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Security a 'natural fit' with school's building management upgrade

By [Leischen Stelter](#) - 10.27.2009 [email](#)

HOUGHTON, Mich.—A \$12 million project to improve energy efficiency and infrastructure at the Houghton-Portage Township School District also became an opportunity for the district to develop a security program. “The project focused all around energy conservation and then addressed security and other needs,” said Ronald Stimac, public sector account executive for Johnson Controls, the security integrator for this project.

While the primary purpose for the upgrades was to improve the energy efficiency and infrastructure of the school, adding in security systems to the school was a 'natural fit', he said.

The district spent \$4.8 million of the \$12 million to upgrade the IT infrastructure, which included the security system, and fire alarm system, as well as the building management system.

Johnson Controls added 26 PoE, IP cameras to monitor the interior and exterior of the buildings. A card access system, which is also PoE, was added to all the main entryways throughout the schools. While the card access system is currently utilized only by teachers and other school staff, Stimac said integration of student identification cards in the future is a possibility. In addition, exterior doors are equipped with door strikes to alert administrators if doors have been propped open or are opened during unscheduled times.

All these systems, including the building management system, run over a fiber optic backbone that routes the system to a centralized location. Administrators can then



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access video surveillance footage or alarm alerts from their offices.

In order to secure the funds for this project, the school called a special vote by the community, which approved a bond referendum for the project. As part of the bond, the district was able to provide a \$3 million energy savings from the system from managing things like lights and temperature controls.

And while the security portion of this upgrade does not necessarily yield a direct savings for the district, Stimac said the system has intangible benefits and vastly improves the security and safety of students and staff.

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