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Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District

Ramping up school security with a unified view

Name
Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District

Industries
Education

Location
Texas, United States

Products
Security Center, Omnicast, Synergis, Streamvault, Synergis Cloud Link

Partners
Bosch

Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD enhances school district security by investing in Genetec Security Center and Bosch Intrusion Detection

Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District (CFBISD) provides schooling for pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in the suburbs of Dallas, Texas. Welcoming about 25,000 students, the school district comprises 24 elementary schools, six middle schools, five high schools, and three specialty program centers. At CFBISD, part of preparing this diverse community of learners for a bright future means offering them a safe and secure environment. This ensures they can focus on their studies and gather valuable knowledge and skills to prosper through life.

Moving away from older, disconnected security technologies

The CFBISD community has a rich history of investing in the school system. While the district had previously upgraded school buildings and security over the years, the CFBISD team knew it was time to re-assess and enhance safety measures.

The school district had video surveillance, access control, intrusion, and other security systems in place. However, these technologies were managed separately, and integration between them wasn't possible. Having multiple disparate security systems slowed investigations and limited visibility of what was

happening across the district. Device failures and limited security coverage in certain schools also left gaps in security that needed to be addressed.

"Our biggest challenge at the time was that there was very little standardization across our schools and facilities. We needed a more streamlined approach to security. The upgrade wasn't only about investing in a new unified security solution. It was a complete change of mindset in how we secured our district," explained Daniel Robertson, Senior Security Systems Engineer at CFBISD.

The school district began a three-year bond project to refurbish older buildings and update all security systems. The goals were to increase video coverage and door monitoring while implementing a standardized modern intrusion system. To streamline the decision process, they enlisted the help of True North Consulting Group, a consultant with vast experience in school district security upgrades.

After many product demonstrations from various technology vendors, CFBISD made a final decision: Genetec™ Security Center for video surveillance and access control combined with Bosch Security Systems for intrusion detection. The depth of

integration between the Genetec and Bosch solutions and the ability to manage and maintain all systems from a single intuitive platform were key decision factors for moving ahead with this joint solution.

Standardizing on Genetec and Bosch across the school district

Today, the Genetec-Bosch solution has been deployed across 42 sites within CFBISD. This includes most schools, administrative buildings, sports stadiums, transportation depots, service centers, and other facilities. At all locations, the team is using Security Center to manage nearly 2000 cameras, 50 door readers, and 600 Bosch intrusion sensors with Bosch G series intrusion panels. They also have video intercom setup at main entrances.

"Security Center allows us to quickly investigate any situation across our facilities. All our doors and intrusion points are linked to video, so we can easily retrieve everything from one platform. And if there's an alarm triggered, we can click on that event and immediately know what's going on. All this can be done quickly, so we see what's happening and address it right away," said Robertson.

Using Security Center, school receptionists monitor intercom video and manage visitors by remotely confirming their identity and granting them access to the school if needed. Likewise, the district's central monitoring team uses Security Center to manage and respond to all door and intrusion alarms around the clock. When an alarm is triggered, key security staff are automatically notified. No matter if it's after-hours or during a school day, lead staff always stay informed on what's going on across the district.

The security team has also set up automated reporting to track any recurring issues such as doors that are kept open too long or wrong pins entered at intrusion panels. This gives the team good visibility of potential risks so they can address them before they become bigger security concerns.

"Using Genetec Security Center and Bosch Intrusion together under one platform has been extremely simple. Ease of use is probably one of the best strong points of this joint solution because both our tech-oriented people and those with less technical expertise can easily use the system. At first, they were hesitant about learning and using this new security technology, but now they're loving it because they have better control and feel safer," said Dalton Lee, Technology Consultant.

Achieving seamless control of video, access control, and intrusion

For years, Bosch and Genetec have cultivated a strategic technology partnership. For a customer like CFBISD, this means they benefit from deep, full-featured integrations and seamless control of all their devices through Security Center.

"The Genetec-Bosch intrusion and video integration is a very strong security tool. Since all our intrusion points are populated on a map within Security Center, I can see where an intrusion alarm is located. Then I can click on the map to view the associated video and see

what's going on immediately. Also, if someone forgets to arm an intrusion panel, I can retrieve video to validate and arm the panel remotely," said Robertson.

At one school campus, CFBISD has set up a scheduled task to arm the intrusion system in the building. If the intrusion system hasn't been armed by a certain time, Security Center will automatically trigger the intrusion arming.

"Automatically arming our intrusion system on schedule is something we're trialing as a fail-safe plan. In case someone forgets to arm the intrusion system at the end of the day, we know our buildings will remain secure," explained Lee.

Managing cardholders and pins with greater ease

Within the Security Center platform, the CFBISD team has set up cardholder groups and assigned certain groups intrusion pins for arming and disarming zones. Groups such as principals, facilities, maintenance staff, and sometimes school staff have different pins.

With over 7,000 cardholders to manage, the Active Directory (AD) Integration feature in Security Center has helped streamline cardholder activation and deactivation. According to Robertson, this trickles down to intrusion pin management:

"When someone leaves and we deactivate them in our Microsoft Active Directory, Security Center will automatically deactivate their cardholder profile and remove their privileges and intrusion pins. That automation has helped our team tremendously. It's just another way for us to ensure our schools are always secured," he said.

The security team has also given relevant School Resource Officers and Police Chiefs in their district areas AD accounts and limited security system access. This will help streamline response and keep everyone on the same page in the event of an emergency.

To facilitate the Bosch intrusions system integration, the CFBISD team deployed Genetec Streamvault. This turnkey infrastructure

appliance runs the main intrusion role and the full Bosch Remote Programming Software (RPS) through a USB dongle.

The team also set up automated bi-directional synching between Security Center and Bosch RPS. Now, any time they use the unified platform to update panels, change pins, or alter intrusion system configurations, a nightly sync ensures that Bosch RPS always receives the updated settings.

Evolving school security with security technology leaders

While the CFBISD team has made huge progress in the upgrade, it's still underway. Plans moving forward are to get the remaining 10 schools onto the joint Genetec-Bosch solution and ensure all systems are working and set up according to their new physical security standards. After that, they may begin exploring analytics, mobile functionality, and even automatic license plate recognition technology to further enhance school safety and security.

As they keep evolving their district-wide security and safety, the CFBISD is happy to have Genetec and Bosch on their side.

"Working with Bosch and Genetec has been great. These are two physical security industry leaders who are quick to lend support when we need it. Can I say their support makes my job easier? Absolutely," concluded Roberston.

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