

Secure Schools Project FAQ 1-28-19

As part of the May 2017 Health, Safety and Modernization Bond, approximately \$5 million dollars was allocated to upgrade school security systems across the district. That work is known as the Secure Schools Project. Answers to frequently asked questions can be found below.

What are the security upgrades?

Based on best practices and available funding the district will focus on installing:

- Electronic access control systems, including video intercoms and electronic locks at the main entrance of every school. This system gives school staff the ability to see who is at the front of the building, and control who may enter the site.
- Public address system speakers in the hallways, gym and external areas of schools as needed.
- New signage to direct school visitors to the main entry and require check-in at the main office.
- Additional fencing and gates may also be added depending on the needs of a school site and available funding.

How did you determine the order of the schools to get security work?

The following eight criteria were developed to determine the order in which schools will be getting security upgrades.

- Occurrence of safety and security related incidents in the school.
- Crime statistics for the immediate surrounding community.
- Surrounding area environmental and geographical impacts on security including parks, high traffic corridors and transient camps.
- Schools with younger students and most vulnerable students will be ranked higher.
- School design and construction effects on security, with schools lacking robust access control ranked higher.
- Schools lacking an effective communication system will be ranked higher.
- Schools with poor office line-of-sight to the main entry will be ranked higher.
- Schools with all security items already installed will not be on the install list.

How were the ranking criteria determined?

The above eight criteria were used by the PPS Security Work Group, as well as the Portland Police Bureau's Youth Services Division, to rank each school's security needs. This process was informed by the results of a recent survey of district administrative staff, Facilities Managers, District Area Supervisors and the Portland Police Bureau.

What is the Secure Schools Project Timeline?

In order to address security work in the most efficient manner the project has been divided into three groups. Design work on the first, highest priority schools has already begun. The next step is to select construction contractors. This will begin in early 2019, with construction and implementation to begin in summer 2019 and continue through the school year until completed. Once construction begins at a school, we estimate the installation of the electronic access control systems will take approximately two weeks. High schools will take about four weeks. The security work on all of the schools is set to be completed by Spring of 2020.

The projected work schedules on the security projects are subject to change based on contractor availability. The Portland construction market continues to see record growth, and qualified contractors remain in high demand. The district is working diligently to line up qualified contractors.

What has been done so far?

- An evaluation of the security system of each PPS school buildings
- Security prioritization based on criteria developed by PPS Security Work Group
- Design work on a number of schools in the first phase of work

Are you going to add cameras to all schools?

The project scope includes only cameras for the video intercom access control systems at the main entry ways.

Are PPS charter schools included in this program?

Charter schools will not receive security upgrades from the Portland Public Schools bond program. Charter schools lease or purchase their buildings from the commercial market, and therefore PPS does not perform facilities work or upgrades on those buildings. If parents at charter schools have concerns about the security of their school building, they should contact the charter school's Principal or Director with their concerns. They are also welcome to [contact the PPS Charter Schools Office](https://www.pps.net/Page/1466) (<https://www.pps.net/Page/1466>)

How can we be sure that the security project money won't be allocated to other projects or priorities?

Bond spending is overseen by the Bond Accountability Committee, and an independent performance auditing firm. PPS will fund projects as they are listed in the language of the voter approved Bond.

I've heard that some schools don't have locks on the front doors what are you doing about that?

All schools have mechanical locks on all front doors. We are adding electronic locks on the main entry of each school with a call box. This gives school staff the ability to see who is at the front of the building and control who enters the school.