

New measures to keep Onslow students safe

Most agree, in times of crisis situations in a school, every second counts. The Onslow County School System is doing everything it can to shorten response times and expand communication and awareness during crucial situations.

The Onslow County Board of Education made the commitment to increase safety and security measures throughout the school district last December by approving \$400,000 through the district capital outlay fund.

On Aug. 6, school principals were introduced to the Sielox Crisis Alert Status System (Class) being installed throughout the school district this fall. Onslow County Schools is the first in the state to have such a system. With the Sielox Class they and other district administrators will have the ability to identify a problem and pinpoint its location within the school through its mapping capability, which will enable administrators and first responders to address a crisis quickly and efficiently, which can make all the difference in saving precious student lives.

With the push of a button from a teacher or administrator's computer, smartphone, tablet or any device that can tap into their browser-based system, a school can be placed on lockdown. It also enables silent communication between school officials, teachers, officers and others in real time.

Gary Hinton, with North Carolina Sound who is installing the system, said whenever a teacher changes their color code from red to green, whoever is in the school office will be able to reach them via instant message to verify the alert is legitimate, then will pull the panic button, which will automatically notify law enforcement. At the same time six other administrators from the Central Office, including the Department of Safety and Security will have been notified by the same means and be on their way as they continue to receive information. Law enforcement can view interactive classroom maps that pinpoint the danger area or areas on their computer screens or in their patrol cars so they can respond accordingly.

"It is automating an evacuation plan in a response to a crisis situation," said Hinton. "The system is automating the FEMA system of the red/green cards. And it creates a graphical map for law enforcement to respond quickly to areas in the school instead of walking in blind and not knowing where the crisis is ... What we are going for is speed."

In addition to the Sielox Class system, schools will have upgraded classroom door locks on the school system's 1,600 doors, a visitor management system that is consistent throughout the district and panic buttons have already been installed in each school. Since the panic buttons were mandated by the state OCS received a \$74,000 grant to help with that purchase.

"Putting in all these measures in place amounts to approximately \$10 per student this year, after this year the cost is minimal," said Dusty Rhodes, the director of safety and security.

"We want students to come to school and feel safe; and we want to save lives should a crisis arise, that's why we're doing what we're doing," he said.



Onslow Schools first in state to add digital lockdown system



Gary Hinton, owner of Goldsboro-based North Carolina Sound Photo, presents a digital simulation of an actual lock-down alert now functional at Onslow County's 37 schools at the Southwest High School library on Wednesday morning. All school principals met at the library to learn about the new system. The map of classrooms at Southwest High School appear red during an emergency.

Photo by Michael Todd/The Daily News

By Michael Todd Michael.Todd@JDNews.com

Published: Wednesday, August 6, 2014 at 05:29 PM.

The green lights marked safe zones. The red-lit squares on the digital school map marked simulated crises, such as the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado and Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut, in 2012.

The mock crises on the screen Wednesday morning at Southwest High School's library had begun with the press of a button by a teacher in the classroom marked red, said North Carolina Sound managing member Gary Hinton during a presentation of a new alarm system now available at all 37 Onslow County public schools.

The digital system maps — with a red square on a digital grid of each school — exactly where a crisis originated. A teacher simply presses a button to initiate the alarm, Hinton said.

"You can imagine being a teacher in the classroom and there's a crisis. You obviously need to notify someone," Hinton said. "So what happens is you have the ability on your screen (of a mobile device, such as a laptop) to choose a color status."

At Onslow County schools, that choice will be limited to red or green. If red is selected, six school administrators at the central office at 200 Broadhurst Road in Jacksonville will be notified immediately.

Onslow County's new digital-alert system costs roughly \$231,000, Hinton said.

A new state law requires all North Carolina schools to install a panic-lockdown button that links to law enforcement. The red button at Southwest High School's main office actually has to be pulled to send the alarm.

Hinton's presentation to the press at Southwest High School on Tuesday followed a meeting among his staff with all Onslow County school principals at the school's library.

"We actually gave this demonstration and gave the principals details to introduce the system to them," Ulbrich said. "They raised many good questions. They wanted to know about substitute teachers. In actuality, we have some things that we learned we have to work out. Naturally, they have concerns about actually using it and the human element in there. That's why we're going to start out using (only the) red-green system." There are options available that include medical or other emergency notifications.

Onslow Schools Safety and Security Director Dusty Rhodes was unaware of any other county with such a system at its schools.

He said the new system allows teachers to report an emergency without wasting time and releasing information to the intruder.

"Right now, the way the FEMA system works is the principal has to call the lockdown," Rhodes said. "They have to find the red or green card and place it in the window. In the process, they're standing in front of the window or the door."

With the new system, "Now the door's locked, they can go hide in the closet with the laptop," Rhodes said. "Normally, the process is just long and drawn out. 'Have they called 911? Have they called the district office?"

Rhodes would be on the way to the school as soon as the teacher in the classroom pressed it as red on any mobile device linked to the new system. Teachers must sign into the system in the mornings each school day, he added.

"They've never even picked up the telephone and law enforcement is already on site," Rhodes said.

Hinton, during the demonstration, said timing is everything in an emergency.

