

Palm Beach School District Protects Students and Staff



The Palm Beach School District strives to protect its most precious resource - its children.

Palm Beach School District is the nation's 14th largest with over 170 facilities housing almost 162,000 K-12 students and 18,000 teachers and staff. The diverse district ranges from rural to metropolitan and experienced violence in May 2000 when a seventh grade student shot and killed a teacher in a middle school.

With the ongoing budgetary challenges a school district faces, Jim Kelly, chief of the Palm Beach County Florida District Police Department, worked hard to secure grants to install a security system. They chose an AMAG access control system using proximity cards. The cards provided an excellent alternative to keys, which would cost the district between \$10,000 and \$20,000 to re-key a school building. If a staff member loses an access card, they report it to the card administrator. It gets deleted and they are issued a new card, eliminating the need to re-key a school and issue new keys.

The access control system provides comprehensive security without increasing staff or disrupting the

learning environment. It also saves money.

“Our schools contain our most precious resources – our children. My mission, and that of the police department, is to provide a learning environment that is both secure and caring, where students are not distracted with concerns about their safety,” said Kelly.

Palm Beach is purchasing the product through PSA member Security Lock Systems of Tampa, Inc.

“The Palm Beach School District project was a competitive bid situation, but we were able to win the job, in large part, because of the pricing offered through PSA and AMAG,” explains Marcy Wilson, owner of Security Lock Systems. “AMAG is perfectly suited for a large multi-location installation like the Palm Beach School District. It has

ongoing technical and customer service support and the AMAG product makes that easy.”

The AMAG access control system operates at the district's headquarters using AMAG multiNODE control panels to communicate with HID proximity readers and electrified door hardware. One panel functions as the parent panel and connects via the district's WAN to upload data and download changes to the cardholder database. Two workstations are stationed at the headquarters – one issues

Specifications

- AMAG Access Control System
- AMAG multiNODE Control Panels
- HID Proximity Readers
- HID Readers with Intercoms
- Panasonic Digital Video Recorders

Palm Beach School District Highlights

- Thirty-seven schools are monitored by the AMAG access control system.
- 5,000 cardholders utilize the system.
- The system operates over a WAN.
- 326 access points are monitored.
- Two workstations provide badging; one for staff and one for visitors.
- Web-based monitoring provides easy viewing for elementary staff and police.

extensive networking capabilities and allows for a versatile use of technology. We are providing the district with

visitor badges and one is in the police station that handles ID badging. At this point, the school district monitors 37 schools and manages about 5,000 cardholders. Students are not issued cards. The numbers will grow as more schools are added.

Additional Innovations

The district wanted to provide after-hours access to staff. The previous solution was to install a phone outside the main door with a direct line to a central dispatch station. The challenge was that anyone could call and then the dispatch center had to authenticate the caller.

Palm Beach replaced the telephone with an HID reader and intercom. If a

staff member wants access, they present their card, which triggers the intercom to dial the dispatch center. Only valid cardholders can have access.

CCTV

The school district is working on placing cameras at all schools. The schools with cameras have about 15 to 30 cameras per campus. Dome cameras are placed around the outside of the school buildings.

In the elementary schools, where there are fewer problems with delinquency, monitoring the cameras is a clerical staff function. Web-based monitoring through a



AMAG multiNODE control panels communicate with HID proximity readers and electrified door hardware.

browser interface is provided to elementary school principals and police staff. In the middle and high schools, monitoring responsibilities rotate among staff eliminating adding extra staff to the payroll. Cameras are monitored over the WAN at district headquarters.

Planning for the Future

In spite of the accomplishments of his department, Kelly maintains a forward-looking perspective in discovering new ways to make the district and its students safer and more confident in the security of their surroundings. To ensure the investments he is making today will enable him to take advantage of the technology advances

of tomorrow, Kelly requires that any electronic security system his department obtains utilizes industry-standard, non-proprietary components.

The AMAG access control system provides a powerful platform to build upon. Kelly's future plans include placing biometric readers in classrooms to take attendance, placing biometric readers on buses to help track students, using smartcards for cafeteria or vending purchases and library transactions, incorporating time and attendance for payroll and implementing classroom intercoms, and panic buttons.

Departments pool their budgets to acquire systems they would not be able to afford separately.

Kelly also hopes the discoveries and solutions he and his security team made will benefit his peers in other school districts nationwide. All schools face the same budgetary issues, he adds. He hopes other districts can learn from what Palm Beach did and apply it to their particular situations.

Founded in 1981, Security Lock Systems of Tampa, Inc. has been servicing the Security and Life Safety needs of the commercial, property management, banking, military, manufacturing, health-care and educational markets throughout Central Florida.

