

Lakota Local School District (OH) Toughens Protocols, Stops Sex Offenders with Raptor[®] Visitor Management



Lakota Local Schools is the largest suburban public school district in southwest Ohio. It's also the eighth largest school district in the state, and the largest of all 10 public school districts in Butler County. Employing about 1,900 teachers and support staff, the K-12 district serves the communities of West Chester and Liberty townships.

THE CHALLENGE

Chris Passarge, Chief Operations Officer for the Lakota Local School District (OH), takes the safety and peace of mind of his students, teachers, and staff very seriously. As part of the continuous evaluation of security and safety protocols for the district, the district looks for various filters and layers to enhance their existing security measures. In 2018, the district set out to “find different ways to improve and get better in the area of visitor management. “We did not want to rely on only one type of solution to keep our students and staff safe.”

At that time, Passarge's district was very “paper and pencil” when it came to documenting visitors coming in and out of their buildings. “We had a basic sign-in that did not include any type of screening process. People would sign in on a notepad or clipboard in the main office. From that point, they would get a sticker with the school's name on it but didn't include any additional information. Building staff really had no way of knowing who was in the building, when they checked in, why they were in the building, or when they checked out. There was very little understanding of who the visitor is and where they were supposed to be in the building once they were past the main office.”



The district wanted to change this, so they began looking for electronic solutions to help track, document, and screen the hundreds of visitors seeking access to the schools every week. This solution would also need to bring consistency to their protocols across all buildings and remove the potential for human error. “All records of visitors were in paper form and maintenance of those records was not consistent across all buildings. We wanted to find a way to electronically track and maintain records of people coming in and out of the buildings.” Passarge continues to say: “When we started looking for options, Raptor popped up at the top.”

How Raptor Helped

The Lakota Local School District invested in the Raptor® Visitor Management system, immediately replacing paper-and-pencil and word-of-mouth practices with more accurate and consistent protocols. Each person’s state-issued ID is scanned, and the visitor is screened against sex offender registries in all fifty states, plus any customized alerts such as custody violations and banned visitors. Administrators and staff can accurately monitor every visitor by printing a temporary sticker badge that includes the person’s photograph and destination on campus. This quickly and easily verifies on sight whether a visitor is authorized. “Now parents know that when they are coming into the building, they have to have their ID, it does get scanned, and there is more awareness by building staff on who is coming in and out of our buildings. In the past, we allowed vendors just to by-pass the office and go to their destinations. Now all vendors are scanned when they enter the building, which improves our accountability of who has been in and out of the facility.”

In addition, the Visitor Management system gives the district information about their visitors that they did not have before. From September 2018 to September 2019, the system alerted the district to four hits on the national sex offender list. This led them to create protocols to prevent those who have history from interacting with students. “It’s a public building, and you can’t deny letting a parent see a child, but now there’s a protocol where the tagged

person waits for the child to be brought to them.” This was an important breakthrough in improving security measures in the Lakota Local School District. Before, unwanted entrants merely recorded their names and proceeded into the building, but with the Raptor Visitor Management system in place, school administrators are able to see accurate and reliable visitor details and sign-in history for these individuals and make security decisions accordingly.

The Results

One of the most immediate results Passarge and his district noticed was improved public image. “It’s a public relations positive for the school where parents in the community see the background checks in place. Having Raptor as an additional layer security has been well received by the public.”

The teachers and staff of the Lakota Local School District have also responded positively to the new Raptor solution. “Our staff was a little more resistant and apprehensive at first—worries about how much time it would take and if it would really slow things down—but once they got used to the system, they really appreciate it now, too.”

With the Raptor Visitor Management system in place, the issues of inaccuracy and inconsistency with the old paper-and-pencil practices became a thing of the past. Before the district would “check IDs for those who picked up children, but only to verify who they were. Nothing beyond that. Now, we get quick notifications back. Those who are greenlit are automatically added to the list able to enter the building. But if something pops up, then the staff can make a decision about what to do.”

This has led Passarge to have conversations with peers in other districts. “They have their own cultures, and things are a little bit different everywhere. But from a pure public relations aspect, and pure accountability aspect, you can’t go wrong with Raptor. It allows the community to see that you’re investing in keeping your students and staff safe.”

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