

# Enhancing school safety and security—how communication technology can help

School districts throughout the United States are being challenged with school safety and security issues as a result of recent violence and subsequent threats of violence. District superintendents, school principals and school safety coordinators are in the process of reviewing their internal policies and procedures in an effort to deter juvenile crime on school property.

Today's communication technologies can play an important role in the quest to enhance safety and security in our schools. Phone accessibility in the classroom, enhanced 911 capabilities and video remote surveillance are just a few of the telecommunication technologies available.

## **Communications technology and careful planning can assist in addressing these important questions facing our schools today:**

- ▶ Do you have a detailed crisis management<sup>1</sup> plan in place to alert police, fire, or other emergency officials if there is an emergency in the school or classroom?
- ▶ Are your staff and faculty prepared for a variety of emergency situations?
- ▶ Does the teacher have a way to notify authorities of an emergency without leaving the class unattended?
- ▶ If you alert the authorities, do they have a way of knowing the exact location of the incident? Do they know which building or which room to respond to?
- ▶ Is there a means to alert parents about issues that might affect their student's well being?
- ▶ Are you effective in contacting parents if their student is demonstrating behavior problems in the classroom?
- ▶ Do the parents have a convenient and efficient means to communicate with teachers and administration about personal concerns they might have for their child?
- ▶ Have you implemented every means possible to provide a safe and protected educational environment for your children?

These are only a few of the concerns school administrators, teachers, and parents across the country are addressing. Sprint can help you enhance safety in our schools through careful evaluation, planning, and reviewing available resources. Sprint offers many solutions that may assist you in addressing safety and security concerns in our schools. Examples of these solutions include:

### **Phone Accessibility in the Classroom to Enhance Safety**

Telephones in the classroom have many benefits, none as important as their impact on safety. Classroom phones are used to:

- ▶ Provide teachers and students with the instant ability to alert emergency officials in threatening situations
- ▶ Allow teachers to communicate with parents and staff without leaving the classroom unattended

Adding telephones to the classroom can be the most effective security enhancement made to your school.

### **Enhanced 911 Capabilities to Expedite Emergency Response**

Enhanced 911 (E911) is a local telephone service provided solution that can pinpoint the origin of the call down to the caller's telephone number as well as the location within the building of the phone from which the call is made. E911 is a service available in most counties where Sprint provides local service.

A very important safety issue to consider is the capability of your telephone equipment when dialing 911 in an E911 service area. When an emergency call is placed from a phone on a PBX (Private Branch Exchange) or Hybrid Key Telephone System, detailed station location does not display on the emergency response system; it only shows the phone number and address of the telephone common control system. This may not be the address of the reported emergency. If fire and police units are dispatched to the equipment location instead of the scene of the emergency, a critical delay in response can occur. There are telephone systems such

<sup>1</sup> There are many resources for crisis management planning. We have found [Crisis Management Plan for Schools](#) to be a good planning guide. J. Berra Engineering, Inc. produces this step-by-step guide in binder format covering 33 types of crisis situations and how to react. To order a copy, contact J. Berra at 281-447-8300.



as Nortel's Norstar Key System and Nortel's Meridian 1 PBX that will assist in translating the exact location of the phone from which the call was made. For example, even if the PBX equipment cabinet resides in the administrative building, E911 will know to dispatch emergency assistance to the chemistry room on the second floor at the junior high school across town, the emergency location from which the call was made.

**IMPORTANT E911 SAFETY TIPS TO REMEMBER ARE:**

- ▶ If E911 is available in your area, it is important to know whether the telephone equipment serving your district or school already has an E911 interface or has the capability to be upgraded.
- ▶ It is necessary to understand your present telephone system's capabilities by working with your system supplier and your local telephone service provider.
- ▶ It is important to develop a plan with your telecommunications provider(s) and the public safety community to identify the locations of each telephone in your school or district. This information could then be provided in your crisis management plan.

