

Case Study

Indianapolis Public Schools Reduce Costs and Improve District-Wide Security by Integrating “New and Existing” Technology

Profile

Indianapolis Public Schools serves more than 40,000 students and is the largest school district in the State of Indiana. IPS has more than 5,700 teachers, support staff and administrators and ranks first in the state in assessed valuation, enrollments and number of pupils transported. Nestled in a challenging urban location with far-reaching boundaries are the district's 76 schools and 90 buildings. A couple of schools are campus environments that have multiple buildings. IPS also has four administrative buildings that range from business operations to facilities management.

Aging Systems Overburden Staff

Faced with ever-increasing security demands, IPS' biggest challenges, aside from educating its children, are ensuring the safety of those students and staff, and protecting their property. “We want to ensure that when teachers and students come back to school the next day, equipment and resources are where they left them,” says Rick Joest, technology foreman for the district. But investing in advanced technology and staff with an already overburdened budget proved to be a difficult task.

First, the district needed to upgrade its incompatible and cumbersome access control, video and burglar alarm system. Security officials have been spending extensive amounts of time handling even the most routine matters. “There are a lot of things that our school police are having to do on a daily basis that would flood them with tasks,” says Joest. “One of the big issues is the opening and closing of buildings. When the building was opened, the custodian would call and send an alarm code when they entered. With 90 buildings opening up about the same time every morning they were getting flooded with calls.” Clearly, IPS needed a more advanced and user-friendly access control and security system.

The advancements of technology into the classroom, namely, the widespread use of computer-aided learning, led to another area of concern-- protecting valuable computing and video equipment. It was no longer enough to just have motion detectors in the hallways. “We saw an evolution from breaking into office areas for equipment, to simply breaking in through a classroom window and taking a television, a VCR, a computer and leaving without even being detected,” says Joest. “The equipment just vanished.”

A Partnership that Protects Investments

When the Indianapolis Public Schools began to deploy new security equipment five years ago, the district could not anticipate how future systems would work together. Joest says they quickly realized they would need a partner that could protect these investments by building on existing systems.

“When we began to implement new security systems five years ago, we had to choose the products that best suited our needs at the time,” says Joest. “The number one thing we needed to do in this new project was to use our existing equipment, to protect investments we've already made. Honeywell presented solutions to integrating all of our different products, and we realized at that

point that the industry had caught up with what we needed and it in fact turned out to be the Honeywell system.”

To improve safety and reduce costs, Honeywell is integrating the district’s existing equipment with new systems using its Enterprise Buildings Integrator™ (EBI) platform. The district will use the consolidated system to provide better, more responsive security throughout the district without increasing the size of its staff.

The enhanced security system is part of a seven-year \$250 million capital improvement project that includes the construction of four new schools, demolition of six schools and renovations within the district’s 90 buildings. Honeywell is installing new access control, digital video monitoring and archiving and an asset tracking system. The EBI system will integrate all of these systems and enable Indianapolis staff to monitor and control security for all 90 buildings from a single, centralized location. The Honeywell security project is being implemented over four years. When complete, the renovations will provide a more safe and secure learning environment district-wide.

Total Integration Enhances Security and Improves Efficiencies

The implementation of Honeywell Security Manager during the first phase of the project will essentially eliminate the burden of opening and closing buildings for custodial staff and school police. Upon completion of the renovations in 2009, the system will automate the process of opening each building and confirm the identity of that person without them having to make a phone call. This will help reduce the number of calls the school police department receives every morning, and provide the district a tool for meeting ADA compliance requirements.

Inside its buildings, the district plans to use Honeywell Asset Locator. A tool often used to track the location of critical equipment and security people within facilities, IPS plans to use Asset Locator, solely, to track and protect valuable artwork. The system alerts administrators if tagged artwork is moved and allows them to track the missing item’s location. The position of tagged assets is identified by room and can be graphically displayed on a PC workstation – the same Enterprise Buildings Integrator (EBI) system to provide school security with simple monitoring at a glance. The asset locator scans and updates that information every four seconds.

IPS also plans on using Asset Locator to ease the burden of keeping track of the district’s 300 buses. “We have a lot of parents calling asking, “Where is the bus?” says Joest. “And we simply didn’t know.” Each vehicle will be equipped with the Asset Locator, which will allow district officials to track where the buses are, when they left the dispatch center and when they arrive at school. “There’s a lot of accountability there when the dispatcher knows when bus drivers left the lot and when they come back, which helps to identify potential problems.”

Tracking activity within the district’s 90 buildings has also been greatly enhanced. In recent years, the Indianapolis schools have used video cameras to monitor school entrances and, more recently, most hallways. As part of the upgraded security system, the district will install additional digital video cameras and link them using Honeywell’s Digital Video Manager™ (DVM) system. The system will be integrated with EBI using a high-speed network to keep video off the school network and prevent it from tying up all the bandwidth.

“Keeping all that video off of our network was a pretty good accomplishment in itself,” says Joest. “We always had the capability of using our network for video, but when you have 400 cameras going there was no way that our network would support that traffic all the time. Honeywell’s digital video solution solved that problem for us.”

The video monitoring system will provide school police a complete picture of district facilities and control over surveillance. District staff will use the Honeywell DVM system to view, record, archive and retrieve digital video from the EBI workstation. With the new system in place, Indianapolis security staff will eliminate the cost and inefficiencies of tapes, tape storage, VCRs and staff productivity tied up in locating footage on tapes.

A More Secure Future

Joest anticipates the upgraded system will help the district prevent incidents before they occur. “I like using video as a deterrent number one. I want the cameras to be visible because our intent is to stop someone from doing anything wrong, not to catch to them once they’ve done it. That is our priority.”

The new automated system helps enhance the human factor by relieving some of the tedious work that overwhelmed IPS staff. “Our dollars are primarily spent to educate children, and as much as we can save in our security portion, the more dollars we make available to that child to assist in their learning,” says Joest. “We want to provide the best updated technology that allows us to focus our resources where they need to be spent.”

When complete, the Indianapolis school district will have better tools for ensuring students’ safety, protecting school assets and responding to issues quickly and effectively. By integrating security and other building functions, the district will reduce costs and improve security. “Five years ago we thought it was probably impossible to find a company that could tie all of our systems together,” says Joest. “But here we are today on our way to a fully integrated system that will enhance our ability to protect our investments and property, and better ensure the safety of our students and staff.”