

Putnam Valley Central School District Raised Its Security IQ



Putnam Valley Central School District

Overview:

Hardening security is quickly becoming a priority for school districts and security directors across the country. There have been so many sad stories of violence in our schools, and districts are paying attention by putting heightened security measures in place.

The Putnam Valley Central School District (PVCSD) in upstate New York has been very proactive in securing its students, staff and facilities. And, when it sought to upgrade its video surveillance system recently, turned to the integration expertise of Bay Shore, New York-based A+ Technology & Security Solutions to get the job done. Adam Daley, the A+ Sales Engineer on the project, together with Joe Gervasio, A+ Project Manager, worked with the school and its architect to develop a security plan tailored specifically to the District's needs.

The Integrated Solution:

The Putnam Valley Schools already had a mixture of analog and network cameras on security detail. By expanding the system and converting them all to a SentryVMS video management system from IPVideo Corporation, A+ was able to add new IP cameras and incorporate the existing analog cameras onto the network, resulting in a significant savings and increase in security for the district.

The new video surveillance network consists of 24 new Advidia cameras (A14 interior & A34 exterior), 31 analog cameras on Advidia encoders, and 12 Pelco network cameras in the high school. 10 new Advidia cameras (A14 interior & A34 exterior), one new Axis 5512 PTZ camera, eight analog cameras on Advidia encoders, and 10 Pelco network cameras in the middle school. And, 17 new Advidia cameras (A14 interior & A34 exterior), 13 analog cameras on Advidia encoders, and 12 Pelco network cameras in the elementary school. The Advidia cameras are part of a select group of IP cameras endorsed by IPVideo and bear the "Powered by IPVideo" insignia, meaning there are no licensing fees associated with connecting these cameras to the SentryVMS system.

A+ also installed the Gallagher Access Control system on many of the exterior doors on the schools. Along with access control card readers at the various doors, local door alarms were also installed that alert staff if someone tries to leave the building through specific doors. Gallagher's Command Centre platform leverages a client-server architecture, enabling system operators to configure the site and all system components; manage cardholders, including their access, cards and photo identification; monitor alarms and control all aspects of the system; retrieve and report on stored system information, and interface to and exchange information with third party systems.

Additionally, Aiphone JF series intercoms were installed at each of the main entrances and new vestibules were created. All exterior doors are monitored so if a door is left open or breached, staff are alerted. Magnetic door holders were also put in place throughout the main corridors so that, in the event of a lockdown or manual control, the doors would close, preventing access to certain areas. Visitor management systems were also installed at every entrance,

where visitors must present a photo ID to be granted a printed visitor pass.

The Benefits of SentryVMS®:

Daley reports that the SentryVMS system makes managing the cameras very easy for the district. While the Facility Director is in charge of monitoring both the VMS and access control systems, staff can access the cameras from any workstation (using a login/password) as well as off-site via a secure viewing application. They can also access the cameras from the Web interface that comes with the SentryVMS servers and the phone app. This allows the district to keep an eye on the school grounds not only during the day, but at night and during holidays, as well.

In addition to the Security Resource Officers at the schools, the local Sheriff's Office, located between the High School and Middle School campus and the Elementary School campus, is tied into the system, giving them access to the surveillance footage. In the event of an emergency situation, they can sign in and view the live camera footage to respond as needed.

Trading Places:

To better protect its schoolchildren, school staff assumed the role of students themselves to become educated on their new security system. A+ has provided multiple training sessions with various groups within the school. Employees who monitor the front entrances have been trained on the use of the Visitor Management System while employees in charge of the overall facility were educated on the use of the access control and video surveillance systems. Ongoing support is always available so if, for example, employees have questions from time to time they can call A+ and have their questions quickly answered. The company's Red Carpet Customer Support guarantees immediate phone assistance Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Eastern and a call back within 30 minutes for a support request placed via the company's online portal.

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Patrick Bellino, Director of Operations, Technology & Transportation for Putnam Valley Central School District

A System That's Scalable Well into the Future:

To accommodate changing security needs and advancements, the A+ security system is completely scalable and expandable. "The school regularly adds more IP cameras to the system, replacing old analog cameras while adding new cameras to new areas," notes Project Manager Gervasio. "We're also adding new access control readers and electronic locks, as well as more local alarms to some of the doors," he says. "We're also regularly upgrading the software used to the latest versions as they are released. The system is completely scalable, so there's no limit to the amount of cameras, access control doors, alarms, etc., that we can add."

Because of the dramatically improved image quality that the new IP cameras deliver, the District has contracted A+ to replace virtually all of its analog cameras with Advidia network cameras. In addition, they've also opted to have A+ alarm more doors, this time at the elementary school, that lead to courtyards and parking lots. This added security ensures that if a student opens the door without a teacher escort, an alarm will sound. Although the entire system had already been installed, A+ was able to add these additional safeguards quickly and expediently.

A+ Gets an A+:

The heightened security measures put in place at Putnam Valley schools are providing peace of mind for the district. "A+ Technology & Security Solutions delivered to us a highly reliable and secure video and access control system that has, as its heart, the safety and well-being of our students, faculty and entire staff," notes Patrick Bellino, Director of Operations, Technology & Transportation for the Putnam Valley Central School District.



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The transition to the IP system has been very smooth for students and staff, Bellino reports. "It's been virtually seamless. The biggest change for them is that their ID cards are now access cards. The expandability of the system is another major benefit to us financially," he says. "We can add cameras and servers and any other access control devices we need, when we need them, to continue to meet the safety and security needs of our schools now and in the future."

While the Putnam Valley Central School District has been very fortunate in that it has not had any serious security incidents, they felt the need to be proactive in securing its students and staff. "It is a pretty genteel community," Bellino points out. "But in the times we live in, we, as a District, are being proactive, because bad things can happen anywhere."

How Schools can put State Contracts to Work for Them:

In addition to providing the Putnam Valley Central School District with an upgraded and highly-reliable security system, A+ holds contracts with a number of purchasing and procurement programs, including the NYS OGS and PEPPM, which provide means for easy procurement and guaranteed competitive pricing. As Bellino points out, "The great thing about working with a vendor like A+, that holds a state contract, is that the state has already vetted the vendor for you, so you know that they're reliable. It also saves time that would need to be spent putting out RFPs," he says. As a holder of a New York State OGS Contract for a majority of its solutions, A+ is also an authorized reseller on the OGS contracts held by other leading manufacturers, as well as an authorized reseller in the PEPPM Technology Bidding and Purchasing Program, a technology procurement site for schools, libraries, government and other eligible non-profit agencies.

A+ Technology & Security provides integrated, IP-based technology solutions to major school districts and universities, municipalities, Fortune 500 companies, healthcare campuses, utilities and many other types of public and private entities. The company's expertise in security technology, security infrastructure and professional A/V systems enables it to deliver comprehensive solutions that all harness the power of network connectivity. It is the largest provider of security solutions for K-12 districts in the metro New York area. Founded in 1989, the company is currently headquartered in Bay Shore, NY.