

Wireless Lockdowns

Not Mechanical Breakdowns

SCHOOL FACILITY
CASE STUDY



INTRO

When a high school actually wears out lock mechanisms while trying to keep its students safe, it's definitely time for a cloud-based wireless upgrade.



To protect Corning (Arkansas) High School students from intruders, all classroom doors were kept locked and the teachers opened and relocked them as needed. Principal Jennifer Woolard says, "You would be surprised how many times a key was used in each door throughout the day. It was unbelievable." The lock mechanisms were literally worked to death.

Corning School District is rural and has a small budget. According to Superintendent Kellee Smith, "We're losing industry like a lot of rural communities and so are experiencing declining enrollment. We have about 860 children districtwide, not counting preschool. There are about 420 in the high school, grades seven to twelve."

Smith states that having to manually lock and unlock the doors also made effective lockdown plans problematic, and in today's world, having a plan, and drilling on it, is not optional.

More than 4.1 million students endured at least one genuine lockdown in the 2017-2018 school year. This was revealed in a first-of-its-kind analysis by the Washington Post released in December 2018. That number was derived from a review of 20,000 news stories and data from school districts in 31 of the country's largest cities. School districts outside of major metro areas experience lockdowns too, and like many city schools, their buildings are often older—built before the 21st-Century's active shooter phenomenon emerged.

Corning High School was built in 1967 and comprises seven buildings connected by breezeways, with about 50 classrooms, a gymnasium, an auditorium, cafeteria, and library.

"It's open, like a lot of schools were back in the 60s. During the school day, students go from classroom to classroom, which often involves moving between various buildings," explains Woolard. "Every 50 minutes, students may go outside to get to a new classroom. We don't have a way to fence in our property to keep outsiders off our campus. So, basically, the way our buildings are set up, anybody can be outside and when the bell rings to change classes, they can come in and mingle with our students."

Help On The Horizon



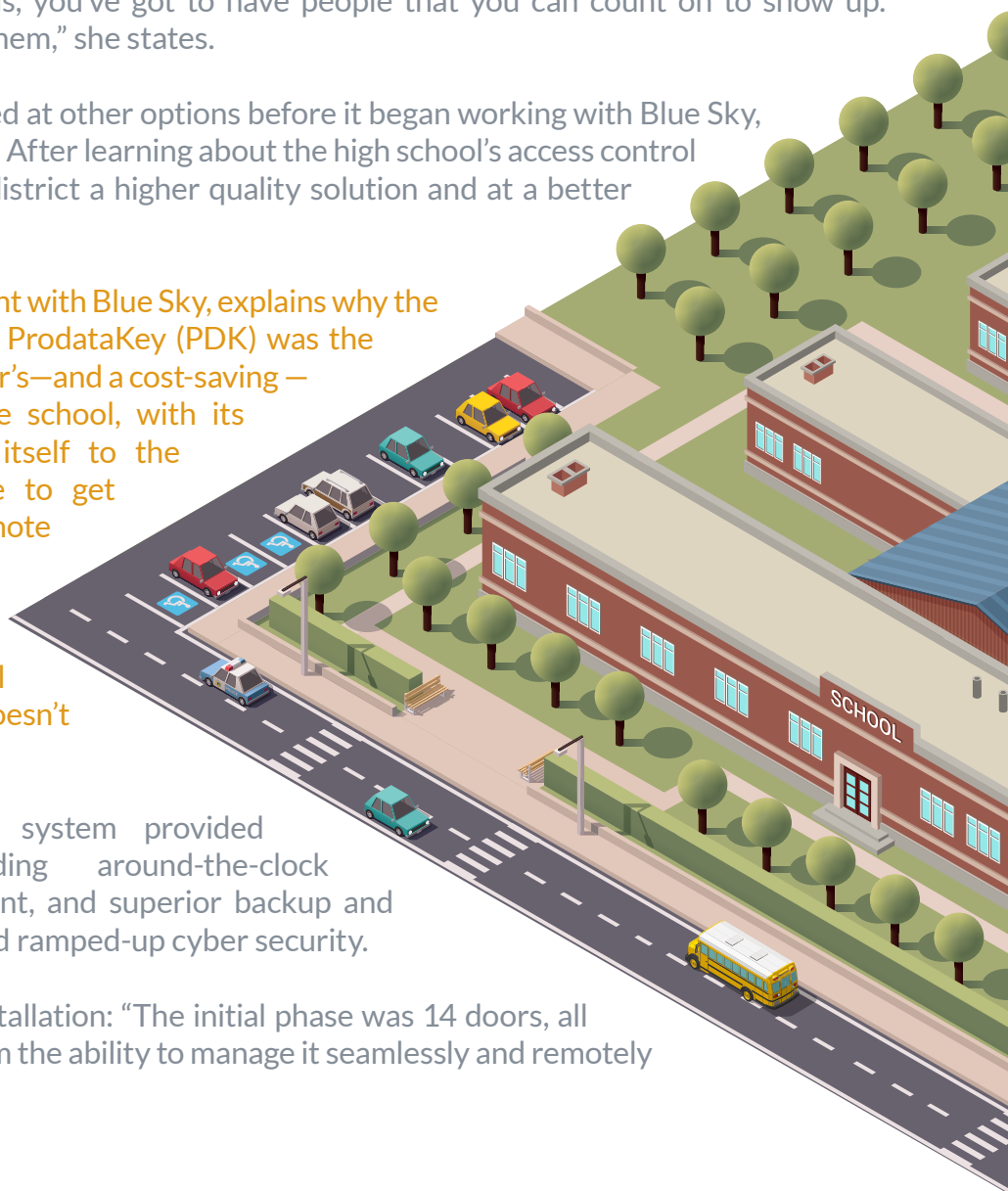
The school district chose integrators Blue Sky Technologies of Jonesboro, Arkansas, to handle the project. Smith says that the company had aided the district in the past, installing security cameras and troubleshooting with Internet problems encountered in the old school buildings. “In the day-to-day operations of schools, you’ve got to have people that you can count on to show up. They’ve shown us we can trust them,” she states.

