

# CASE STUDY

## Leavenworth Public Schools



## HISTORY

Leavenworth Public Schools were the first K-12 education system in the State of Kansas and recently celebrated its 153rd year of existence. While operating safe and secure schools has always been the district's top priority, it was not until 1999 that USD 453 installed its first security camera. This was as a direct result of the school shooting tragedy at Columbine High School in Colorado which garnered attention worldwide, and caused safety and security experts to think differently about school threat identification and response.

Leavenworth began with a modest camera system at the intermediate and middle school level focused on hallways and common areas. Over the next several years, similar systems were added into all school buildings. These systems have undergone major upgrades over the years as technology has advanced and improved equipment became more affordable.

During these same years, the school district worked to establish a District Emergency Management Team (DEMT) consisting of key individuals and school representatives to provide support and resources in

## ABOUT LEAVENWORTH

The Leavenworth Unified School District is contained within Leavenworth, Kansas, which is known as "the First City" of the state. Adjacent to Fort Leavenworth, the City of Leavenworth has a population of about 37,000 residents. With the rich history of Leavenworth and close proximity to the Kansas City and Topeka metropolitan areas, it has become a blended community of lifelong residents and retirees.

Leavenworth Schools has 7 school buildings with a K-12 student population of approximately 3,700. Leavenworth projects to maintain population with a very minor adjustment up or down in student attendance.

Leavenworth has the presence of a strong correctional system, as well as the military. This delivers a diverse, and sometimes transient, student population with unique challenges in maintaining safe and secure schools.

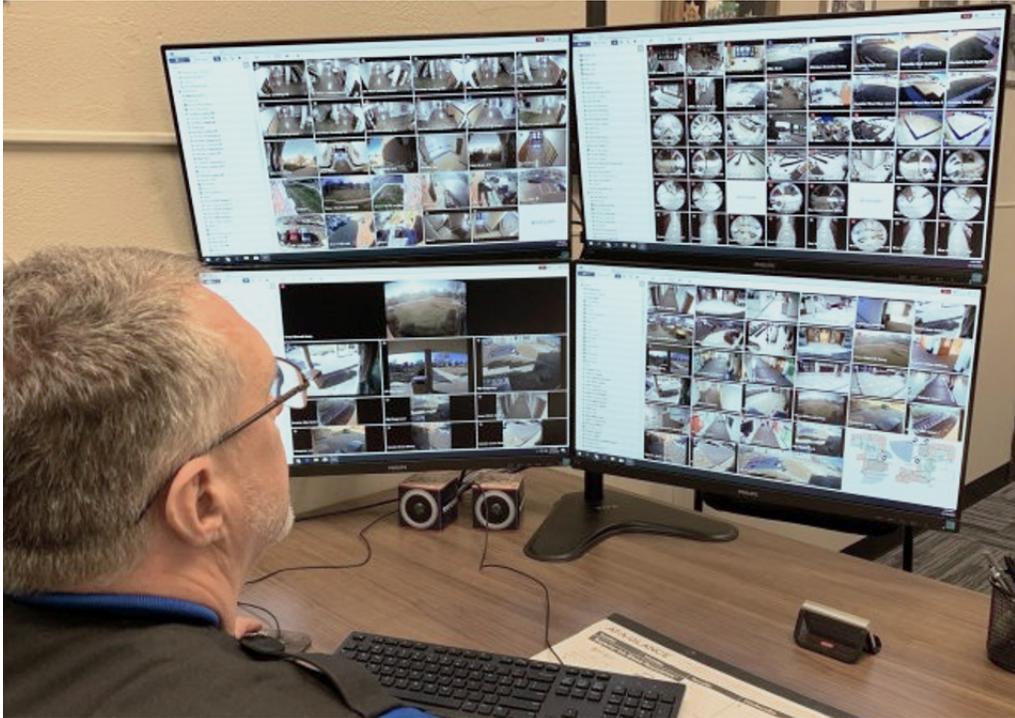
the area of safety and security. This group began developing procedures and protocol with counsel from the Kansas Center for Safe and Prepared Schools program launched by the State. This program also supported building-level emergency management teams (BEMT) designed to help train and educate staff and students on how to respond in a time of crisis. These teams still exist and are going strong 20 years later.

Along the way, security measures of all types became more important as they continued to witness disruptive, and sometimes violent, incidents on school property. It was a matter of educating themselves on new products, methods and working with first responders to gain an understanding of what the next steps consisted of. Team members trained under area emergency managers and gained FEMA certifications in Incident Command Systems (ICS) making them better understand the role they played in the event of an actual crisis.

In order to build an effective working relationship with local first responders, Leavenworth welcomed emergency management professionals and various agencies into school buildings for training opportunities and solicited feedback for continuous improvements. The district relies on the expertise of these security professionals to review protocols and maintain the safest environment possible for students and staff.

