



CASE STUDY

Midland Park Public Schools

SOLUTION SUMMARY

- Eastern DataComm implemented a variety of security technologies to help the **Midland Park Public School District** enhance school safety across three school buildings and associated outdoor facilities.
- EDC's Lockdown and Emergency Notification System (LENS) uses a patented system controller to integrate audio and visual components for near-instantaneous communication across the entire district in the event of an emergency.
- Integration with the district's existing IP telephony system allows administrators and staff to trigger notifications and lockdown procedures from phones throughout each school building.
- The system triggers screen-pop alerts on phones and computers throughout the three school buildings and the Board of Education office, along with pre-recorded audio messages over the school's paging systems.
- Strobe lights and LED signboard messages provide visual cues for a large population of hearing-impaired students.
- Wireless radio speakers ensure that notifications reach all outdoor spaces, including parking lots and sports fields.

Safety-focused district enhances its security posture with Eastern DataComm's Lockdown and Emergency Notification System.

The Midland Park Public School District makes a focused effort to create a safe learning environment for its students. District officials consider it a bed-rock obligation to the community.

"We constantly discuss security and safety measures, including emergency management procedures and how to improve them," said Dr. Marie Cirasella, Superintendent. "It is a static agenda item when we meet as a team or when we meet with emergency management officials from the borough."

The district serves approximately 1,000 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade in the borough of **Midland Park**, in Bergen County, NJ the most populous county in the state. Its focus on school safety shows in the Department of Education annual report.

"Safety is part of our district philosophy," said Cirasella. "Whenever an idea about improving safety and security comes forward, we always consider it."

That was the case last year when Cirasella and District Business Administrator Stacy Garvey learned of **Eastern DataComm's** Lockdown and Emergency Notification System (LENS) from attending one of the educational seminars that the company hosts throughout the school year.

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Dr. Marie Cirasella, Superintendent Midland Park Public Schools

Designed from the ground up for emergency notification, LENS is a fully automated solution that integrates multiple audio and visual technologies to deliver nearly instantaneous event notification to reach everyone on school grounds (inside and outside). District officials welcomed an onsite demonstration from **Eastern DataComm**.

“They came in with a truckload of equipment. It was so impressive,” said Garvey. “That led to a larger meeting with our technology coordinator, our building and grounds supervisor, our building administrators and Dr. Cirasella. Then we took it to the Board of Education for review.”

“We had already begun looking into ways we could improve safeguards for our students and staff, and this seemed an impressive way to do that. Everybody loved the product and the concept. Nobody had seen anything quite like it before.”

BETTER BY DESIGN

Comprehensive and customized design sets LENS apart from other school security measures – as well as **Eastern DataComm**’s expertise of working with over 100 schools in New Jersey and the NY metro area over the last 30 years.

While attempting to balance safety concerns against economic realities, schools are often tempted to take a piecemeal approach, acquiring isolated products such as cameras or alarms from a variety of different vendors as the budget allows. This can lead to a hodgepodge system of hastily purchased, poorly integrated and minimally supported technologies that ultimately fail to deliver adequate reliability.

With LENS, **Eastern DataComm** takes a much different approach. Using a proprietary and patented system controller, LENS fully integrates notification components such as prerecorded announcements via the schools existing paging system speakers, LED sign boards, strobes/beacons, wireless speakers, messages to key school administrators and simultaneous calls to 911 and the local police, for comprehensive notification across school grounds.

This creates a tightly integrated system that improves school safety. Operating costs associated with traditional and disparate systems are reduced as **Eastern DataComm** designs, develops and installs the entire system. “Someone described it as the ‘Cadillac of security systems,’ and once we saw it in action, we agreed,” said Cirasella.

Time is of the essence in an emergency, and the LENS system is designed to initiate lockdown, evacuation or shelter-in-place procedures within 20 seconds after a threat is recognized. Unlike other systems that require activation from a central location, such as the main office, the LENS solution can be activated from any phone in a school building or office. Additionally, lockdown “stopper” buttons installed in the main offices of each of **Midland Park**’s three school buildings can activate the system. In certain cases, the system can also be activated via an app on a teacher or administrator’s cell phone



Once activated, the system triggers screen-pop alerts on phones and computers throughout the three school buildings and the Board of Education office, along with prerecorded audio messages over the school's paging systems, strobe lights and LED signboard messages. Wireless radio speakers ensure that the LENS notification reaches all outdoor spaces, including parking lots and remote sports fields. The wireless speakers are radio/RF frequency and not Wi-Fi wireless, a key differentiator to **Eastern DataComm's** school safety solution.

Simultaneous calls to the local Police and 911 are also made, and play prerecorded messages announcing the emergency and the location of the activation point.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS MET

The ability to provide visual cues with the strobe lights and LED signboards was of particular importance to **Midland Park** as the district hosts a large hearing-impaired education program. The program offers a continuum of instructional options and services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"The strobe lights are at every entrance, in every hallway and in every main area, and we have the boards with digital messaging in every building," said Garvey. "That is really important for our students who can't hear notifications over the PA system. This system provides a means of communication with every student in every building, whether by voice or vision."

Another important feature is automated notifications to the borough's emergency management personnel. Because the LENS controller integrates with the district's existing IP phone system, an event triggers automatic calls to 911 and the police and fire departments.

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"Our local emergency management team was initially concerned when we described it as a lockdown system," said Garvey. "They were worried that it would automatically lock all the windows and doors. How would the fire department get in if there was a fire? Once they had a better understanding of what it actually does, they were very impressed."

Although **Midland Park** hasn't experienced any actual emergencies since implementing LENS last year, the district has tested it frequently with very good results. Officials were so impressed they agreed to host an **Eastern DataComm** seminar for other potential school district customers.

"They have been great to work with," said Garvey. "We had very few issues during the implementation, but they immediately addressed anything that did come up. Not only did we host the program for them, but I've recommended them to a number of my colleagues. We've had representatives from other districts come here individually to take a look at the system, and I've provided information and offered up my opinion in a positive way. We've been very happy."

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Stacy Garvey, District Administrator Midland Park Public Schools