Smith says that the district looked at other options before it began working with Blue Sky, but nothing seemed to fit the bill. After learning about the high school’s access control problem, Blue Sky offered the district a higher quality solution and at a better price, says Smith.

Brian Duckworth, sales consultant with Blue Sky, explains why the pdk.io access control system by ProdataKey (PDK) was the obvious choice from an integrator’s—and a cost-saving — perspective. “The layout of the school, with its multiple buildings, really lent itself to the solution, since we didn’t have to get copper or fiber out to these remote locations. I’d estimate that just the cabling alone would have cost in excess of \$60,000 dollars to connect all those buildings, and that doesn’t include the associated labor.”

Additionally, the cloud-based system provided definite advantages, including around-the-clock accessibility, remote management, and superior backup and redundancy, regular updates, and ramped-up cyber security.

He explains the scope of the installation: “The initial phase was 14 doors, all done wirelessly, which gives them the ability to manage it seamlessly and remotely from one interface.”





The first phase, Duckworth says, included the exterior doors to various buildings, plus other locations such as the principal's office. The goal was to control access through major hallways and corridors first. In the future, when time and budgets allow, and because of the almost limitless scalability of the PDK solution, Blue Sky will add additional doors as needed throughout the entire high school campus, as well as the other district buildings.

“It’s just a matter of tacking them onto the existing system. The new doors will just be added to the same managing interface. With PDK’s scalability, we can add as many doors as we like, up to the entire campus,” Duckworth states.

The installation was completed in November 2018, and Duckworth recalls, “We were probably there about two weeks getting everything put in and programmed, working on end-user training and making sure that the tech staff and others knew how to use the system; how to unlock doors remotely, how to add users, do all those types of things that they would need to manage on a daily basis after the initial implementation and programming.”

He says that staff training was provided on-site. “Our technician sat down with all of the school’s senior administrators and technical staff and went through the entire PDK interface. It was hands-on training. We wanted to make sure their entire team was really comfortable using the solution.”

