judicate access during normal school time and outside these hours. More important is how they behave in the event of a lock down. Locks will connect to your access control and lock down system and are integral to safety and security. Having a wrongly configured or incorrect lock type will have dire consequences.

TIP:
Insist that your provider of choice includes a system design that includes lock deployment and purpose. Do not appoint separate locksmiths who lack the expertise and know-how for electronic locks and hardware.

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MOBILE SOLUTIONS

Mobile Solutions can be effective in lock down situations and other notice-driven events. Security System apps can be used to remotely monitor and control access control systems, video surveillance systems, and lock down systems. Providing instant and dynamic situational awareness to everyone or select user groups.

School administrators and security personnel can use mobile apps to quickly initiate lock down procedures, view video footage, & monitor access control systems.

TIP:
Ensure you have explored any consequences for requesting personal smartphone usage. Employment conditions may prohibit the use of these applications. Seek collaboration & agreements with the faculty who will have school systems installed on their personal devices.

The protective measures you develop should address as many of these basic functions as possible with respect to harmful actions against your students, faculty, and facilities.

PREVENT
hazard condition or attempt by threat

DETER
access or attach by an active threat

DETECT
presence of hazard or threat

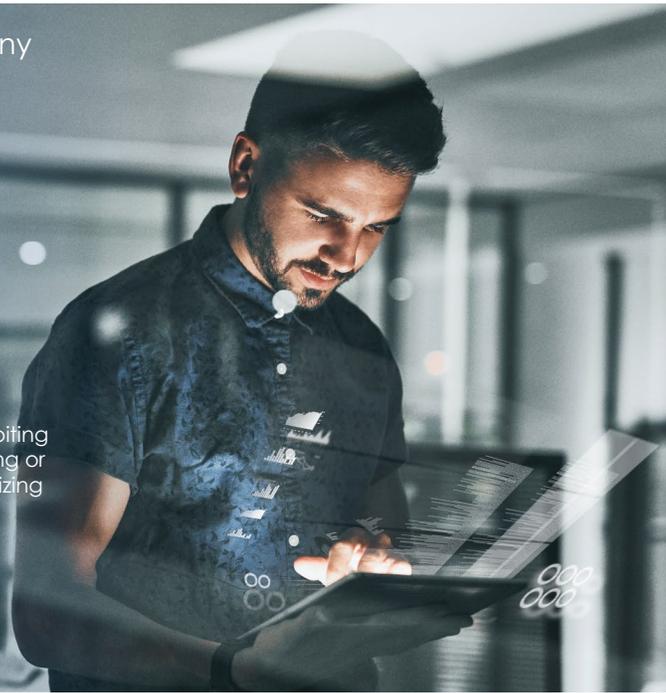**DELAY**
access or attack action

ASSESS
situation

RESPOND
by denying access, inhibiting attack actions, defending or protecting assets, minimizing consequences

RECOVER
from effects of the attack

THE FIRST FIVE STEPS

These five steps will ensure your security initiative is a success and your budgets maximized with a system that you can use today and will evolve with you.

1. INTER-DEPARTMENTAL BUY IN

Deploying (new) or managing (existing) a physical security system requires considerable collaboration between departments within a school district. Often security system technologies and hardware reside on a schools' network therefore the IT department should be continually involved through the process, including during technology selection. Whether ultimate decisions rest with the IT department or somewhere else, internal collaboration is imperative for successful outcomes.

TIP:
Network limitations should be identified, discussed and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

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2. UNDERSTAND OBJECTIVES

Avoid scopes that lack detail and do not define objectives and expectations. Seek help where necessary from trusted sources that have a proven track record and experience. Your budget limitations may reduce the reach of your security system, but it should not have a negative impact on the performance or viability of your security system. The right integrator will work within your budget constraints to build a solution over time that first addresses what has to be done and can accommodate future tools for what could be addressed or improved later.

TIP:
Balance the number of devices with effectiveness, rather than use cheaper products.

3. THE RIGHT SYSTEM FORMAT

What system format is going to meet your needs and objectives most effectively? Deciding this at the earliest opportunity will aid in selecting the manufacturer and products that will best work for you.

A system format is how you intend to set up and use the system. The function and network ability may dictate the format which is right for you. There are two types that exist today are on-prem and cloud-based application. Both have their advocates and critics.

