

# Montgomery County Public Schools Standardize on IQeye Cameras

One of the nations largest districts relies on IQinVision megapixel technology



With more than 200 schools and facilities, 138,000 students, and over 21,000 employees, security is a critically important undertaking for the Montgomery Country Public School (MCPS) system, the 17th largest in the US. MCPS maintains its own central alarm control center—monitoring perimeters, boilers, water flow, refrigeration, breakage of windows, and more—that receives over 36,000 separate alarms throughout the year.

The MCPS Department of School Safety and Security oversees 200 plus security staff deployed in its schools and after-hours security program. The MCPS comprehensive security program includes emergency/crisis plans in place for each school and facility. MCPS has also partnered with the Montgomery County Department of Police to assign uniformed officers to each high school and some of the middle schools with a future plan to expand the program to the remaining MCPS secondary schools.

## The Challenge

“We believe that for students to learn and staff to be effective, they have to believe they are in a safe learning and working environment. We must assure parents that we can take care of their children, and if there was ever a major incident, that we are prepared to take care of the situation,” said Bob Hellmuth, Director of School Safety and Security, MCPS. Post 9-11, the Montgomery County Council provided Hellmuth with funds to purchase security cameras for the high schools. “We put 16 to 32 cameras in each school along with a VCR. We were surprised at how short the equipment shelf life

was—the VCRs kept breaking down. Then we went to DVRs, but we knew we could do better.”

## The Solution

Hellmuth’s security philosophy has been a driving force behind the MCPS security upgrade project. From conception through the ongoing six-year roll-out, MCPS has been on an exciting, often challenging ride as they auditioned and then partnered with multiple players including the MCPS Office of Information and Organizational Systems (IT); their integrator of record, Netcom; the security consultant, Jim Gompers; and a whole host of technology and service providers. Of MCPS’ more than 200 schools, the most immediate need is in the middle schools. The high schools have existing surveillance systems that will be replaced with new expanded systems, and the elementary schools’ surveillance systems will be installed down the line. Both the project integrator and security consultant recommended Milestone XProtect for IP video management—it’s very user-friendly, integrator staff need only provide

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about ½ hour of training and then the MCPS end users are ready to go. The initial training was important because it empowered each school to make the most of their system and not rely on the Security or IT departments.



### The Highlights

- > IQinVision megapixel cameras ensure crystal clear images and because MCPS has standardized on megapixel technology, they can meet their coverage goals with superior image clarity, remarkable reliability, and fewer cameras overall—ensuring improved security with lower total operating costs over analog cameras.
- > “We don’t monitor the cameras live at all times, so if we have an incident, we need to be certain we’ve got good images, said Hellmuth. “We’re very pleased with the quality of the IQeye video images and the ease of use of the entire system. It’s one platform, it’s easy to operate, and our administrators, as well as police and fire under certain conditions, have access to video and system data—that’s vitally important.”

- > The video has proven very useful in showing images to students suspected of foul play. “They just melt,” said Michael Cady, a Director in the Office of Information and Organizational Systems, when shown video of their actions caught on camera. “The images are so much clearer than our former cameras. I’m impressed that we’re doing only 4 frames per second on these cameras. We’re getting calls on a regular basis from the schools that they’re using their video to positive effect in investigating incidents.”
- > “For what we wanted to accomplish at MCPS, the IQeye camera was the best choice for us. We would go with nothing less than megapixel cameras both for image quality and for coverage,” Hellmuth concluded.



- > The MCPS command center runs 24/7/365 receiving all alarm and data feeds from a growing number of schools as they come on line. At the end of 2009, there will be 60 middle and high schools with functioning alarm, video, and access control systems. Each school monitors and records their own video. When the project is fully rolled out, video will pop on alarm or other trigger in the command center for timely, effective back-up for the schools when in session and to cover the district when school is out of session.