"Response time is what saves lives," Hinton said. "The other thing: It allows you to communicate privately. ... Whether it's an active shooter or someone on site, they do not know what you're saying. Whereas, if you make an audible announcement, you tell everyone to report to a location, then that crisis is not averted because they know where to go."



New Security System for Onslow County Schools



The Onslow County School System is adding more preventative steps to ensure their students safety this coming school year.

The 37 schools in Onslow County have installed a new security system and the change is effective immediately.

The system is called Sielox. Contractors with North Carolina Sound say the security system is basically an 'app' that all teachers and faculty members have access to. The system has been placed in every classroom with a main 'panic' button in the main office of each school.

The way it works is like this. In the morning each teacher will label their room 'green' if its safe. If conditions ever become dangerous they can change the status of their room in order to receive assistance, or notify others of the present danger.

This system is an immediate indicator to the other staff members, but more importantly, to law enforcement who can be in route within a minute.

Teachers will receive training on how to effectively use the system starting the week of August 18th.

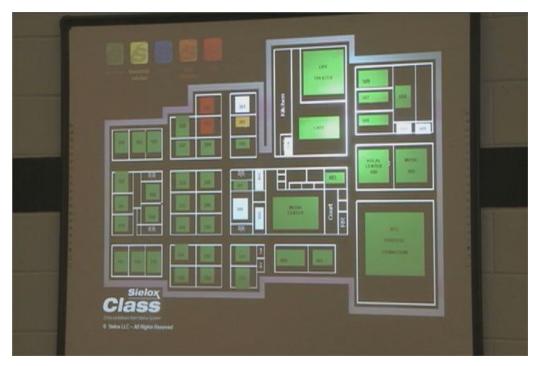
The system can be accessed by computer or mobile device.

It cost just over \$230,000 and was paid for with grants and school funds.



Onslow County Schools Implement New Security System

By: Amanda Wilcox 08/06/2014 04:25 PM



JACKSONVILLE—Onslow County has become the first school system in the state to implement an electronic crisis management system.

The Sielox Crisis Lockdown Alert System has been installed in all 37 schools in the district after they received 19 bomb threats last school year.

The system is browser-based, which means teachers can access it on their computer, tablet or cell phone with a username and password.

"So what happens is, you have the ability on your screen to choose a color status," said Gary Hinton, a contractor with North Carolina Sound who installed the system. "You can go red/green which is the standard FEMA colors, and we also have three other colors available to them for medical emergency or a crisis like a missing student situation."

Whenever a teacher changes their color code to red, whoever is in the front office will get a hold of them through instant message, make sure it's legitimate, then pull the panic button, which will automatically notify authorities.

"They've never even picked up the telephone and law enforcement is on-site," said Dusty Rhodes, security and safety director for Onslow County Schools.

The system also sends a color coded map to law enforcement so they know exactly where the crisis is located before they even step foot on campus.

"Normally the process is just a long and drawn-out process of 'Have they called 911?', 'Have they called the district office?'" said Rhodes. "Now when that teacher presses red, I'm automatically notified. I'm already en route the same time police is en route."

Rhodes said it's about cutting down response times, which ultimately means saving lives.

"With all the threats last year, a lot of questions were 'Well what are you doing?'" he said. "This visually shows them, this is what we're doing."

The new system comes with a price tag of around \$235,000. However, \$74,000 of that money came from a state grant.

Administrators said the system will be up and running by the start of the upcoming school year.

- See more at: <u>http://coastalnc.twcnews.com/content/710556/onslow-county-schools-implement-new-security-system/#sthash.X6ELJUIv.dpuf</u>



New lockdown system installed in Onslow County schools

By Katy Harris

Published On: Aug 06 2014 03:42:04 PM CDT

JACKSONVILLE, ONSLOW COUNTY -



It's a little red button with the potential to make a big impact for school safety in Onslow County.

A new alert system can call for help if a student needs medical attention, or simply notify school administrators that a student is absent. But the big reason the system was installed is to assist in a situation that could involve an active shooter.

It's a silent alert device only visible to Onslow County school staff, faculty, responders and law enforcement.

Kecia Metty is a mother of two boys, with one going into kindergarten this fall.

"For me, I feel more at ease that, you know, things can get done quicker, people can get there, and hopefully get them out faster," said Metty.

Stephanie Haraway also has two boys, with one enrolled in Onslow County Schools. She said this is just the start of making school security better.

"They also need to step up a little bit more on their security, but they're going on the right track," said Haraway.

Representatives from North Carolina Sound showed the principals how to use this new system. It's a system that will open up on all staff computers every morning. All a teacher needs to do is click the red button to highlight his/her room indicating an emergency.

That alert would then be sent to the school resource officer and six administrators at the Onslow County Schools central office. Those people would then either call 911 or hit a red panic button.

When law enforcement officers show up on scene, they can log in either on their laptop or phone to find the location of the emergency.

Onslow County Schools Director of Safety and Security Dusty Rhodes said the district had 19 bomb threats last year alone. Having a crisis lockdown alert status system helps him sleep better at night.

"We're stopping the lag process. They're not having to, 'Well we have a gunman on campus.' No, they're already en route. They're showing up with cavalry and they're coming to help," said Rhodes