

DILLON SECURITY & INVESTIGATIONS LLC

Security Assessment

COLCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following is a school security assessment for the Colchester Public Schools, 127 Norwich Ave., Suite 202, Colchester, Connecticut. A brief security assessment was performed on Bacon Academy High School and William J. Johnston Middle School. The assessment is designed to address security and safety issues through a comprehensive program targeting possible vulnerabilities. This assessment is specifically targeting the possible need of security/safety personnel at each one of the district's four schools.

The Security Assessment will assist school administration in addressing the need for more practical, cost-effective measures for school security, safety, emergency preparedness planning, violence prevention and physical security measures.

The Colchester Public Schools are currently attended by approx. 2,247 students and employ approx. 440 certified/non-certified staff.

I was assisted in my assessment by the school district's School Resource Officer. It is my understanding the SRO spends the majority of his school day at Bacon Academy and William J. Johnston Middle School. Upon initial inspection of the two buildings, I observed two well-maintained structures with William J. Johnston Middle School being much newer. The school grounds were free of debris and the structure showed no graffiti or outward signs of visible damage. The following is a brief overall security and safety review of the exterior and interior of the building and the need for safety/security officers.

That in my brief assessments of the high school and middle school, I found both schools to be well maintained, clean and no visible damage. As with both schools, I was able to identify several vulnerable areas that need addressing. I was able to identify certain exterior areas that needed improved physical security measures.

The exterior security measures that should be considered for improvement:

- Use Security/Safety personnel
- Additional use of access control
- Use of security/safety film on exterior windows
- Exterior door lettering
- Warning strobes
- Signage

In regard to improved interior needs they are:

- Increase use of 2-Way Radios
- Interior cameras w/assessment
- Warning strobes in classrooms or areas (i.e., band room, chorus room, wood shop, etc.)

Security / Safety Personnel

One consistent area district wide that needs consideration is the use of security/safety officers. I have found statewide that there has been a dramatic increase in the use of security/safety personnel. Most school districts that have hired security/safety personnel, hire retired police officer or retired correctional officers. In today's environment any school district that does not employ security/safety officers at their schools leaves their school vulnerable. The hiring and placement of security personnel in each one of your four (4) schools will dramatically increase the school's level of security and safety. School security/safety officers aid each school's principal in developing a more safe and secure learning environment for its students, staff and visitors. A full-time security/safety officer at each school would report directly to the school's principal and would assist in:

- Building relationships with students
- Assist in controlling student behavior
- Responsible for controlling access to the building and grounds
- Assist the principal in dealing with daily security needs and questions.
- Assist with morning student drop off traffic and afternoon student pickup traffic.
- Will assist in monitoring the school CCTV cameras
- Daily checking the building's exterior doors to maintain a secure environment
- Assist with school medical emergencies
- Assist in providing security at after school events.
- Will work closely with the Police Department and SRO in dealing with school security needs.
- School security/safety will assist the principal in the administering of the required emergency drills and reporting.
- Assist the principal in times of crisis
- Assist the principals in student escorts

What I have described above is a small list of what a school security/safety officer provides to a school. These security/safety officers often take many duties off the principal's plate and allows him/her more time to concentrate on their administrative duties. It is more often than not that I hear from a principal that they didn't know what they did before they had a security/safety officer. In every district I've worked, security/safety officers have been a huge daily asset. The biggest and most important responsibility of these officers is that they must build relationships with students. The relationships are extremely beneficial in the control of student behavior and the ability of officers to obtain information from these relationships. This information obtained by security/officers often results in the prevention of violence, criminal activity or the violation of school policies. School security/safety officers often receive information from these student relationships that help identify students in crisis.

If considered, it is my opinion that school districts should be directing their hiring practices towards retired police officers. I say this due to the increase in school districts hiring armed security officers. That being said, state requirements only allow retired police officers to be employed as armed security. Therefore, if at a later date, the school district begins to discuss or

consider going with armed security their current security staff will already meet the state requirements.

Policy & Procedures

In viewing the district's current State of CT All Hazard School Security & Safety Plan, it is well written but has many areas that need improvement. The plan is written using the State of CT All Hazards School Safety & Security Plan template. A complete district plan assessment is needed with an additional assessment completed of each school plan. Upon completion of the plan assessments, I will then complete a Safety & Security Infrastructure Checklist. A more extensive assessment report will accompany the infrastructure checklist.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Dillon

Dillon Security & Investigations LLC