



BUILDING IN SAFETY

Safety. Security. You'll find it in buildings built by the Ohio School Facilities Commission.

OHIO SCHOOL FACILITIES COMMISSION

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Security and safety is not a “warm and fuzzy” feeling—in today’s society, it’s value cannot be overemphasized whether it be in a bank, a business, or, most importantly, a school building.

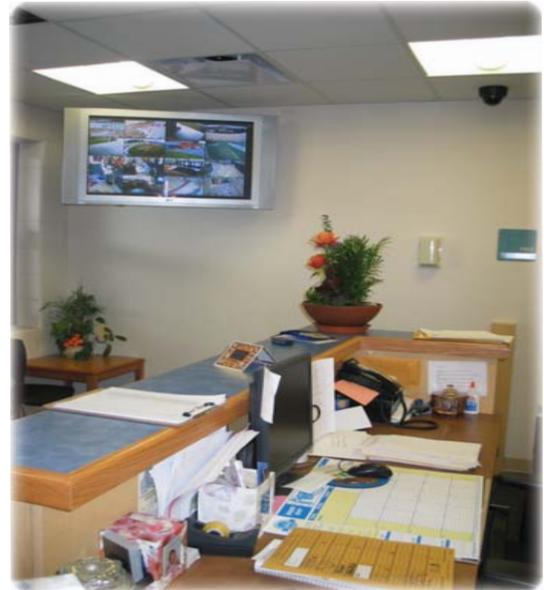
The Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC), through the guidelines and standards in the Ohio School Design Manual (OSDM), uses a variety of methods to ensure the safety of school buildings. That’s because at the Commission, we’re not just about buildings, we’re about building for the future.

The safety of students and staff is a primary concern of the OSFC. But how do you make a building secure?

Among the many security options the OSDM provides is the use of the latest technology to make buildings safe and secure. Cameras and door access systems, designed to be unobtrusive as possible but highly effective, are two of the most commonly chosen. The additional layers of surveillance camera and door access systems provide against outsiders who may try to gain access to the facility and also serve as a deterrent to student behavior problems on school grounds.



For schools, student, teacher and staff safety are high priorities. From the bus to the classroom to the playground to the front office, schools can monitor their buildings and grounds via security monitors.



Dayton Public School District

Features such as two-way paging and voice intercom systems are an integral part of OSFC-funded buildings. These systems provide quick and easy voice access from classrooms to administration areas and to all areas of the building, which is extremely important in heading off emergency health and behavioral situations.

There is another facet to school safety. At the 2007 National Conference on Safe Schools, school safety expert Tod Schneider noted, “The physical environment obviously plays a critical role in keeping students safe. The structure should provide an inviting environment in which children can be protected from threats and learning can take place. Researchers are continuing to study the role that a facilities’s physical environment plays in school safety. Meanwhile, educators and parents agree on the importance of providing a safe school environment. Children who feel safe are both psychologically and physiologically more receptive to learning.”

BUILDING IN SAFETY

DESIGN FOR SAFETY / SECURITY

The OSDM encourages design professionals and educators to incorporate the concept known as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). CPTED recommends that planners include safety elements into a building design at the earliest stages. Examples are administration control at main entrances, the avoidance of corridors with hidden spots, and fewer entrances.

In OSFC projects, the layout of a building is used as a natural deterrent to crime and vandalism. Buildings are typically designed to reflect a centralized point of entry. Visitors must enter and leave through the same entrance, which routes the visitor through or near the administration area. In addition, buildings are designed with clear lines of sight from one end of the structure to the other, so that potential problem situations can be recognized and addressed as rapidly as possible.

Is all this working? It would seem so. Principals and teachers tell us that they see a decrease in student bullying, fighting, and other behaviors due to these increased security measures.



Toledo Public School District

CPTED KEY PLANNING QUESTIONS

- What risks and opportunities are posed in areas directly adjoining school property?
- Can office staff observe approaching visitors before they reach the school entry?
- Do staff members have the physical ability to stop visitors from entering?
- Is the overall school climate pro-social?
- Are there identifiable or predictable trouble spots or high risk locations?

According to expert Don Hensley, “The goal should not be turning a school into a fortress; it should be improving the level of trust between students and teachers. If metal detectors, cameras and steel gates begin to take over a school, student attitudes will degenerate, and a culture of violence will be perpetuated.” Hensley calls for schools that integrate environmental design into their overall security plan.

The OSFC has accepted that challenge.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

Established in 1997, the Ohio School Facilities Commission administers the state’s comprehensive Kindergarten through 12th grade public school construction program. The agency helps school districts fund, plan, design, and build or renovate schools.



Wellston City School District