



Scalable and Cost Effective Dortronics control console solves access control challenges for Brunswick School Department



Customer

The City of Brunswick, Maine, located 26 miles northeast of Portland along the Atlantic coast, is a vibrant and highly livable community. It is the home of Bowdoin College, famous for its many graduates and faculty including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Professor Calvin Ellis Stowe, husband of author Harriet Beecher Stowe. The town's public school system, overseen by the Brunswick School Department, includes two elementary schools, a junior high school and a high school.

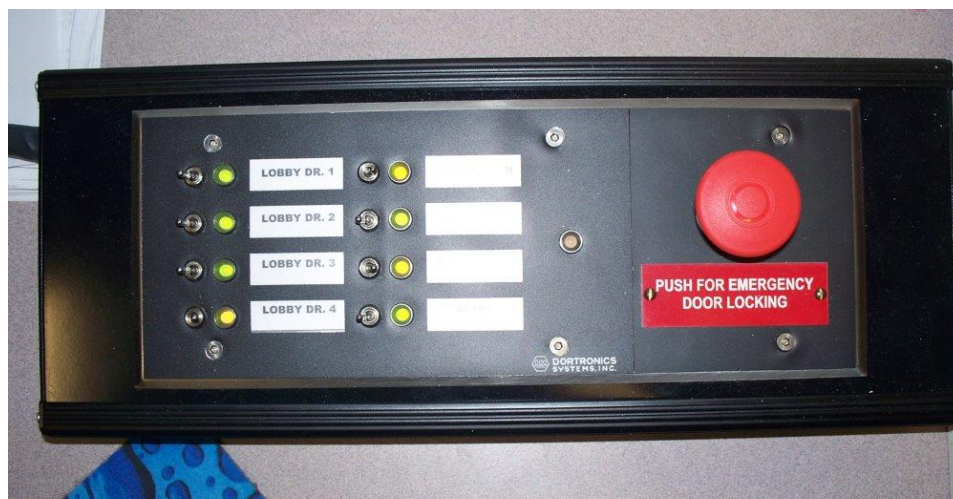
Challenge

Maintaining and/or upgrading physical security systems is a challenge for schools across the country, and the Brunswick School Department is no different. Budgets are tight and changes, whether modestly affordable or very expensive, fall entirely on the local community.

An original door control system, installed at Harriet Beecher Stowe School, was limited in its functionality and was frequently in need of repair. Visitors to the school had to be manually buzzed in from a wall-mounted control console located in the front office.

Alarms were activated on other exterior doors when propped open or for unauthorized egress. Staff had to manually check all doors at the end of the day to ensure they were locked. Any record keeping of alarms, off-hour entries and so on, if done, was manual.

While the safety and security of the students, staff, visitors and facilities was primary, parents liked to be able to enter the school whenever they wished and without any hindrance. Overall, they did not see the need for a new visitor management door control system to be installed either at the Harriet Beecher Stowe School or at the other three schools.



Solution

Based on the increasing number of incidents at schools across the country and the desire to increase measures that would ensure the safety of Brunswick's students and staff, Facilities Management was able to secure funding to replace the existing control console with the Dortronics 7600 control console. With the new console in place on the desk, staff could more easily see the clearly labeled names of each door and colored LEDs indicated the status of each. Opening any secured door causes the LED to flash red and the alert sounder to be activated. The design of the console is compact and easy to operate. Doors are quickly and conveniently locked and unlocked and alarm conditions verified. Per a special request by the school, the console also includes a panic button, custom designed by Dortronics. The mushroom-shaped button, when pressed, returns all doors controlled by the console to the locked position, regardless of the position of the individual door control switches.

As budget allowed, the Dortronics control console solution was installed in the other three schools and integrated with the access control system. The Dortronics consoles trigger inputs of local door power supplies which then activate the respective door's locking device power output. Each trigger input is also tied to the access control system which uses one central controller that talks to other door control nodes over the school network. This allows management of doors in four physically separate school buildings. The integrated system also allows facilities management the capability to monitor after-hours access and egress activity, generate reports and remotely lock or unlock a door.

"The Dortronics solution offered us everything that we were looking for and needed in an integrated system," said Paul Caron, Director of Facilities and Transportation, Brunswick School Department. "There was a lot of flexibility and we were able to design what we needed now with the ability to expand as we grow. Parents have really come to understand the security that the system provides."

The system was installed by system integrator Building Controls LLC, of Lewiston, Maine. In addition to the Dortronics solution, the security system includes an NVR storage system, an HDD controller, an integration gateway and surveillance cameras, all transmitting on a fiber/hybrid network.

"We had used the Dortronics 7600 consoles for another school district and were very pleased with the way they operate, their ease of use and their longevity," said Dave Gideon, President, Building Controls, LLC. "With the new system in place, the staff can spend less time on door checking and manual reports. Instead, they can spend more productive time planning, or working with students, with the knowledge that the environment is safer than before."

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