Considerations for Improving Physical Security in K-12 Schools

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B.L.U.F.

Different schools have **vastly different security needs** based on location, student population, budget

There is **little empirical evidence** around the effectiveness of protective measures

A **systems-based approach to layered school security** can help schools make better-informed decisions for their unique contexts

What technologies do schools consider appropriate?

Technologies Rated as "Very Appropriate" for **Severe** Forms of Violence:

Technology	Urban Schools	Suburban/ Rural Schools
Communication technology	√	√
Entry control equipment	√	√
Emergency alerts	√	√
Tip lines		√
Social media monitoring		√
Video surveillance	√	

Technologies Rated as "Very Appropriate" for **Frequent Forms of Violence:**

Technology	Urban Schools	Suburban/ Rural Schools
Communication technology	√	√
Tip lines	√	√
Social media monitoring		√
Video surveillance	√	

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Evidence about effectiveness of school security technologies is mixed

- **Few studies evaluate effectiveness**, despite the large literature on different types of school safety and security technologies

- **Contextual factors likely impact measures' effectiveness**, e.g. occupant behavior, awareness of countermeasures, etc.

- **More cost-effective solutions** include the implementation of access control measures, e.g., door locks, entry screening, IDs

- **The unintended impacts that measures can have on school climate and perceptions of safety** suggest that the opportunity cost of investing in security technologies is high for schools

# Key theme: a systems-based approach recognizes that one size does not fit all

- A systems-based approach helps schools **address their unique circumstances**, and ensures that security measures work with efforts aimed at preventing violence and responding to incidents

- A layered approach to security helps **avoid single points of failure** and ensures that elements are working in an integrated way to detect, delay, and respond to threats

- **Physical security technology, site and building design features, personnel, policies and procedures, and training programs** work cohesively to provide security benefits

- **Multi-disciplinary teams leading the planning process** meet the needs of diverse stakeholders and enhance response capabilities

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Future directions

For Schools	For Technology Developers
✓ **Create** a comprehensive, all-hazards school safety plan integrated with violence prevention and response & recovery efforts	✓ **Develop** improvements to technologies that schools consider appropriate for severe and high-frequency forms of violence
✓ **Consider** new technology's up-front and long-term costs and potential impact on school climate	✓ **Develop** complementary resources that help ensure the effectiveness of technologies, such as training materials
✓ **Ensure** that new technology can be integrated with existing systems and upgraded in the future	✓ **Test** technology solutions through simulations and in real-world environments where possible
✓ **Consider** the staff and training needs associated with that technology's successful operation	

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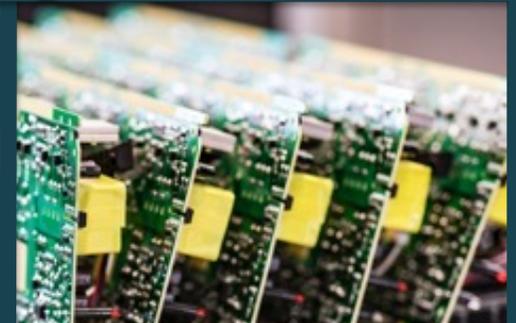
Questions & Discussion

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