

# Greenwood Community Schools

“Many public schools have bits and pieces of a security philosophy as a result of the incidents in Columbine, Colorado, and others that followed,” says Superintendent David E. Edds, Ed. D, of the Greenwood Community School Corporation, “but it didn’t seem to me that any of them really had put all the pieces in place. We looked at how we could combine the hardware, the philosophy, the practice and the culture to do everything possible to protect our students and staff.” The result is a system that controls access effectively and enables administrators to monitor activities unobtrusively at critical locations while also providing the backup data to support any required actions.

Greenwood Community Schools, located south of Indianapolis serves a student body of almost 4,000 in an area with a population approaching 35,000. The district includes four elementary schools, a middle school and a high school, as well as an administration building.

Greenwood has always been proactive about security, but several tragic well-known events increased the emphasis on doing everything possible to protect students and staff. Dr. Edds explains, “The event that really heightened my concerns was when a gunman walked into the Amish school in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania and killed those children. It was a horrible tragedy that could have been prevented.” Shortly afterward, he began talking with the School Board about what could be done to prevent a similar situation in Greenwood. Such conversations often take place, but after everyone agrees about the concern, definitive action is seldom taken. Dr. Edds says, “It wasn’t easy for me to dismiss the thought, and I had some conversations with our architectural firm on what an effective security system would look like in Greenwood schools.”



Southwest Elementary School is one of six schools and an administration building in Greenwood, Indiana that all incorporate a new comprehensive security system.

URS Corporation's Indianapolis office, the district's architectural firm, brought in Allegion, as a security consultant. For the Greenwood Schools, Allegion provided the site assessments and proper specifications needed to implement security and safety enhancements for each specific access point. Based on their multi-solution perspective, they were able to recommend the optimum combination of systems and components to meet the district's comprehensive needs.

Dr. Edds notes, "After spending a few hours with the security consultants, I was sure this was something we really could accomplish. I put the challenge in front of the school board when I asked, 'Could you live with yourself if something preventable happened to a student on our watch?' After that, I felt like the decision makers were on board."

Financing the security upgrade program was the next challenge, but a timely situation with a bond issue that was up for [M1] renewal provided the funding. According to Dr. Edds, Indiana schools operate under private holding corporations, and the Greenwood Schools holding corporation readily agreed to the refinancing. This provided sufficient funds to proceed with the work.

Although many school districts are not able to secure the funds needed to implement a full program through a bond issue, grants or other sources, the bond issue enabled Dr. Edds to implement a four- to five-year program in a single year in order to drive a dramatic cultural change. While the resulting cost—well in the six-figure range—may seem high at first glance, it covers upgrading the complete video monitoring and recording system for seven buildings, replacing or converting exit devices and other door hardware to electronic operation, wiring a large number of openings, card readers, a new high security mechanical lock system, and many other upgrades in systems, components and hardware.

Allegion reviewed several access control strategies with the district, which selected the Open Options platform as the software because of its ease of use and special event management. Allegion then put together a comprehensive system that integrates the district's access control, digital video and alarm monitoring systems into a single solution.

Once the system was installed, the district began working with Paul Timm, President of RETA Security, a Chicago-based security consultant brought in by Allegion, to train users in effective security measures. Dr. Edds says, "Here in the Midwest we've lived in a culture where we feel we don't have to lock our doors, and we can park our car with the keys in it. Although we still want to trust people that way, we have come to the realization that we can't. Our challenge now is to change the culture."

One example suggested by Timm was a credential exchange. Previously, says Dr. Edds, a visitor simply signed in at the office and went off to see their child, meet with a teacher or wherever else they wanted. "They could have signed any name, and if we gave them a visitor's badge, we never got it back," he adds. Now we will have to see a photo ID to make sure the person signing in is who they say they are, and we will hold their driver's license until they sign out and return our badge." This policy also helps ensure that visitors can be accounted for in an emergency.

With the new system up and running, Dr. Edds says he will sit down with Assistant Principal and Safety & Security Coordinator Todd Garrison and the school safety committee to write a handbook of policies and procedures. "Once we get that done, we'll have Paul Timm come back and address our faculty to keep it in front of them."

