



Valley View Public Schools

*Serving portions of Bolingbrook, Romeoville, Lemont,
Plainfield, Downers Grove and Lockport*

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Security consultant says cameras, access control are important to any school security plan

When it comes to their children's safety, parents expect more than ever before from the schools their children attend, according to security consultant Pat Markham.

"That requires schools to anticipate threats before they arise," Markham said at the Valley View School District School Safety Conference.

Schools across the country are now using video surveillance, controlling access and employing security personnel to ensure the safety of their students.

"Of course no camera is going to stop a guy with a gun and no locked door is going to deter someone who is already inside the school," he said. "But it's important" for every school district to conduct a security audit to make sure their schools are safe.

"If you have cameras they must be operational and you must record them," said Markham, who indicated too many facilities have fake cameras. "Cameras are a deterrent and investigative tool. They won't stop something from happening once it starts."

Restricting access is important as well.

"There is technology today that will restrict who comes into your facility," he said. "Visitors come in, swipe a card, have their information verified and a badge printed in a matter of seconds."

Markham also suggested utilizing a school's natural environment to not only assist in controlling access but also allow staff to personally observe potential trouble areas.

And, he added, "you can't have a security program without security people."

"The key is to maintain an open and inviting atmosphere" while maintaining a secure environment, he said. "You don't want it to be like Ft. Knox."

