



LONG BRANCH SCHOOL DISTRICT SYMMETRY™ SECURITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ENROLLED IN SEVEN SCHOOLS

Long Branch School District (LBSD), Superintendent of Schools, Joseph M. Ferraina's "children first" philosophy has driven LBSD in New Jersey to construct four new schools and renovate others. Today's volatile society, along with after hours school building demands by the public, require school districts to secure not only their students, but their staff, properties and numerous visitors.

Facilities Director, Ann Coyle Degnan was tasked with researching and deploying a standardized security management system throughout LBSD's 10 schools and one administrative building. After reviewing several systems, Advanced Video Surveillance recommended AMAG Technology's Symmetry Professional access control system and Symmetry Video for a complete security management system.

Seven buildings now have Symmetry Professional installed and six of those have implemented Symmetry Video. All staff is required to wear badges. High School and Middle School students carry an ID badge, but it is not an access card.

Once LBSD started expanding to accommodate the needs of its 5,000 students and staff, they realized they could do so much more in terms of security. They wanted to monitor student traffic flow, view schools remotely and implement a staggered dismissal. They wanted one set of security rules for all schools to follow.

"After 9/11 the Homeland Security Department stepped up and adopted criteria for new buildings," said Ferraina. "We had a threat of vulnerability assessment done, which gave us the background and knowledge to go out and execute our security plan. We strive to do what is right for our students, staff and buildings."

Ferraina feels that security is a big concern. Cameras provide a lot of information to help resolve issues. LBSD takes an interactive approach to protect its schools. Rather than having a guard view monitors, a security officer roams the hallways throughout the day and interacts with the students. The security people are physically monitoring what is happening, and if there is an incident, they radio back using handheld radios to the office staff who immediately view the monitors.

Security officers are stationed at different areas throughout the building. In the morning, they are outside watching over the students. The high school finds it helpful to monitor traffic and student behavior outside. They don't hesitate to review video if there is an incident. They like to keep an eye on their students. The new high school and middle school use Symmetry Video as a live tool to help deter unwanted security breaches and bad behavior. The elementary school uses video as a forensic tool.

Having just opened their new high school, students and staff are transitioning to the new building. High school administrators



don't know where all the hiding places are, and therefore added security officers to help them learn as they go and where additional cameras should be placed.

"No initial camera/security design is perfect, and it makes a difference how a building is utilized," said Degnan. "We don't know this until a building is utilized. The life of our building is going to change. Security is a living, breathing thing – it's a compliment."

Symmetry manages access after school hours. Prior to installing the Symmetry Security Management System, LBSD relied on janitors to lock doors at appropriate times to manage access in designated areas. Now, the necessary doors are scheduled to lock at a specific time. Automatically locking doors forces people to remain in designated areas where an event is occurring.

The Board Office administration building houses Symmetry's main server and cameras monitor the exterior. In addition to securing administrative offices and staff, Symmetry protects the district's daycare center, Hand in Hand. The daycare center is utilized by student mother's who drop off their children and then are bussed to their school.

Symmetry Video helped the police identify two suspects who removed items from the middle school and high school building sites.

The system also helps track employee activity. If an employee is in a building late at night, Symmetry Video can track the employee's whereabouts. It eliminates the need to pursue certain issues because you can see who was in the building.

The Symmetry Security Management System controls access so well, that only two people have keys to all the doors for all buildings, severely reducing the chance for keys to get into the wrong hands. The system, however, is set up so others do have an interior master key. This allows LBSD to properly administer access rights to appropriate individuals without compromising security.

Symmetry Meets Special Needs

The Symmetry Security Management system allows the schools to manage their own database. Having multiple schools on the system, LBSD needed centralized control for each building. Symmetry provides the ability to separate the database so the principal of the high school only sees the high school badge holders. The principal can manage his/her own database. If a cardholder belongs in multiple schools, then the card is issued that way.

"Symmetry is a well written system and written correctly to meet today's needs," said Degnan. "I am never duplicating efforts; it just works correctly. So we spend our time learning how to use the system rather than installing the system."

She continues, "I didn't see another system written for a multi-site environment with your technology standards of today. AMAG uses a standard database and protocols and allows you to do standard things. Other companies had proprietary databases or you had to enter information in two or three places. AMAG is truly a technology based security company."

LBSD runs a web client which allows principals at different schools to log in and modify badges and access level permissions for their perspective schools. This provides a lot of flexibility if the principal needs to conduct changes from home or an alternative location.

The IT department runs Symmetry Professional on a laptop and is considered a strategic command center in the event of an emergency. Running Symmetry on a laptop with wireless capability allows administration to act quickly if necessary. In the event of an emergency, Ferraina or the administrator in charge can take the laptop outside and view the location of staff and students. The laptop also allows administration to view the school in crisis, providing an opportunity to take immediate action.



"I am never duplicating effort – it just works correctly"

"The Symmetry Professional system allows each principal to monitor and actively diffuse potential problems before they get out of hand," said Advanced Video Surveillance's Mike Riotto. "Each school can take advantage of the mustering capability in the event of a crisis and see at a glance who is where in a building. This critical information assists police in how to manage a crisis."

Why Advanced Video Surveillance?

Advanced Video Surveillance is a high-end security systems design and integration company that services high profile clients throughout the New York and New Jersey area. Their extensive experience with AMAG's Symmetry Security Management System, Symmetry Video system and understanding the demanding needs of LBSD made them the perfect integrator to install the system into LBSD.

Success

LBSD conducted a comprehensive security drill at the middle school. The police were impressed with what they could see on the monitors. Sitting in a trailer during the drill, the police and administrators could see where the kids evacuated and that it was done properly. There was a large amount of information to view. The cameras allowed administrators to watch several aspects of the building instead of the one spot they were stationed too.

"We produced an alarm and realized none of the cafeteria people left the building," said Ferraina. "We saw flaws in our system that we needed to address. We learned 1000% more because we had those cameras. Everyone saw the value."

"The Symmetry Security Management System has allowed LBSD to provide a safer environment for our students," said Ferraina. "While I know that no system is fool-proof, I feel we are doing the best we can to protect our students and staff from a potential tragic situation, and I will continue to do all I can to ensure the safety of our students, staff and administration."

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