8 Forward Thinking Ways
to Turn a School PA System
into an Effective Life Safety
Communication Tool

AtlasIED

1601 JACK MCKAY BLVD.
ENNIS, TEXAS 75119 U.S.A.

TELEPHONE: (800) 876-3333
SUPPORT@ATLASIED.COM

AtlasIED.com

Every school needs an easy and effective communication tool implemented.

You've been relying on your school's PA and intercom system to deliver messages to students, staff, and visitors. It's been easy and effective at communicating the daily schedule, dismissals, and other routine announcements, but how does it stand up when emergencies strike? Do messages reach the entire campus reliably and quickly? Is the system able to provide clear, concise life safety instructions? Is it accessible and intuitive during times of duress? If you answered no to any of these questions, or have concerns about the capabilities of your school's PA system to meet new safety protocols, it's time to give it a communications overhaul.

❶ Integrate IP Endpoints

IP Endpoints extend the reach of a school's current PA system, broadcasting messages both visually and audibly to areas that might have been outside the scope of the original communications system. As schools transform unused real estate into functional classrooms or build out their campus, IP integration-friendly IP endpoints can be added at any time to ensure that every area receives critical life-safety information.

❷ Deploy a Combination of Audible and Visual Messages

School campuses are notorious for being noisy during classroom transitions, assemblies, sporting events, and before- and after-school. In these situations, it's possible that audio notifications are falling on deaf ears. IP endpoints with built-in displays and flashers ensure students, staff, and visitors can see the message when they can't hear it. This goes for those wearing headphones during classroom instruction and with hearing impairments.

❸ Enable Mobile Message Delivery

Traditionally, a PA system delivers messages only to speakers and displays on-premise. In integrating a mass communications system with mobile delivery capabilities, people who may be off the property, like employees on a lunch break or parents/students arriving late, can receive text messages on their smartphones. Everyone, regardless of whether they are at or en-route to the school campus, receives emergency notifications, which helps save lives.

❹ Automate the When, Where, and How of Your Emergency Notifications

The brain of a mass communication system allows audible recordings and visual text to be customized and scheduled for automatic delivery. This eliminates human error—common when under duress—which vastly improves a school's life safety measures. Pre-recorded -and scripted messages regarding lockdowns, active shooters, inclement weather, and more can be initiated quickly at the press of a button on an IP phone, for example, rather than requiring staff to broadcast live announcements on the fly. This method leaves nothing to chance, making your school environment safer and minimizing the burden on your staff.

⑤ Sync Security and Communications Systems

The same security condition that triggers a siren throughout a school campus can also activate a pre-recorded and -scripted message to IP speakers and displays. Speakers originally intended for PA applications can now also broadcast evacuation and lockdown information, while displays can present a wide variety of information for wayfinding, security, and regulatory purposes. United under the aegis of a mass communications system, these once single-purpose products can function as multifaceted communications tools.

6 Layer in Routine Announcements

The same IP endpoints integrated into your PA system for greater security coverage can also handle the delivery of routine announcements. Your PA backbone, combined with new mass communications technologies and products, provides more bang for your budgeting buck. You retain the same useful PA features for broadcasting bells, the morning schedule, and other non-critical information, but with additional emergency notification features. You don't have to completely restructure or revamp your communications platform or procedures—just boost its functionality with the addition of new life safety technology.

❼ Pump up the Volume

The volume of most school PA systems is set to be heard during quiet classroom periods. It may be an ideal level to announce the daily schedule but probably will not hold up under noisy conditions and in busy hallways. During critical times, PA systems, under the management of a mass communications platform, can trigger alerts and instruction at a volume that automatically increases to ensure it is heard above ambient noise levels.

8 Embrace the Power of Practice

You can take every step to enhance the emergency notification capabilities of a school PA system, but the only way to ensure that it's working as it should is by running realistic lock-down drills. Push comfort, convenience, and accountability aside, and perform drills during pass-through periods, lunchtime, before and after school, and other busy, chaotic non-classroom times which research shows is when most school shootings occur. You might be surprised to learn that notifications are not reaching all areas, are not being seen or heard, or that your administration and staff are struggling to initiate alerts. Once you identify the weak spots in your PA system you can take the right steps to correct them.

AtlasIED

Check us out at AtlasIED.com or engage
with us on your favorite social platform

AtlasIED

1601 JACK MCKAY BLVD.
ENNIS, TEXAS 75119 U.S.A.

TELEPHONE: (800) 876-3333
SUPPORT@ATLASIED.COM

AtlasIED.com