

A photograph of a female teacher with long brown hair, wearing a light blue cardigan over a white top, sitting on the floor and reading a green book to a group of diverse young children. The children are sitting around her, looking at the book with interest. The setting is a library or classroom with bookshelves filled with books in the background. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting a bright window.

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eBook

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## SAFE & SMART CAMPUSES

Technology that Protects the Physical Safety of Today's Students

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In the face of rising threats, school leaders need new strategies to bolster security and keep students safe. For many institutions, this means increasing the number and diversity of deployed security devices. But more doesn't always mean better.

From K-12 schools to higher education campuses, school leaders are struggling to integrate disparate technology from several different manufacturers, leading to security gaps and compromised campus visibility. When you replace these point solutions with a single, connected system that

combines the power of access control, cameras, intercoms, and motion detection, you are much better positioned to provide comprehensive safety for your students.

Considering the challenges and threats of today's school environment, you must take a strategic approach to implementing, maintaining, and managing security technology. Integrated technologies that provide complete visibility of your campus at all times are instrumental to ensuring your students, faculty, and administrators feel safe and protected.





## The State of Educational Security

The typical school landscape has drastically changed over the last decade. In the 2009–2010 school year, only 61% of public schools used security cameras. By the end of 2020, 91% had adopted the technology.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, 97% of schools have added building access control during the day, with as many as 66% also controlling access to the entire school grounds. As of November 2022, 43% of public schools are outfitted with panic buttons that directly link to law enforcement — up from just 14% four years prior.<sup>2</sup>

Alongside access control systems and panic buttons, many higher education campuses also invest in security guards. One report estimates that schools now collectively spend more than \$12B per year on security guards — second only to annual spending on teachers and well ahead of school counselors (\$10B) or nurses (\$4B).<sup>3</sup>

It's not hard to understand why school leaders feel an increasing need to augment their security. In the 2021–2022 school year, over half of public schools (67%) reported at least one violent incident for a national total of 857,500.<sup>4</sup> In 2023, there were 346 school shooting incidents across the country — the highest on record since 1966.<sup>5</sup>

The statistics are concerning. But new technological developments offer promise. Integrated physical security systems that enable you to see, hear, and communicate with everyone attempting to access your campus 24/7 allow you to proactively deter threats and keep students safe.

1 School safety and security measures. National Center for Education Statistics.

2 More schools have panic buttons, locks and police, new data shows. The Washington Post.

3 After Teachers, America's Schools Spend More on Security Guards Than Any Other Role. Education-Week.

4 New Schools Data Examine Violent Incidents, Bullying, Drug Possession, 'Restorative' Practices, Security Staff, and More. Nation Center for Education Statistics.

5 School Shootings by State. U.S. News & World Report.

## Alyssa's Law

In 2019, New Jersey became the first state to pass [Alyssa's Law](#), a law calling for the mandatory installation of silent panic alarms that are directly linked to law enforcement.<sup>1</sup> This law honors Alyssa Alhadeff, a native of Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey, who was one of the 17 victims killed in the Parkland shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February 2018.

Under this law, every public elementary and secondary school classroom must have one of these panic buttons installed on a wall, or desk, or attached to a wireless pendant for easy access during emergencies. When pressed, the button sends an alert to law enforcement so they can quickly dispatch to address the situation. They also have the option to install a similar alternative.

Alyssa's Law aims to address the issue of law enforcement response times when a life-threatening emergency occurs because "time equals life." In addition to New Jersey, the law has been passed in Florida, New York, Texas, Tennessee, and Utah, and is in progress in nine more. It has also been introduced at the Federal level.

While panic buttons are a profound step in bolstering school security, they are only one piece of the bigger picture. To deliver full-campus, around-the-clock security, you need to integrate a broader physical security system.

<sup>1</sup> What is Alyssa's Law? [MakeOurSchoolsSafe.org](https://www.MakeOurSchoolsSafe.org)





## Technologies Today's Schools Need

In its third edition of the "K-12 School Security Guide," the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) stresses the importance of a layered, systems-based approach to physical security across campuses. It highlights technology as a key element in strengthening a school's physical security system but notes that this technology must be deployed "in an integrated way to detect, delay, and respond to threats."<sup>1</sup>

Here's a look at some of the different technologies your school should consider when building a complete, fully integrated physical security system that can protect your students and faculty.

### Intercoms

Intercoms enable better school-wide communication, making it easier to manage security threats. With an intercom installed at an entrance, your staff can remotely communicate with individuals seeking access and ask questions to determine if they are authorized to enter. Security can also use it to warn unauthorized individuals that they must leave campus or face legal action.