**Improved Parental Communications to Promote Safety Awareness**

Technology such as Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems are being used to identify and report behavior problems before a situation becomes critical. An IVR is a sophisticated voice mail system allowing callers to get or leave information from any touch-tone phone. Sprint's ParentLink is an example of an IVR system designed to increase parental involvement, by phone or via the Internet. ParentLink or IVR systems can be used to:

- ▶ Provide better communications between school, parents, and students while promoting school safety issues
- ▶ Conduct surveys to measure student and parental perceptions on school safety
- ▶ Alert school safety officials to threatening situations anonymously reported by students or parents as well as notify school officials via a pager when a threat report or anonymous tip is made
- ▶ Record broadcast messages on voicemail boxes to educate the school community on subjects such as district and school policies, juvenile crime, teen violence warning signs, and reporting procedures

**Video Surveillance via the Internet to Increase Security**

New technologies are evolving to increase surveillance in school buildings. Internet Protocol (IP) based technologies will allow school officials to monitor student activity in common use areas from remote cameras. Using IP, cameras act as dumb stations until activated from a headend location. This allows emergency officials in your school to react more quickly to an emergency that may be developing. IP surveillance cameras can be used to:

- ▶ Quickly identify potentially dangerous situations allowing school leadership and law enforcement to see what is happening inside the school building. Activity can be viewed from any location with an Internet connection
- ▶ Increase security by monitoring common use areas and school entrances
- ▶ Provide remote access for surveillance when school is not in session

**Wireless Communications to Allow Instant Communication and Faster Response**

Wireless or PCS services can be used to provide a means of communicating quickly in an emergency situation. They are often used:

- ▶ As an emergency back-up should the school's telecommunications equipment fail due to vandalism, fire, or power outages
- ▶ By key personnel, school nurses, and security staff to allow mobility and quick response
- ▶ By teachers on field trips, coaches on the field, and bus drivers to immediately report accidents or other emergency situations

Note: In addition to wireless options, some telephone systems such as Nortel's Norstar Companion Key System and Meridian 1 PBX support portable phones giving school staff the mobility they need within the building.



### Local Telephone Services to Enhance Safety Measures

There are a number of features that may help to provide a safer environment for your school or district. Such features include Caller ID, Anonymous Caller Rejection (ACR), Auto Call Return and Call Tracer. Commonly referred to as “custom calling features”, these services provide call management and screening capabilities to local telephone service customers. They operate over business, residential and Centrex trunks and are available in most of Sprint’s local telephone service areas individually or as a package.

The following custom calling features can function individually or together to assist in identifying or discouraging harassing, threatening, or obscene calls. Below is a brief explanation of how they can work for you:

#### CALL TRACER

- ▶ Call Tracer can initiate a trace on an unwanted phone call very simply.
- ▶ Upon receiving an unwanted call, an access code can be dialed automatically sending a message to the telephone company indicating the calling number, the time the call was received, and the time the trace was activated.
- ▶ When contacted, Sprint will assist in taking the appropriate action.

#### CALLER ID

- ▶ Caller ID allows the called party to view the number and sometimes the listed name of the telephone number from which a call is placed.
- ▶ A display phone or an adjunct display device is required which can assist in identifying threatening callers.

Note: Not all PBX systems, long distance companies, or other local telephone service companies are capable of sending the Caller ID information.

#### ANONYMOUS CALLER REJECTION

- ▶ Anonymous Caller Rejection (ACR) is a feature that allows the called party to send all calls that have been blocked to a recording.
- ▶ Calling parties can block on a per-call basis or on a per-line basis. The recording informs the calling party that “blocked” calls are not accepted and instructs the caller to unblock their calling identification if they wish to complete the call.
- ▶ All calls completed will display the Caller ID information (if available).

#### AUTO CALL RETURN

- ▶ This feature allows the party called to call the last number that called them regardless of whether the call was answered.

The availability of these features depends on the capabilities of Sprint’s central office as well as the compatibility of each individual school’s telephone equipment. If Sprint is not your local service provider, you should contact your local telephone service provider to determine if these or similar products are available in your area. You can determine if your telephone equipment is compatible with such features by contacting the vendor who installed the system or the telephone equipment manufacturer.

These are just a few of the technologies available to help enhance safety and security in our schools. Sprint’s team of professionals are dedicated to addressing the needs of students, parents and educators. While providing our schools with the information and support required to be informed of the latest technology, Sprint continues to develop and implement resources that create a safer learning environment for our children.

**For more information on anything you’ve read, contact your local Sprint business office or the Sprint Education team at 1-888-840-4138. Or visit our web site at [www.sprint.com/education](http://www.sprint.com/education)**



To receive more information, please complete the information listed below and fax it to: 1-888-259-5790.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility/District: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes**, I would like to receive more information about: (check all that apply)

- Phone accessibility in the classroom
- Enhanced 911 Capabilities to expedite emergency response
- Improved parental communications to promote safety awareness – ParentLink
- Wide surveillance via the internet to increase security
- Wireless communication to allow instant communication and faster response
- Local telephone services and features (call tracer, caller id, anonymous caller rejection, auto call return)

**Please have a Sprint representative contact me to schedule an appointment.**

