

lesson learned


allen independent schools choose

The background image shows the exterior of Allen High School at dusk. The building is constructed of red brick with several windows, some of which are illuminated from within. A large glass entrance is visible on the right side, with the words "ALLEN HIGH SCHOOL" displayed in illuminated letters above the doors. The sky is a mix of light blue and purple, suggesting twilight. The foreground shows a paved walkway with a pattern of light and dark tiles.

Three years ago Pelco Press featured a cover story on the Allen Independent School District in Allen, Texas. At the time, a Pelco security system guarded the district's only high school. As part of our continuing look at school security in 2006, we have returned to the Allen Independent School District to find out how video security is working for them.

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complete pelco solution




Just before one o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday, November 11, 2006, a fire broke out inside the dance room at Allen High School. After the flames were extinguished, investigators suspected that arson could be the cause. A quick search of video recorded with a Pelco DX8000 DVR seemed to confirm the theory. "The cameras were rolling the whole time," says Bob Curtis, Executive Director of Facilities for the Allen Independent School District. "We saw a young man walk onto campus and go into the storage room. A minute and a half after he walked out, the fire alarm went off." The young man was identified, and subsequently taken into custody. While under arrest, the suspect was told that he had been recorded; he soon thereafter gave a full written confession. "Situations like this give you a taste of why we put in video security in the first place," says Curtis.

Curtis admits that ten years ago some community members were hesitant about investing in video security, but he believes the system has more than

proven itself. "Since installing the system, we've seen the incidents of vandalism go down, while attendance rates at the high school are up."

After realizing the benefits of the technology, the district made a commitment to upgrade the existing system and expand video security to its elementary and intermediate school campuses. Security integrator Enterprise Security Solutions of Texas (ESST) was brought in to guide the district through the process. ESST owner Ron Rackley explains, "They came to us and said 'give us a system where we can monitor video and control the cameras from any school in the district.'" Rackley did his homework before selecting the manufacturer for this project. "We tested probably ten different DVR manufacturers and five different camera manufacturers. Pelco beat them all."

Allen Independent Schools are now replacing the cameras they had previously purchased from another



manufacturer with Pelco Spectra Dome Positioning Systems. According to Curtis, it came down to performance and reliability. "With Pelco we found the cameras that we like, and we're going to stick with them." Spectras can now be found at seven of the district's 18 campuses and DX8000 DVRs record the video taken by the more than 300 Spectra Domes installed throughout the district. The cameras can be viewed at monitoring stations on each campus, and every camera in the district is connected to the main security center at the high school through a Pelco CM9760 Series Matrix switch. The video is monitored on three Pelco 50-inch DLP Displays with Multiviewers, allowing security officers to watch up to 16 video signals on each display.

This school district has made a long-term commitment to improving and expanding the presence of video security on their campuses. Currently they are installing more Spectra systems and plans are in place to install another 50-inch DLP monitor in early 2007.

Securing Student Success

In a perfect world there would never be a price tag associated with a child's safety. But this world is far from perfect and every day, school administrators are faced with the task of protecting our most precious citizens with limited resources. In an environment where academics are the obvious priority, some argue that the expense associated with a major security system is difficult to justify. But a rise in violence inside of schools has changed the way communities are looking at school safety.

Eric Ackermann of Ken Massey Associates has extensive experience outfitting public schools with video security systems. He says that over the years, administrators have come to see a connection between security and academics. "If a child does not feel safe in school, they will not want to come to school," he says. Ackermann also points out, however, that you cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach to school safety because every campus has its unique concerns. "While a high school may be worried about student-on-student violence, elementary schools are more likely to be focused on protecting their students from abduction."

Many schools are turning to consultants like Dr. Thomas Franklin, CEO of the Universal Security Tech Group, for assistance in designing systems tailored to their specific needs. "Due to budget constraints, a lot of schools cannot afford the manpower needed to really protect a campus," says Franklin. "Therefore, technology has become a real asset and a way to stretch their resources."

Dr. Adam Thermos of the Strategic Technology Group also designs security systems for schools. He says that in the last 20 years, schools have embraced technology to deal with their security needs. "It can be an extremely effective way to control property crimes like car theft, as well as personal crimes like sexual assaults."

Additionally, access control and panic alarms are widely utilized in campus environments. Video security systems are also becoming more common. Dr. Thermos says that many schools are looking for ways to integrate their systems into converged environments – and then connect those systems to local law enforcement agencies.

Ackerman, Thermos and Franklin agree that many schools are discovering that an initial investment can result in significant savings down the road. "When you are dealing with schools, student safety is the number one concern," Ackerman says. "But vandalism can cost school districts millions, so property protection can be a real fringe benefit."