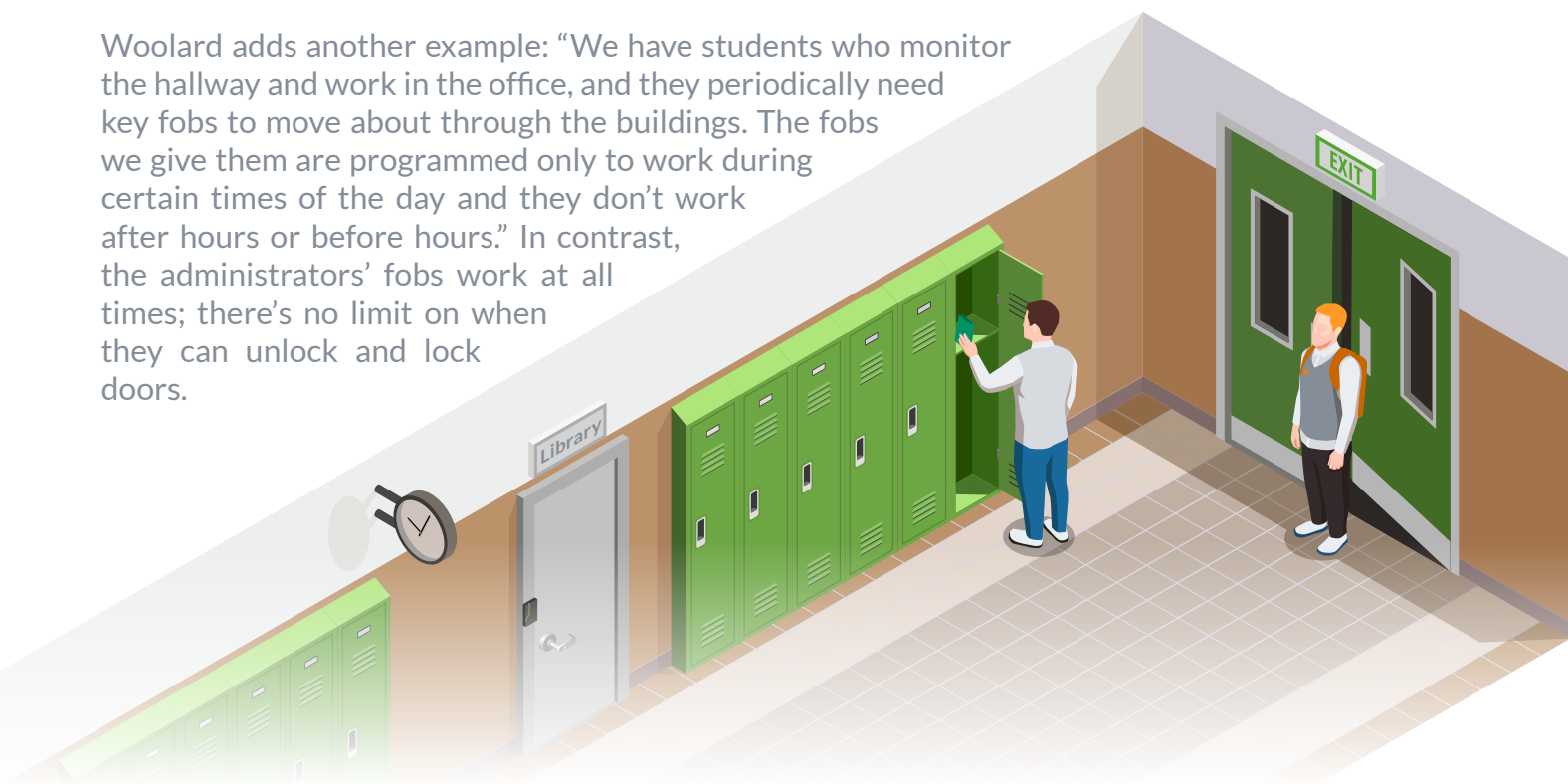
High-Tech Hall Pass

For teachers, staff and administrators, operating the PDK solution is easy as A-B-C. “They were all assigned fobs to unlock the doors. Students don’t have fobs but teachers have special ones that they sign out to students who need to leave the classroom for some reason, for example, to go to the library,” Duckworth explains. “The fobs are assigned to a specific classroom, so when they’re used by a student, we can see what classroom they came from and be aware if any teacher is letting kids out of class too frequently.”

Woolard adds, “We do have students who just want to be out of class. Because of the fobs, we can see how many students are leaving a certain teacher’s room to go to the library, go to the cafeteria, or go to the nurse and we can get a traffic pattern. And we can also see if they’re going somewhere different than where they were supposed to go.... Now we can look at when a fob was swiped and then pull up the security cameras for that time to see what was going on and who was there.”

Within the solution, access rights are managed through groups. “There are separate permission groups for teachers and custodians. The teachers still have keys for their own individual classrooms, but the fobs let them move freely between buildings,” Duckworth states.

Woolard adds another example: “We have students who monitor the hallway and work in the office, and they periodically need key fobs to move about through the buildings. The fobs we give them are programmed only to work during certain times of the day and they don’t work after hours or before hours.” In contrast, the administrators’ fobs work at all times; there’s no limit on when they can unlock and lock doors.



