Technology Security

Communications and Technology Infrastructure

During the last several years the communication and technology infrastructure has been upgraded throughout the school district.   Intercom and paging systems which were in some cases 20+ years old have been replaced by newer technologically advanced systems. Telephone systems that were 20+ years old have also been replaced with newer network based phones that can be moved and replaced with greater ease. District wide cell phones have been ordered and will be distributed for the 2020 - 2021 school year that have direct dial access to 911 and local agencies that all staff will be required to keep on them at all times. Cameras have been replaced through the district that were 14 years old or did not exist in locations to monitor entrance/exits, hallways, intersections and outdoor areas of the campuses. Also in an effort to improve campus security, door access controls were added to entrance/exits at the High and Middle Schools and to the main entryways of the Elementary and North Early Learning campuses. These controls restrict access to employees and staff with special access identification cards. Students who are accessing the doors that are not between class times have to press a call button where they are visually identified by the front reception area at each campus. The last safety area deals with new Cybersecurity laws that protect the data and information of the staff and students.

Intercom and Paging Systems

New paging and intercom systems have been placed in all schools over the last 2 years with systems manufactured by Valcom. Valcom systems are designed and manufactured in the United States All speakers have been replaced and new call and emergency buttons placed in all classrooms. These systems connect to the district's network so that authorized users can modify bell schedules, send emergency alerts or modify bell tones from any computer.

Telephone Systems

New telephone systems have been placed in all schools during the last 2 years. Phones have been programmed to dial out directly to 911 to comply with "Kari's Law" in Texas. These phones have also been connected to the intercom and paging systems so that the campus administration can have more flexibility in communicating to the campus.

Cell Phones

In addition to telephones installed in the schools all staff will be carrying cell phones that will have speed dials programmed to 911, local police and front office numbers. These cell phones will only have access to these numbers above. All staff members will be required to carry a cell phone. It can be their phone or a district phone but a cell phone must be carried at all times.

Camera Systems

During the last 2 years, the district has installed 460 cameras over the 4 campuses. The new systems have 45 + days of recording capability with each campus having an independent server and storage unit. The cameras have been placed to cover all areas of the campuses both indoor and outdoor. Outdoor cameras have low light and infrared lighting to be able to see during night time conditions. The cameras record on detected motion. TV's showing camera views of high traffic areas are located in administration or campus police offices on the campuses.

Door Access Controls

Door Access Controls have been added to the Elementary, Middle and High Schools. North Early Learning has older door access controls that are to be upgraded to the newer system. For staff, RFID door access identification cards have been distributed and programmed for the campus of the staff member. All doors that are equipped with door access controls have a camera and call button for students or anyone without a RFID identification badge. When the call button is pressed the front reception area can initiate a two way call with the person requesting access. Visitors are instructed to report to the front entrance of the campus to gain entry or contact staff or students.

Cybersecurity Laws

HB 3834 and SB 820 deal with Cybersecurity for Texas school districts. HB 3834 states that all staff with district computer access must be trained on Cybersecurity through a state approved training and administered through the Texas DIR(Department of Information Resources). SB 820 states that school districts must:

- Adopt a cybersecurity policy
- Designate a cybersecurity coordinator(appointed by the Superintendent)
- Report cybersecurity incidents to the Texas Education Agency(TEA) and district families.

This program is administered through the TEA. Local school districts must align their policy with the Texas Cybersecurity Framework which aligns itself with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Network.