The Architect:
An Integral Part of Your Best Practices for Safety and Security Plans

School security and safety has become a prominent issue in today's Educational climate. School Administrators are tasked with ensuring the safety of their students and staff. Architects have a growing role in assisting Administrators with evaluating their facilities, identifying vulnerabilities, and designing effective solutions to secure the built environment.

Given an opportunity to investigate a campus and its facilities , the Architect can prescribe a mixture of active and passive strategies for increasing site safety, and peace of mind. Solutions are tailored to the Client's specific needs, budget, and in response to anticipated threats to the building population. In addition to building modifications, security recommendations can also include facility manuals, preparedness plans and occupant training.

When working with your Architect towards best practices on safety and security for your campus, combine passive and active strategies for maximum success. For the purposes of this paper, Active security refers to building security systems and best practices, while passive security is based more on programming, thoughtful design, built features, and building configuration. **The ideal security solution for your facility may include any or all of those listed below:**

ACTIVE SECURITY STRATEGIES

Camera Coverage

Video surveillance cameras cover the building's interior and exterior locations, but are they telling the whole story? An Architect can review the cone of vision angles and provide an accurate overview of campus blind spots, vulnerable to theft, the usual mischief of students, and other more serious threats. Selecting the best options for your campus might include cameras with motion-sensors with high-resolution imagery, IP security networked cameras, or other solutions your Architect can share with you.

Card Access Control

Card-access controls tighten up security to keep trespassers out and the building envelope secured. Access control is achieved by a variety of inter-connected sensors, hardware and devices including technology that carries out lockdowns at varying levels, propped door alarms, and school-wide card swipe access systems. An Architect can develop plans with an Administrator to indicate where card access can be installed at door locations, augmented by door hardware upgrades that can re-key the entire building. Electronic access systems can also identify and log comings and goings of personnel, as well as alert building managers to unauthorized intrusions.

FIRM STATS AT-A-GLANCE

11 PERSONNEL
6 LICENSED ARCHITECTS
3 LEED ACCREDITED PROS
+ CONSULTANT SERVICES

SUSTAINED RECORD OF EXCELLENCE

- AIA: Award of Special Citation, Institutional/Commercial; Fostering Emerging Profesionals Recognition; Architectural Design Award for Merit (Eastern chapter)

-Architects & Engineers: Presidential Award of Excellence, Innovative Energy Efficient Design

- Associated Builders & Contractors: Award of Excellence

- Central PA: Forevergreen Award, Suburban Renewal School of the Year

- **Masonry Contractors of Central PA:** Excellence in Masonry Design; Judges Award for Craftsmanship

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Staged Entry
During school hours, limiting and regulating entrances can be a complex task for School Leaders. Building access to non-occupants should be minimal, ideally only one secured entrance that allows staff to safely interact with visitors with minimal risk and prevent intrusions into the interior of the building. An Architect can help you create a strong, but functional entrance strategy that minimizes risk to your students and staff by outside threats.

Building Entry Security
It's important to know who will be entering your building, and when. An Architect can help identify potentially porous entry points as part of an overall study. After the analysis, solutions may include hardware replacements, upgraded control of access credentials and scheduling. New technology is now available to check state-issued photo IDs and names of visitors against a list of registered sex offenders, for example, and alerts Administrators if there is a match. In addition, there are now unified notification systems can provide alerts to the entire School District on active situations involving banned visitors or other security breaches.

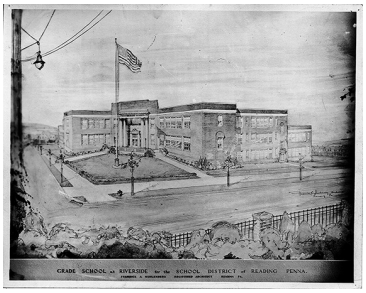
PASSIVE SECURITY STRATEGIES

Site Obstacles
An Architect provides expertise on cordoning off school areas not intended to be used during certain hours. Building security starts at the site level. Careful placement of overt barriers such as bollards, walls and curbs, or more subtle touches like planters and benches can impede the use of a vehicle in an intrusion attempt.

Improved Natural Surveillance
Visibility is an effective deterrent to intruders. Natural surveillance involves the ability of people to see each other and to be seen by others without technology. For example, the thoughtful placement of windows in relation to places such as visitor parking lots and entrances can enhance visibility on campus and reduce undesirable privacy and blind spots in critical areas. Improving site lines with natural surveillance has a powerful deterrent effect on crime because would be aggressors are afraid their presence will be detected, and actions observed.

Windows, Retrofits, Security Glazing & Films
Windows are excellent for daylight and aesthetics but may be a liability to your facility as well. Architects familiar with code requirements, daylighting strategies, and building security can help you identify avenues of intrusion, and measures that can be taken to reduce risk and slow down intruders. Placement and sizing of new fenestration is a strategic balance in today's environment. Clear openings and appropriate glazing types are essential considerations. In the case of existing windows, and in lieu of expensive replacements, an architect can specify security films to protect the integrity of the glazing (while reducing solar heat gain) or recommend other measures to increase security.

ABOUT US



Muhlenberg Greene Architects have designed schools and worked closely with their Administrators since 1925. Beginning with the Riverside School in Reading, Pennsylvania, Mr. Muhlenberg was commissioned in 1923 to design the facility. The school was designed to house up to 500 students and the first classes for the newly built school began on February 2, 1925. It was the first school in the city to have cement flooring instead of the typical finished wood floors.

Planning and design of educational facilities continues to be a focus of our practice. We are proud to maintain ongoing relationships with, and be the Architect of Record for, several of our local school districts. For more information about our rich history and to review a sample portfolio of our educational projects, please visit our website listed below.

Have an upcoming project at your campus and need some advice?
We'd love to hear from you! Send an email to BobC@MG-Architects.com or ScottG@MG-Architects.com or give us a call to discuss your upcoming project.

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