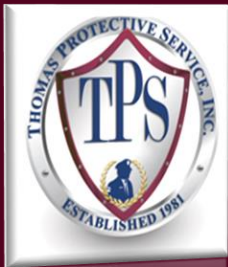# *HOW TO IMPROVE SCHOOL SECURITY WITH A LIMITED BUDGET*

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School security plays a crucial role in supporting the intellectual, social, physical and emotional growth of students. A protected environment allows students to learn and engage with each other without the fear of potential risks, thus making it critical for school officials to regularly assess and improve their security approach. However, as many school districts face limited funding, it can be difficult to see past budget restraints when trying to address security issues. By identifying areas of improvement, school officials can develop a security plan and act on it in order to better protect their environment without breaking the bank.

Stick to Security Fundamentals

With the growing number of active shooter events happening in schools, it is easy for school officials to get caught up in researching and wanting gunshot detection technologies. However, these solutions are not an ideal starting point for institutions that need to increase security efforts on a limited budget. Instead, school officials should address security basics first such as making sure there is a single point of entry, a visitor sign-in system and that all doors are locked at appropriate times throughout the day.

These fundamentals are typically more affordable and are important to have in place as the backbone for more sophisticated technology.

In the example of active shooter technology, the technology can be hampered if traditional security systems, like access control, aren't installed. In fact, advanced technologies can be easier and less expensive to implement in the future if the proper security building blocks are set in place.

Integration Within Budget

Once a school has a solid security foundation, systems integration should be the next step school officials should consider. A comprehensive security approach can help achieve faster response time to threats and eventually reduce costs. For instance, if systems are connected in the event of a potential intruder once a panic button is pressed the right doors are locked for the situation, students and teachers are alerted via an intercom system, and law enforcement is notified. With siloed systems, each safety protocol would happen separately, meaning slower response times and putting the school at greater risk.

A common misconception is that an integrated security approach takes additional funding. However, a security systems integrator can help plan, implement and manage a connected security strategy all while staying within budget and sometimes even save money. An integrator can look at current security technologies, find ways to consolidate systems and add news ones if necessary. This takes pressure off a school officials and helps reduce risk. Most of all, the integration of security systems means that schools end up buying and supporting less technology, ultimately lowering costs while increasing safety.

School officials can run education programs on how the new integrated system works with faculty and students. This can allow students to have better peace of mind and concentrate on their studies, while teachers and staff can work more comfortably knowing the learning environment is protected. With an integrated security system, school officials can focus more time on improving other areas of the school and less time worrying about safety hazards.