Let's begin with outlining the basic differences, without the technical nuances and viewpoints of various manufacturers. While both utilize software, established security solutions are installed on-site whereas cloud based runs an Internet connection to the manufacturer's platform.
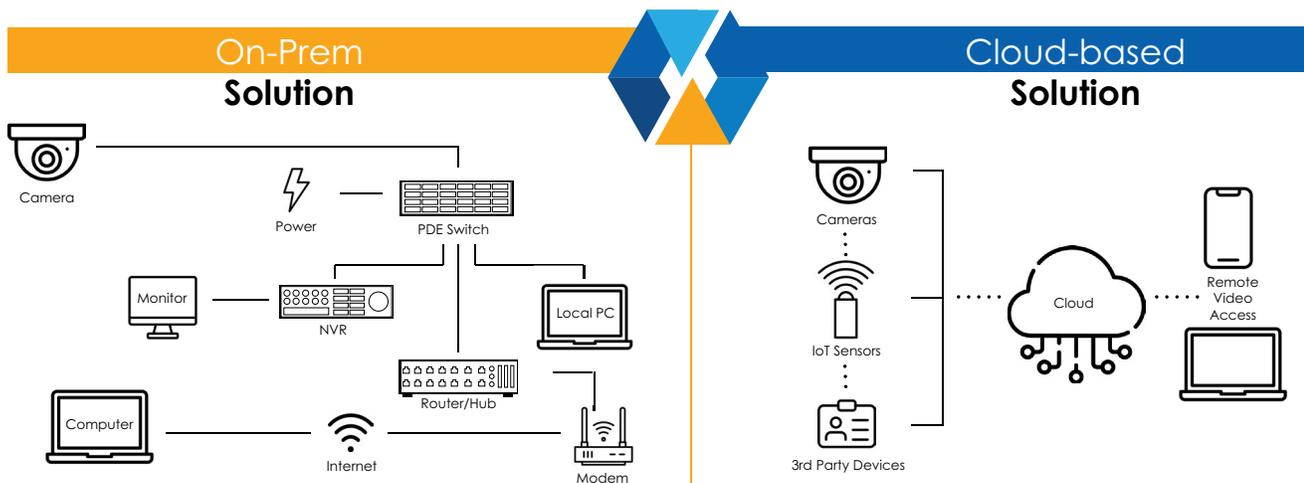
*Below are the top 5 advantages of each solution, to facilitate discussion and insight. ivelah has an expanded publication regarding the pros/cons of both technology formats for video surveillance, **click here to access**.*

On-Prem Benefits

- Most hardware & devices are supported with many performance options.
- Not locked into propriety camera and reader types
- No subscription management & reoccurring fees required.
- A deeper level of integration, more application options.
- Higher resolution & frame rate without Internet limitations.

Cloud-based Benefits

- No server set up required
- Can be managed off-site
- Virtually unlimited data storage
- Firmware & software vulnerabilities addressed remotely
- Most platforms allow users to access the video via a website without a VPN or firewall details.

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4. SELECTING TECHNOLOGY

Selecting Technology in accordance with your specific needs and budget: use recognized brands and established manufacturers. Insist on product demonstrations and request user references. Avoid low-end residential use systems, and avoid readily available online products or low-cost solutions available through large retail outlets.

Investigate if products have proprietary and limited technology that locks you into that system forever. Select NDAA approved products and video surveillance that is ONVIF compliant.

5. BEFORE DEPLOYMENT

Appoint a security integrator or partner who acknowledges your expectations and provides you with a full system synopsis. Comprehensive designs should include the usage requirements and application of all devices. Plans and maps should identify each competent with a unique identifier.

Additional supportive drawings shall include individual door designs. Any competent provider will furnish you with a complete system topology, using graphics to illustrate the cause-and-effect workflow of lock down protocols where applicable.

MOHAVE
COOPERATIVE

ivelah Contract #:
221-LAH-1116

We help schools that require more than their current physical security solutions can deliver. We do that by first assessing their existing access control and video surveillance hardware & software to see where we can elevate their existing solution. From there we work with the district to design, deploy, or vet access control and video surveillance solutions that create environments conducive to learning and achievement.

IVELAH IS COMMITTED TO SERVING SCHOOLS
PHYSICAL SECURITY INITIATIVES IN ARIZONA & BEYOND
BECAUSE EVERY CHILD IN ARIZONA DESERVES THE CHANCE TO THRIVE

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Your physical security demands are unique & constantly evolving. Every building, playground & workspace has a different need for security, with varying levels of protection requirements.

Access control and video surveillance solutions need to extend to the safeguarding of students, teachers & and visitors. If you have an existing system or are considering a new one, it's vital to conduct an assessment of your technology and configurations.

You deserve an integrator that will take the time to understand your needs, obstacles, and future trajectory to deliver a security solution that grows and responds how you need it to.

SCHEDULE A DISCOVERY CALL WITH OUR TEAM →

ivelah IS COMMITTED TO DOING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

the right **choice**
Make better-informed security decisions on what equipment to use in your security designs & technologies.

Access Control

Video Surveillance

Perimeter Security

Visitor Management

the right **process**
Ensure your deployment & ongoing system management is running efficiently & in a cost-effective manor.

Technology Choice

Deployment Practices

Reduce Cost of Ownership

Scalable Solutions

the right **connects**
Maximize the benefits your security system offers while connecting seamlessly to other operationally critical systems.

Maintenance

Operations

State/Federal Regulations

Information Technology

the right **support**
Finally a support solution customized around you, your business needs, & budget.

Comprehensive Service Plans

Synchronized Warranties

System Longevity Planning

Managed Services

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