

*Enhancing School Security—Technologies to Complement SSHS Initiatives  
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National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention*

Research on school climate and connectedness has found that in order to create a positive learning environment, students must feel both physically and emotionally safe. They must feel that the adults in their lives care about them and are there to support them. In addition to drug and violence prevention strategies, and mental health services, Safe Schools/Healthy Students sites are employing a variety of security technologies to help their students feel and be safe. Listed below are available school security technologies (with a list of issues to raise about each). Also included are strategies to help students with learning disabilities feel safe.

Surveillance Equipment:

- *Video cameras:* Color versus black-and-white cameras. Fixed versus pan-tilt-zoom cameras. Hardwired versus wireless systems. HD vs. analog. Formats, resolution, pixels, lenses, and field of view. Camera housings. Placement and mounting. Covert cameras. Cameras on busses. Lighting requirements and nighttime applications. Maintenance and expected lifespan. Price ranges. Going out on bid for equipment and system maintenance contracts. Signage for use of cameras on school grounds. Legal aspects of the use of video cameras in schools. Internet Protocol-based surveillance. *Example:* Chicago Public Schools used the REMS grant to develop an integrated information management system. The City and schools can both use the Facility Information Management System (FIMS) to access safety plans in the event of an emergency, including site maps, school contacts, incident command flow, and evacuation sites. Chicago emergency responders may access school cameras in the event of an emergency in the school or surrounding community.
- *Recording equipment:* VCRs: the weak link. Multiplexers. Time-lapse recorders. Event recorders. DVRs vs. NVRs.

Metal Detection:

- *Walk-through metal detectors.* Space requirements and layout. Throughput. Hardware costs and manpower costs. Procedures for the operator. Instructions for the scannee. False alarms. Sources of interference. Acceptance testing and performance testing. Maintenance and expected lifespan. Working with the vendor.
- *Hand-held scanners* for personnel: Policies and procedures. Space requirements. Throughput. Hardware costs and manpower costs. Procedures for the operator. Instructions for the scannee. Maintenance and expected lifespan. Working with the vendor.
- *X-ray baggage scanners:* Safety concerns. Setup and space requirements. Throughput. Hardware costs and manpower costs. Procedures for the operator. Instructions for the scannee. Acceptance testing and performance testing. Maintenance and expected lifespan. Working with the vendor.

Entry Control Technologies:

- Limiting entry/exit points. Entry-control cards. Biometrics.

Visitor, Staff, and Student Identification Badges:

- Issuing and collection protocol. Scanning licenses run through offender databases.

Alarms:

- Fire, panic buttons, burglary, annunciators, wireless, tracking devices (GPS).

#### Emergency Notifications Systems:

- Voice/email/text via cell phone, BlackBerry, email, IM.

#### Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS):

- Interoperability and Information Management, National Incident Management System.

#### School Crime Operations Package:

- Free software application for entering, analyzing, and mapping incidents that occur in and around schools, <http://www.schoolcopsoftware.com/>

#### Using Technology To Help Students with Learning Disabilities:

- *Surveying* students (Web-based surveys).
- *Wayfinding Technologies*. Maps in multiple formats (to identify safe routes and zones). Satellite maps ([google maps](#) or [mapquest](#)) of neighborhood to show safe routes on cell phones. Mobile GPS units.
- *Anonymous reporting* channels. Toll-free telephone hotline number, a text message hotline number, anonymous email from dedicated "Suggestion Box" computer terminals in public locations and school computers.
- Safety in the *classroom*—ways to make students feel comfortable, including:
  - Post lesson plans on a Website or online learning platform where students can access.
  - Add text-to-speech to school and classroom Websites. Create classroom blogs/wiki's.
  - Create digital study guides that scaffold comprehension and response; ensure that students who need them have laptops or notetaking devices for writing assignments; create advance outlines or graphic organizers to scaffold writing assignments.
  - Ask students to email questions to the online learning platform to be answered anonymously; in advance if lessons/materials posted in advance.
  - Use Web-based social sites such as [Twitter](#) to create anonymous collections of questions and reflections on a topic that can be shared with the whole class.
  - Try a real-time polling software to check student understanding anonymously, such as [Poll Everywhere](#) for a cell phone-to-web option. Help students with reminders (medication or appointments) via digital watches, or text messages using free services such as [Remember the Milk](#), [BackPack](#), and [TaDa Lists](#).

#### ***Selected Resources***

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, <http://www.ncef.org/index.cfm>

National Center for Technology Innovation and Center for Implementing Technology in Education, *Feeling Safe at School: How New Technologies Can Help*, <http://www.ldonline.org/article/28741>

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center, <http://rem.ed.gov/>

National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, <http://promoteprevent.org/Resources/briefs/school%20safety-security.html>

Justice Technology Information Network, National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center, [http://www.justnet.org/Pages/ssres\\_cpted.aspx](http://www.justnet.org/Pages/ssres_cpted.aspx)