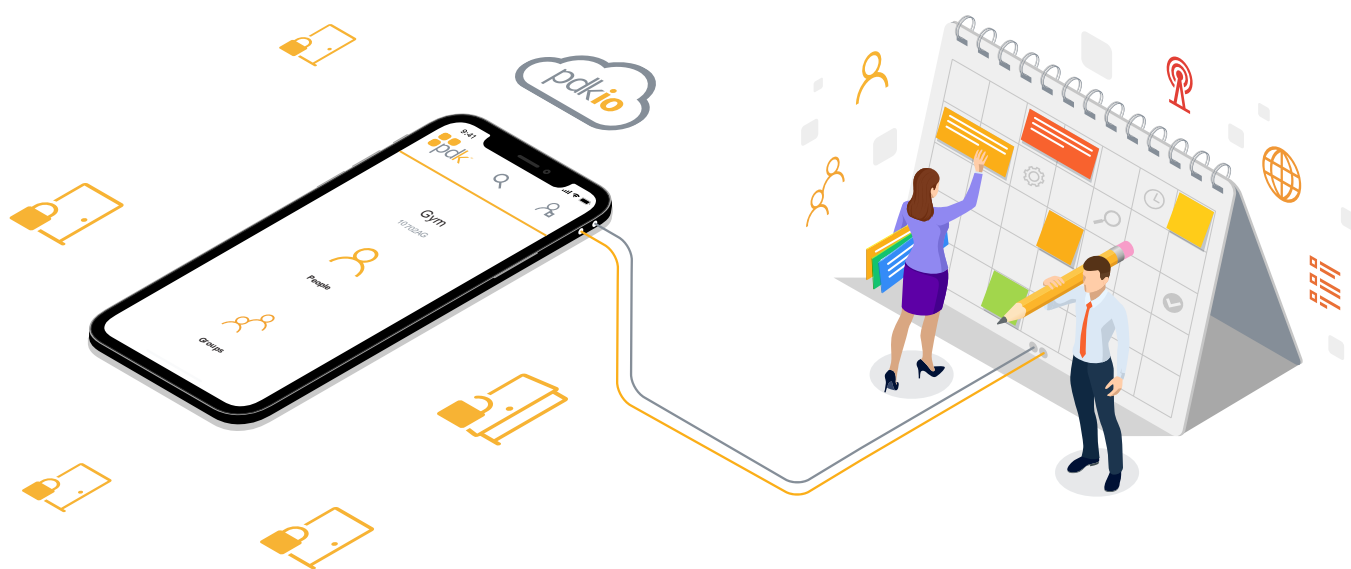
Access Control Around the Clock

During the school week, the schedule for unlocking and locking the doors is programmed to align with the high school's bell schedule, unlocking shortly before the dismissal bell and relocking soon after the next bell sounds.

The lockdown capabilities of the system are managed remotely by the technology coordinator and technology facilitator using mobile phones. "It's a great thing with the PDK system—it can be controlled from anywhere," says Smith.

They can also adjust the preset schedule to accommodate special events both during the week and on weekends. "They can go into the system, select that door, and specify the predetermined amount of time it should stay unlocked before it returns to the normal sequence. They've been trained to really become self-sufficient at this point," says Smith. "Our tech facilitator could be sitting at home on a Saturday afternoon when he gets a call from somebody wanting to play pick-up basketball in the gym. He can unlock the door from his couch. That's a whole lot easier than driving up to the school to give someone a key."

"Obviously if there's something more elaborate or detailed that needs to be done, we're available to provide support," says Duckworth.



It's the Little Things that Count

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When asked how the PDK solution has worked at the high school thus far, Woolard states, “To tell you the truth, I don’t know how we lived without it. It’s been helpful with all kinds of issues. The ease of swiping a fob instead of digging out your keys and trying to hold on to all your stuff while you turn the key to get the door open—the new system is just unbelievably better,” she states. “Teachers tell me they wish we’d done this a long time ago.”

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About ProdataKey

PDK is a team of security integrators with decades of hands-on, in-the-field experience. PDK believes that the best technology is created by professionals who know what it takes to secure a facility properly and provide the end user with a solution that instills confidence and safety.

PDK is passionate about creating technology to enhance the security, safety, and overall experience of both the professionals installing electronic access control and those that live with and use the system. PDK continues to create technology every day to enhance its products and the products of its technology partners.

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