For more information about security on school campuses visit these Web sites:

International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators

www.iaclea.org

ASIS International

www.asisonline.org

Security On Campus, Inc.

www.securityoncampus.org

Strategic Technology Group

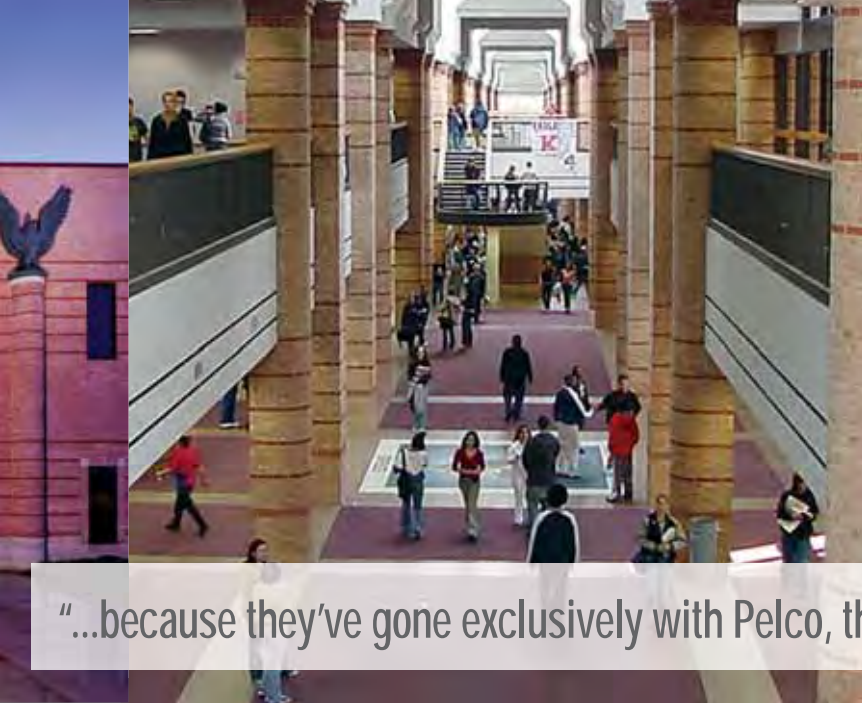
www.drthermos.com



Rackley says the improvements have been methodically mapped out in order to deliver the necessary security presence while working within the district's existing budget.

According to Rackley, choosing a complete Pelco solution has ultimately saved the district money. "Three years ago, the district was spending quite a bit just to keep the system up and running. Now, because they've gone exclusively with Pelco, the district has cut those service costs in half." Rackley says the DLP display is a prime example of the ROI associated with Pelco products. Not only does the display consume an average of 80 percent less power than more traditional nine-inch monitors, it also reduces maintenance time. "With the DLP, I can field-service the display. If you do the math, you'll see this timesaver helps to offset the overall cost of the unit."

Leaders at the Allen Independent School District firmly believe that security is a significant concern for every school and have come to understand that video is an effective way to give students, teachers and parents peace of mind. "We put a lot of thought into our security system," says Curtis. "We want to provide the best environment that we possibly can so that our students feel good about coming to school and can focus their attention on learning."



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For Additional Information

To read more about Pelco security solutions for campus environments visit www.pelco.com

The Allen Independent School District has chosen a total Pelco solution that includes Spectra IV Dome Positioning Systems, DX8000 DVRs and 700 Series 50-inch DLP Displays with Multiviewer Manager Software.

Spectra IV Dome Positioning Systems

With an industry-leading 35X optical zoom lens, 540 TV lines of resolution and the ability to capture quality video at an amazingly low .00018 lux, Spectra IV SE delivers performance far beyond the range of traditional dome systems. A Day/Night camera with LowLight™ technology, Spectra IV SE is the ideal camera system for any lighting condition. With such a large optical zoom lens, Spectra IV SE has been engineered with an advanced electronic image stabilization algorithm, which helps prevent the image from blurring due to vibrations caused by external sources such as wind or traffic.

Spectra IV SE's 128X WDR capability compensates for those scenes where dramatic contrasts in lighting are present, resulting in useable video regardless of glare, direct sunlight or shadows.

DX8000 Series Digital Video Recorder

Delivering exceptional image quality, immense storage capacity, audio, and server-to-server connectivity, DX8100 Systems continue the Pelco tradition of outstanding performance in digital video recording. In our quest to create the most powerful DVRs on the market for the video security professional, Pelco DX8100s now feature increased storage capacity, faster recording rates, Multicasting, Network Time Protocol (NTP) synchronization, Global Data Retention Time Limit, and a new Gigabit Ethernet port.

Pelco 700 Series 50-inch DLP Display with Multiviewer Manager Software

In a security control room, space is at a premium. Pelco understands this and has created a family of products that free up the space usually filled with racks of monitors. With Pelco Multiviewer, you can choose anywhere from zero to 60 image windows on a single display and then configure those windows anyway you want. Digital and analog signals can be combined in this highly scalable system. And with Pelco Multiviewer Manager Software, display layouts can be customized and saved to hot keys to meet the specific needs of individual operators. Pelco Multiviewers are an energy efficient and space saving alternative to traditional monitor systems.