

Enhancing Visitor Management After Sandy Hook by Alison DeNisco

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The tragedy that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 15, 2012 deeply impacted the lives of many across our nation. Specifically, it caused school personnel to review and revise safety procedures and protocols that are implemented in our schools daily.

Many schools have realized that they need to ramp up their security system and put cameras and door buzzer systems in place. Other schools have turned to other “high tech solutions.” Examples of other high tech solutions are identification systems. These systems scan identification cards of visitors and scan national databases for known sex-offenders. This system, although not foolproof as it does not check the background via other national databases, is a step in the right direction. Aside from helping prevent sex offenders from entering our school buildings, this method can help the school keep a digit record of all visitors. Russ Smith of Wake County North Carolina’s public schools sums it up best when he says “it’s not a magic pill, but it’s a complementary piece of our security plan.”

School districts need to become more proactive instead of reactive. Each school should have a safety plan in place beginning at the start of each school year. The local police authorities as well as the district office should have a copy of this plan. Additionally, all staff members should review the plan and be trained for emergency situations. Furthermore, students should participate in drills (lockdown, evacuation, shelter-in) multiple times each school year.