Leavenworth started working with American Digital Security, based out of Liberty, MO, in 2018 and since then has implemented a number of Avigilon's available products.

Through their relationship with ADS, Leavenworth recently introduced door access control systems



from the Avigilon platform, including upgraded camera systems and improved monitoring stations with the ability to view cameras across the district. Today, Leavenworth has implemented some of the more advanced systems available and continues to balance the need for technology with the support of properly trained staff and security.

For years, Leavenworth has provided School Resource Officer(s) to be present, build relationships with students and staff, and add a level of on-site security. More recently, they brought on additional security officers to staff buildings and have created a Head of Security position. Several retired officers have been employed to staff these security positions and assist in daily security evaluation.

Leavenworth Schools have found that a strong relationship between security officers and students results in enhanced information sharing and communications that can help administrators to proactively address and mitigate a variety of situations. While technology may not replace the personal touch of a caring officer or teacher, it does help to provide accountability and assist with incident monitoring and investigation.

## [!] CHALLENGE

Bring old systems up to date, reduce the number of security platforms and operating systems, provide support for daily users, increase ease of use, expedite repair tickets and document system maintenance.

## SOLUTION

ADS provided solutions for a number of ongoing issues, the priority issue being dependability and customer service. ADS boasts the ability to support Avigilon products with quick replacements or repair as this is the primary line of products that are sold and serviced. Instead of having multiple manufacturers to deal with, they established a strong and supportive relationship with the Avigilon product line. As Leavenworth made the switch to Avigilon products through ADS, they recognized the speed for repair and service was increased, leading to less downtime.

Consolidating the video and door access control into the same product line was also a benefit. Not only do these systems work together seamlessly, there is also only one product line to learn and maintain.

As cameras fail, Avigilon has a product that meets or exceeds the intended use of our existing products. Moving from analog to IP has taken time, however, the benefit has been worth it. Better image quality helps in reviewing footage and identifying responsible parties during incident review. As cameras are changed out, analytic cameras are often selected. By using analytic cameras, Leavenworth is able to use the camera software to help identify a human or vehicle presence in an image that may otherwise be hard to view or identify without the assistance of the on-screen analytics highlight tool. With analytic cameras, we only record people or vehicles which cuts down on storage and many hours of looking through video such as trees blowing or rain and snow, which the older motion recording methods would record.

The Avigilon platform is very easy to use. Access to camera systems has been granted to office staff and with little training, this staff was quick to use these systems to monitor parking lots, hallways and playgrounds during the school day. Soon after, users became comfortable enough to pull video footage and save it in a number of different ways.

ADS is unique in the fact that they have a dedicated tech support hotline. Leavenworth has chosen an option to allow ADS access to all servers for direct, live, remote support of all their systems. Any authorized user in the district may contact ADS tech support and gain immediate knowledgeable assistance. This has been one of the most valuable benefits of working with ADS.

Lastly, remote access allows ADS to perform system diagnostics and provide reports on system health and operation. Leavenworth has opted for this option as it supports them in any situation that would require proof of performance and maintenance of the system.



## SECURED ENTRY

Leavenworth has installed new Avigilon intercom/door control systems at all schools and board office locations. With new signage and technology, visitors are greeted and viewed by an employee before entry to a building is granted. Clearly labeled doors welcome and explain the steps a visitor must take to enter. Once inside, Leavenworth schools will run a sex offender check on any visitor advancing beyond the main entrance.

Leavenworth maintains a secure perimeter; however, the Avigilon access control system allows a one-button option to lock all doors that have access control on them in a time of need.

## PANIC BUTTONS

Leavenworth has recently purchased and installed panic buttons in each building. The DEMA has recognized that in an emergency, some staff may not have the composure or time to make a call and communicate a situation clearly for response. With a push of a button mounted on the wall, any staff member can summon help. These buttons can be programmed to perform a number of operations. Initially, text messages will be sent to selected administrators specific to each building, while the system also offers many options to tie into the existing phones to quickly alert classrooms with distribution of a prerecorded message or even options for advanced notification to law enforcement or any other automated system. Leavenworth is training and exploring all the options available to provide the most effective results possible.



## VANDALISM PREVENTION

Aside from an accident in the parking lot or the occasional fight, the Avigilon camera system has proven very effective for catching vandals. Leavenworth built a \$13 million football and soccer athletic facility, where cameras were placed in key locations and over time have been replaced with 9-megapixel multi-head cameras. With the investment of this stadium, a small investment in cameras has caught several would-be vandals and provided clear footage that was easy and quick to locate. The stadium is currently being fitted with several additional multi-head camera units to provide seamless coverage of the entire stadium and adjacent parking lot.