



Pewaukee School District

Critical Situations are A Reality Schools Must Face

Emergencies can happen at any time and anywhere, so for school systems, it's crucial to proactively prepare for unexpected, serious and dangerous situations that can potentially take place on campus.

A preparedness plan begins with a full understanding of all potential emergency situations. These include severe weather, such as earthquakes, hurricanes and tornadoes; building or facility malfunctions, like fires or floods; and extreme events, such as intruders on campus, active shooters and terrorist threats.

For facility operations and administrative decision-makers at Pewaukee School District located in Waukesha County, Wisconsin, ensuring the safety of the district's 3,000 students on their 540,000-square-foot campus is a top priority.

"We put multiple measures and processes in place in order to protect the staff, students and visitors of our campus," says John Stangler, safety coordinator and director of buildings and grounds at Pewaukee School District.

Emergency Communications Require Layers of Alert Types

For every type of emergency that could impact a school district, it's important to identify key communication needs. For most schools, public address (PA) systems and bells are how faculty and students are notified of changes throughout the day. These alerts are already integrated into schools, making them ideal for use in emergency response plans when appropriate. Emails, text messages and even whistles and megaphones can also be used during emergencies to alert those on campus of the situation and provide them direction.

“ As far as the general messaging capabilities of the InfoBoard, I think it's very helpful. ”

JOHN STANGLER, PEWAUKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT

However, it's important to keep in mind the limits of each of these types of communications and identify solutions to deploying messages quickly and effectively if those methods can't be relied upon entirely.

For example, if an emergency happens over a lunch period and the cafeteria is packed with students, hearing information over the PA system becomes difficult. If severe weather hits, the power may go out, shutting off alert systems, if back-up power is not available.

With these and all other scenarios in mind, it's clear that a successful emergency response plan includes various visual and audio alert notifications. "We've implemented some other electronic programs to put multiple layers of security in place for our school district," John says.

Visual Messaging Fills Gaps in Emergency Communication

Visual messaging systems, such as the [OneVue Notify™ InfoBoard™](#), provides the extra level of communication school emergency response plans need. They bring unique points of difference to the forefront, including:

- **Aid for hearing-impaired students, staff and visitors.** "A lot of times in those loud spaces, you can't necessarily hear the announcements very well," John says. "And the other thing is if you have hearing-impaired students, having an additional visual cue in that space can help."
- **Color coding for students who are not of reading age.** An InfoBoard can display seven colors and has adjustable brightness and scrolling speed. Even students who can't read yet can be taught to associate colors with specific actions. For example, red may signal to students stop and return to their own classrooms.
- **Proven reliability and operation during power outages and network failures.** "Having the 72-megahertz transmitter enables us to make sure that the critical communication is sent out and not lost if the power goes out," John says. A low-cost solution for many locations is to provide uninterruptible power supply (UPS) backup for all power over Ethernet (PoE) network switches, and other systems.
- **Alert verification and confirmation.** "The Notify InfoBoard help as a double verification of any drill that is going on," says John says. "So, if the fire alarm is pulled, students and staff can look at the InfoBoard and confirm 'I need to evacuate; it is a real fire drill.'"
- **Extensive reporting.** Post-incident reports are available for schools to review and leverage for improving action plans. "If we have a critical incident on campus, it's important for us to complete an after-actionary report," John says. "We can use OneVue to print out an event history report."



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Integrating Notify InfoBoard Solutions Seamlessly into Daily Operations

Beyond use in emergency situations, OneVue Notify InfoBoard Solutions can be used for general, day-to-day communications in your buildings on campus.

Administrators can use the InfoBoard as a date and time solution for their buildings, as well as customize messaging to communicate important information. For many school systems, general messaging typically consists of after school sport and activity alerts, daily lunch menu updates, graduation and holiday reminders, and more.

To learn more about how OneVue Notify InfoBoard Solutions can strengthen your school's emergency preparedness and daily operations, visit <https://www.primexinc.com/products/onevue-notify-infoboard>.