## Putting the Plan into Action

Before the access control system could be put into place, several bricks-and-mortar changes were necessary. Some of the school buildings were built 30 to 40 years ago, and even the newest one was built 12 years ago, before the concept of visitor control emerged. As a result, it was necessary to construct secure vestibule areas between the main entrance and the school office. The secure vestibules route all visitors to the office where they can be identified and screened before they are admitted. A bank teller-type window provides security while allowing a credential exchange. To confirm his or her identity and ensure they checkout when leaving, a visitor will be required to leave a driver's license, credit card or other identification in exchange for a visitor's pass.

The main entry at each school is automatically unlocked during the peak hours when students arrive and then relocked for security. Assistant Principal Marlowe Mullen of Greenwood Community High School says, "We have the doors preset for specific entry and exit times, unlocking when the students arrive. They lock automatically at a time we have identified as the difference between being late for school and absent from their first-period class." After that, anyone who comes into the school has to be admitted by the school's receptionist. The system also can be set to unlock specific doors for special one-time events.

Digital video cameras record the activity inside and outside each entrance, as well as at locker banks and other locations. This provides date- and time-stamped documentation of visitors or tardy students as well as recording possible thefts or other incidents that may require investigation. Photographs and surveillance reports can be printed, and video clips can be reviewed. The cameras also act as a deterrent to unwanted behavior.

The video system, from Milestone Systems, is a network-based video recorder (NVR) system that runs on standard computers. With the internet-based system, networked cameras are simply deployed at each school, and the information travels back to a server where it is recorded. In most cases, Allegion was able to integrate existing cameras into the new system. This saved the district the cost of investing in separate Video Digital Recorders (VDRs) at each school, and it eliminates the need to coordinate the resulting data. It also allows principals and other authorized individuals to access the system from home or other remote locations via the internet.

At the high school alone there are more than 37 cameras, and a matrix can be selected to show specific areas, such as doors and hallways or the cafeteria. Double-clicking on an image will enlarge it for easier viewing. A 32-inch monitor in one vice-principal's office at the high school can display a single view, as well as groups of four, 16 or up to 64 camera views on one screen. Some of the cameras support two-way audio capability, although that function has not yet been implemented.

All perimeter doors are equipped with door position switches that will notify a central computer when a door is left open longer than allowed and also display the view from the camera at that door. This will ensure that security is not breached by a door that has been propped open. It also eliminates the need for staff members to check the school's exterior doors periodically to be sure they are locked.



The mission of the Greenwood Community School Corporation is to continuously improve the system of teaching and learning that results in increased achievement in all students. Greenwood Community Schools, located south of Indianapolis serves a student body of almost 4,000 in an area with a population approaching 35,000. The district includes four elementary schools, a middle school and a high school, as well as an administration building.

Previously, mechanical keys controlled access to the school buildings, and key control was not a high priority. Dr. Edds says, “Over the years, a lot of people in the community had gotten keys and had access to our buildings. I think there were more keys out in the community than with the faculty.” Replacing the original key system with a card access system made it possible to control access to the buildings. The seven buildings comprising the district now have card reader access on more than 50 doors. Card access can be tailored to individual needs, both in terms of what locations a person is allowed to enter and what hours entry is allowed. Lost cards no longer require costly changing of locks, since the lost card can be de-activated and a new one re-issued quickly.

For athletic events or other special programs outside of school hours, the system allows the athletic director or vice principal to set the times when certain doors will be open and lock them automatically at the end of the event. This makes security more certain and avoids the need for a custodian to physically lock the doors—eliminating human error.

The building perimeter security achieved with the card access system was supported by upgrading the remaining mechanical locks to a Schlage patent-protected key system that prevents unauthorized duplication and provides greater control. Other hardware solutions include Von Duprin EL98 exit devices, with electric latch retraction that is activated by card readers.

In summary, Dr. Edds says, “I know we had done a good job when I started getting calls from parents complaining about how tight and secure the schools are. I’ve had a few calls so far, and I told them we aren’t going to apologize for the inconvenience, because we’re sure they don’t want their children in an unsecured facility.”

## About Allegion

Allegion (NYSE: ALLE) creates peace of mind by pioneering safety and security. As a \$2 billion provider of security solutions for homes and businesses, Allegion employs more than 7,800 people and sells products in more than 120 countries across the world. Allegion comprises 23 global brands, including strategic brands CISA®, Interflex®, LCN®, Schlage® and Von Duprin®. For more information, visit [www.allegion.com/us](http://www.allegion.com/us) or call 888.758.9823.

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