



Research Brief

ID Badges

Question:

- What have schools have tried?
- What sorts of successes and cautions have they discovered?
- What are the logistics of student identification?

Summary of Findings: In response to the growing focus on school violence, many schools are turning to a variety of measures to help keep their students and staff safe and secure. One of those methods is requiring students and staff to wear ID badges.

Hart (1996) examined the use of identification badges as an invitational approach to create schools without fear. After examining the literature written thus far concerning identification badges, and the results of surveys conducted with three high schools that currently use them, the following themes were found:

1. Identification badges help to create a safe atmosphere within the school.
2. Identification badges are more inviting than metal detectors, security guards, and video cameras.
3. Identification badges are inexpensive in comparison with other methods.
4. Identification badges help decrease discipline problems within the school through easy and accurate identification of students.
5. Identification badges create a sense of family and school spirit.
6. Identification badges make it possible to address other students and teachers personally.
7. Identification badges increase efficiency by integrating programs for library materials, food service, and door access, etc.

Simple plastic photo IDs only cost a few dollars apiece with starter kits (including a camera, printer, and some ID card stock) only a few hundred. Higher tech models with magnetic strips or bar codes are more expensive, but can be used to monitor attendance, purchase school lunches, check out library books, or grant access to restricted areas of school buildings. There are other more advanced options, also.

Biometrics Once the stuff of espionage thrillers, biometrics use an individual's physical attributes to provide positive identification. This can include voice, retinal or fingerprint scans. For example, fingerprint biometrics differ significantly from conventional ink and paper or optical methods. Unlike a stored picture of a print, biometrics construct a mathematical representation by measuring the geometry of the ridges and whorls that are unique to each individual. Privacy is protected because a biometric scan cannot be used to reconstruct an actual print. Biometrics has several advantages including eliminating meal tickets or cash that students can lose or forget; deterring lunch money extortion by playground bullies; allowing parents to monitor their child's eating patterns or prevent the purchase of junk food; and eliminating the embarrassment of students in free or reduced-lunch programs.



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Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Already embraced by manufacturers and retailers to track inventory, deployed on bridges to automatically collect tolls and used on ranches to cull cattle. The microchips have even been injected into pets. RFID badges were recently in the news because Brittan Elementary School in Sutter County, California, required students to wear a badge with their picture, name, and grade, and a wireless transmitter that beams their ID number to a teacher's handheld computer when s/he passes under an antenna above classroom doors. The school was a pilot site testing the badges for the local InCom Corp. who developed them. But students felt that they didn't have any privacy or were produce being tracked, and parents hadn't been involved in the decision to test the devices. Bowing to objections from some angry parents, the Brittan School District's board has decided to temporarily halt the pilot.

Other responses to school safety should be considered, as well. Perry (1996) points out that reactive measures such as metal detectors, I.D. badges, and zero-tolerance policies can reduce violence, but cultivating order is more effective than imposing it. Building a respectful, caring learning environment by enhancing students' sense of belonging, implementing a comprehensive character-education program, and teaching conflict-resolution strategies will improve school safety.

Online Resources:

Identification Badges: An Invitational Approach to School Safety.

Hart, Michelle C.;□

Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice, v4 n1 p71-79 Win 1996

Examines the use of identification badges as an invitational approach to create schools without fear.

High Schools were contacted which use identification badges for students, teachers, administration, staff, and visitors. Use of the badges was reported to be an effective and inviting measure within each of the three schools.

ERIC #: EJ548661

http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&eric_viewStyle=list&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=identification+badges&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=eric_metadata&eric_pageSize=50&eric_displayNtrier=false&eric_displayStartCount=1&_pageLabel=RecordDetails&objectId=0900000b8000c114

also

<http://www.invitationaleducation.net/publications/journal/v41p71.pdf>

Proactive Thoughts on Creating Safe Schools.

Perry, Constance M.;□

School Community Journal, v9 n1 p9-16 Spr-Sum 1999

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ERIC #: EJ589411

http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?nfpb=true&eric_viewStyle=list&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=identification+badges&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=eric_metadata&eric_pageSize=50&eric_displayNtriever=false&eric_displayStartCount=1&_pageLabel=RecordDetails&objectId=0900000b8001acee

A Comparison Of Public School And Prison Security Measures: Too Much Of A Good Thing?

By Gordon A. Crews, Ph.D. and Jeffrey A. Tipton, M.C.J.

As the 21st Century begins, Americans are bombarded with the growing reports of school violence incidents. Schools have traditionally been safe havens for children and the vast majority of the Nation's schools are so still. Fortunately, violent incidents still constitute only a small percentage of the total number of crimes committed in schools. However, in any given year across the United States approximately 160,000 children miss school because of fear of injury or victimization.

http://www.kci.org/publication/articles/school_security_measures.htm

Let's See Some ID

A photo identification system can improve school security and enhance administrative efficiency. Schools are facing many difficult challenges. Heightened concerns about security have put stress on staff and students. Tight budgets have led to elementary and secondary classrooms of 30 or more students. Parents and community members hold school administrators to higher standards of efficiency and effectiveness. A photo identification system can improve security in a school; increase efficiency by integrating programs for library materials, food service and door access; and boost school spirit.

http://asumag.com/mag/university_lets_id/

High-Tech Alternatives for Student Identification

Balancing student safety against privacy has spawned debate between school officials, boards of education, parents and other concerned groups. Some feel that a simple photo ID is a small concession to keeping children secure. Others, advising vigilance, warn that seemingly innocuous IDs are the leading edge of a trend that will use technology to scrutinize our behavior from cradle to grave.

http://www.njsba.org/members_only/publications/school_leader/mar-apr_2002/tech_talk.htm

Sample High School ID Policies

Bladensburg High School

http://www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us/~blade/student_identification_badges.htm

Strom Thurmond High School

http://www.edgefield.k12.sc.us/parents/ID_Badges.htm



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Articles on Sutter County's RFID Program

RFID Badges Coming To A School Near You

http://www.smartmobs.com/archive/2005/02/09/rfid_badges_com.html

Students Kept Under Surveillance At School

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/02/10/BAGG0B8I4D1.DTL>

Student ID Badges Raise Privacy Questions

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,149814,00.html>

Critics Attack Policy, Seeing 'Big Brother' Lurking In Hallways

This article also has a short video

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6946395/>

Town Zaps School's ID Badges

<http://www.detnews.com/2005/schools/0503/27/A11-129727.htm>

Pupil Radio-Signal Test Stopped

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/02/17/BAGPSBCM7B1.DTL>

Original News Summary

<http://www.betterhumans.com/News/news.aspx?articleID=2005-02-11-1>

Date: 5/23/2005

Submitted By: Mike Muir, Maine Center for Meaningful Engaged Learning

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