### Video security

A [video security system](#) includes digital cameras and monitors that continuously or periodically provide visibility across your campus. These systems can be deployed inside or outside facilities, such as in parking lots, parking garages, or any other areas where a cable can be run.

Video security helps you screen personnel at the school entrance and observe everyone on school grounds. It can also be a means of deterrence. If would-be actors can see that they're being watched and possibly recorded, they might not act at all.

<sup>1</sup> K-12 School Security Guide 3rd Edition. Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency.

## Access control systems

Access control systems help you control individual access and secure areas based on the criteria you set. They can also record entries and exits that occur with key fobs and door codes.

If equipped with door monitoring switches, access control systems can also monitor doors throughout your school. If someone leaves a door open, the door monitoring switch sends a signal to the control panel, alerting your security team that a door is open so they can investigate the situation.

## Alarm systems

Alarm systems alert you and your administrative team of any unusual or potentially malicious activity. You can customize them around your operating hours so that any movement or school entry outside of normal school hours triggers a call to the authorities. Inside school hours, however, the alarm system can be deactivated so administrators can evaluate and grant entry as needed.



## Even with the Right Technology, Securing Schools Isn't Easy

These technologies are foundational to safe and secure school campuses, but they have notable shortcomings. Although security measures in K-12 schools and higher education campuses have markedly increased in the last decade, most students (and their parents) don't actually feel any safer.<sup>1</sup> In fact, on average 19.4% of students say they feel unsafe at school.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the growing use of security technology, it's clear that something is missing — and that making your school safer isn't as straightforward as just deploying more devices. Let's look at some of the leading challenges your school might be up against when it comes to campus security technology.

### Lack of support staff and technical expertise

Your school might not have the budget or resources to hire security and IT staff members to properly support and oversee your devices. Budget cuts, unexpected expenses, and overcrowded schools force many leaders to forego hiring expensive technical employees. Instead, they must hand these duties over to existing staff members who don't have the training to keep security systems in tip-top shape. This is particularly true for smaller, more rural districts.

You might address these initial technical difficulties by hiring a vendor to install security technology for you. This is a good short-term solution that will get you started on the right path, but it won't give you the maintenance and support you need in

the long run if you don't have the personnel to manage it.

### Disconnected point solutions

One of the main hurdles you might face in school security is the disconnected nature of the devices you already have installed. If they don't work together to provide a complete view of potential threats, you can only take advantage of one device at a time. This gives you eyes, ears, or communication, but not all three. This makes it difficult to accurately assess and act quickly in an emergency.

For example, an individual might trigger a motion detection alarm when they enter school grounds. This tells you that someone is in the vicinity who could be a threat. Without any cameras tied to that system, however, you won't have the ability to see who it is or what they're doing. It could be a gardener. It could also be something much more nefarious. But when your motion detection system is tied to your security cameras, they can activate the nearest camera and capture the activities of the individual in question.

Ultimately, trying to monitor and oversee a campus with disconnected point solutions sows confusion and slows response time, which can leave schools and students vulnerable in the event of an emergency.

### Management through multiple interfaces

Disconnected systems from a variety of manufacturers also create difficulties in accessing, managing, and overseeing each technology. Security personnel have a separate management console for the access control system, another for video

<sup>1</sup> Is More Necessarily Better? School Security and Perceptions of Safety among Students and Parents in the United States. PubMed Central.

<sup>2</sup> Feeling Unsafe at School and Associated Mental Health Difficulties among Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review. PubMed Central.



surveillance, and yet another for the alarm system. This makes it incredibly difficult to keep eyes on everything, especially if multiple devices are triggered at the same time. It also gets in the way of full-campus visibility — particularly for those who don't have a technical background.

The training required to learn each separate interface and its operating procedures can also delay your team's ability to provide comprehensive security. This is particularly true if you experience a period of high turnover in security, IT, or administrative staff.

### Lack of regular maintenance

It's important to remember that security technology isn't set-it-and-forget-it. These sophisticated devices require regular, ongoing maintenance. This presents another issue for your school, particularly your IT team.

In the past, security systems were managed by dedicated facility maintenance departments. Today's security systems, however, are made up of intelligent devices physically connected to your network. This means maintenance and support often become [the responsibility of your IT team](#), even though this isn't traditionally their area of expertise. And if your school doesn't have an IT team at all, your administrative team is left to handle it, taking time away from their usual jobs to train on the equipment.

### No 24/7 monitoring

Although schools' security systems typically include diverse devices from many different manufacturers, they are often missing one key element: 24/7 monitoring.

