

## ...the mission of security



Recognizing the ever increasing need for security in today's schools, the Owen J. Roberts School District has embraced its responsibility to both school and community by instituting a variety of proactive security measures. These initiatives have been designed to provide a safe and secure environment wherein students and staff can effectively pursue the educational goals of the district.

Demographically, the Owen J. Roberts School District, comprised of seven townships covering 110 square miles, is located in Northern Chester County, Pennsylvania. The District enrolls approximately 4,800 students from kindergarten through twelfth grade in one high school, a middle school, and five elementary schools. The School District is continuing to evolve from a farming community to that of a rural suburban community.

As the community has become more sophisticated, so too, has the need for more focused and proactive security. As a result, in February of 2007, the school district hired a Chief of Security and Safety. Under the direction of the new Chief of Security and Safety, two divisions were formed within the school district, the existing school security department and the Owen J. Roberts School District Police Department. These restructuring measures have allowed overall security to improve as each branch of security focuses on specific needs of the school district. Security officers guarantee day to day school security maintenance such as traffic control, parking enforcement and building safety. Although both branches assist each other, the establishment of a school district police force has added another dimension to continued security in the district. School resource officers work with staff and administration, providing not only enforcement and investigation, but also counseling and other humanistic resources aimed at preventing security problems and promoting individual well-being.

Another focus of security improvement has been the establishment of efficient and effective communications and security systems. Some of these include the installation of security cameras and access control systems with a centralized monitoring station, creation of emergency procedure plans, training of staff with regard to emergency procedures, and standardization and utilization of appropriate signage. Other improvements in communication include a district-wide radio system along with radio connection to emergency service providers and municipal police. Communications have also been improved through the implementation of the Connect-Ed notification system which enables administrators to record, schedule, send, and track personalized messages to thousands of students, parents, and staff in minutes. In addition, all school administrators and coordinators are equipped with Nextel two-way communications devices. The school district also operates a state of the art web site to provide communication to the community.

Attention to assessment of existing security systems has also been implemented with security assessments being conducted at each of the schools, specifically addressing individual school needs. Existing security procedures have been evaluated, instituting changes needed to establish a culture which promotes security.

The main focus of all of these changes has been to increase current levels of security and to prevent any security breaches from occurring. Should any breach occur, practical procedures have been put into place which will provide protection for all students and staff of the Owen J. Roberts School District. The school district's goal of eliminating the stress of fear within the educational environment has been aggressive and has sought to maintain and enhance a secure atmosphere conducive to learning and productivity.