



# Security Plus Aesthetics

by Brad Kamcheff

One of the highest priorities for school administrators is to keep their schools—and everyone on campus—safe from potential threats or dangerous situations. Administrators consider a wide-ranging list of security layers when implementing a comprehensive system, including visitor screening, campus-wide communication, paging integration, emergency stations, dormitory access, video recording, and monitoring.





However, another requirement for school administrators has recently surfaced. Not only do school administrators want a quality security system to identify and speak with visitors before granting access, but now school administrators also want sophisticated styles and finishes to complement and maintain the aesthetics of their buildings. This concern applies to both inside and outside of their schools and dormitories. Whether a building is a classic brick structure with a timeless look or a modern steel structure with contemporary elements, the aesthetics of security intercom components is now just as important as their reliability.

The challenge many school administrators face today is selecting a security system that provides the desired aesthetics with the required longevity and functionality. This balance can be tough for manufacturers to pull off due to cost and budget restraints. Funds are often either invested into the features and functions of a system or they are invested into the look

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and feel of the system. When features and functions are the priority, devices often have less available fit and form. This situation can result in a cheaper-looking product even though it may work as needed. When buyers desire refined materials for an appealing look, the durability of the system can be compromised and will most likely need to be replaced sooner than a system with less visual appeal.

Finding a brand that can promise both form and function in a security system is in the best interest of the decision-makers and provides users with a premium quality experience. In this era of having a variety of choices in products, decision makers no longer need to be concerned with sacrificing the aesthetics of their building's façade with clunky, outdated security systems. Many manufacturers offer a variety of finishes for exterior stations, including die cast and stainless steel. These finishes are designed to withstand everyday use at busy entrances,

offering endurance against nicks and scratches, keeping components looking new throughout the life of the system.

Mounting style can also factor into a building's décor. Surface-mount stations at entrances should have a narrow width and low-profile depth to avoid looking too old-school and chunky. Mullion-mount stations offer a slender solution for more compact locations. Flush-mount stations with a stainless-steel finish offer a timeless look for any building exterior. For the inside, sleek touchscreen stations and mobile apps offer simplicity and security for staff.

In addition to school buildings, areas like parking garages and common outdoor spaces also need to be considered. For enclosed parking garages, ADA-compliant wall boxes offer a slim profile while giving easy-to-see points to call for immediate help. For open parking lots and common areas on campus, modular towers are also easy to see and can be branded with school colors for a

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more personal touch. Anyone on campus will know whose campus they are roaming just by high visibility of custom colors.

### Best Practices Always Look Good

Securing a college or university can be a difficult task when building aesthetics are a key factor; this big responsibility affects the lives of the entire population on campus. Campuses need to remain vigilant and continue to look for the best solutions to protect students, staff, and visitors—while meeting their desire to look good while doing it, including these considerations:

- Secure remote areas with wall boxes and towers
- Communicate with classroom stations
- Provide help points with emergency stations
- Empower office staff with interior master stations

- Control building access with door stations
- Broadcast pages, notifications, and alerts
- Design the ultimate command center
- Save time and sustain high-quality service
- Keep students safe with a feature-rich system
- Provide hassle-free versatile options

### Save with Centralized Security

With an IP intercom system, one person can regulate access and monitor activity in multiple buildings. Regardless of building sizes—or the distances between them—campus planners can connect virtually every building together while keeping a consistent look throughout. Choosing systems that reduce the overhead of added security staff is a great way to save. Additionally, high



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costs can be eliminated by reusing existing network or intercom cable and by choosing a system that allows buyers to forego costly licensing fees in both single-building and multi-building applications. As savings add up, decision makers have more options to focus on aesthetics.

### Security Comes in Layers

Everyone's security requirements are different, and each situation has its own evaluation and a best-plan approach. To properly secure a campus, multiple layers should be factored in when crafting a plan for a complete solution, including the following preventative security measures:

- Combine sturdy doors and locks
- Use an access control system that requires credentials
- Install a video intercom system to screen visitors before unlocking the door

- Keep a record of who's been on campus with a compatible visitor management system (VMS)
- Choose a system with mobile app capability for roaming personnel
- Integrate a surveillance system to monitor campuses at a high-level view
- Use intrusion alarms to alert security staff of any breaches
- Complement a video intercom system with emergency stations, towers, and wall boxes to provide multiple points to call for help
- Practice CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) to ensure campus grounds and conditions hinder criminal intent

### Offering the Best Experience

Decision makers are now tasked with factoring in not only the functionality and reliability of a system, but also the look and feel. Sleek,

modern design paired with the highest quality materials adds a tremendous amount of value for users on campus. Beautiful design no longer means sacrificing reliable functionality, durability, or access to a rich portfolio of features within a system. Keeping students and staff safe is always the top priority when selecting a campus security system, and academic institutions can now provide a premium user experience to students and staff, while reinforcing their first-class brand.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Brad has been with Aiphone over thirty years. He uses innovative methods to promote and inform industry peers about Aiphone's vast intercom portfolio, award-winning quality processes, and unparalleled customer service teams. Long-time experience has helped shape his view of the security industry and become knowledgeable of its trends. [aiphone.com](http://aiphone.com).

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