Around-the-clock security is about more than just keeping technology running at night — someone needs to be there to review video footage and monitor systems in real time. But even if your school employs on-site security guards during the day, you might not have the budget to pay for an after-hours security team to oversee the system and respond to incidents overnight.

True 24/7 monitoring requires you to work with a technology partner who can oversee your cameras and alarm systems at all hours — a valuable feature that's difficult to realize when working with multiple vendors.





## Safe & Smart Campuses Require Integrated Security Solutions

To keep students safe, you must be strategic when investing in new devices. Rather than purchasing separate solutions, select a fully integrated physical security system that connects every device from a single console. With a cloud-managed platform that ties together security cameras, access management, intercoms, alarm systems, and panic buttons, you can oversee and monitor your entire campus with a 360-degree view.

In addition, you can take advantage of additional support for maintenance, overnight monitoring, and technical oversight. With this kind of integrated solution, your school will be better positioned to provide consistent, predictable, and comprehensive campus security.

Let's look more closely at some of the benefits of an integrated security solution:

### 24/7 monitoring

A powerful advantage of an integrated security solution is professional 24/7 monitoring. This security feature delivers alarm and [video monitoring](#) around the clock from a team of trained virtual guards who verify and respond to threats for you. These guards can:

- Verify events to screen out false alarms
- Communicate with law enforcement to ensure a priority police response
- Warn intruders via an intercom that the police have been contacted

Around-the-clock virtual monitoring is particularly useful if your campus has a tight budget and can't hire a third-party resource or in-person guards.

### You can be proactive rather than reactive

Perhaps the biggest benefit of an integrated solution is that it enables you to take a more proactive approach to security. Most available security systems are excellent at detecting that an intruder has entered your school. If someone breaks a window or opens a door after hours, for example, an alarm system will alert school security or even dispatch police vehicles.

With integrated solutions, however, tools like motion detection can identify them as soon as they enter school grounds. The motion detection can activate the school cameras in the same area so security can see who the suspect is and what they are doing. If they approach the school, security can speak to them over the intercom to warn them that they are trespassing and the police are on their way.

All of this happens before the suspect enters the building, preventing a threat before it happens.

### Provides a complete picture

An integrated security system enhances the performance of every individual security device you may want to install. It combines intercoms, cameras, access control systems, alarm systems, and more so you have a complete, holistic picture of the campus. Automated alerts and improved coordination between different security layers mean that any unusual activity is quickly identified and addressed. Additionally, this integration facilitates better resource allocation, ensuring that security personnel can be deployed more efficiently and effectively where they are needed most.

With an always-on, clear view of the terrain, you are better positioned to oversee, prevent, detect, and respond to diverse threats.

### Everything is managed from one application

An integrated security system lets you easily manage all your devices from a single pane of glass. Rather than switching between three to four different interfaces, you can log onto one streamlined command system that is quick and easy to access.

It also minimizes technical complications for administrative staff members who don't have in-depth experience with security systems or simply don't want to waste time learning the nuances of five different platforms. This simplicity enables your school to stand up a fully managed security system right away and act quickly in an emergency.

### Easier authorized access

Finally, an integrated security system also makes it easier for you to grant authorized access to approved parties. Individuals can gain entry by holding a key fob in front of a door card reader, contacting the school office using the intercom, and obtaining visual confirmation via a camera. Altogether, this system makes it seamless, simple, and efficient for authorized personnel to come and go. And, of course, it makes it more difficult for intruders to infiltrate.



## Keep Your Students Safe with ANM Special Systems

In the last decade, K-12 schools and higher education campuses have significantly increased security measures. But with threats still on the rise, school leaders need to take a different approach.

Rather than onboarding multiple point solutions that don't integrate easily, you can select a single integrated security system that proactively protects students.

ANM Special Systems is a proud member of the Northern New Mexico Independent Electrical Contractors (NNMIEC) organization and part of ANM, a rapidly expanding IT services provider in North America.

With a focus on effectiveness and ease of use, ANM can help you outfit your campus with a full security integration of intercoms, video surveillance, access control systems, and alarm systems — all on one platform.

"ANM's physical security experts, coupled with our Platinum partnership with Verkada, gives us the ability to offer campus protection, both inside and around the perimeter, as well as rapid response technology. Additionally, we can help you easily monitor, detect and respond to incidents on campus by centralizing security to one easy-to-use, cloud-based platform. It's why 3,000+ educational institutions choose this technology. And at ANM, **nothing makes us happier than being a part of keeping our students safe.**"

- Joe Martinez, ANM Director of Special Systems



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