

# 5 Steps to a Safer K-12 Facility

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## Your Guide to Safer Schools

Contemporary pedagogy and concepts of 21st Century Learning are driving school design that is open, flexible and light filled. Students are encouraged to work in groups, to have choices in the place and manner of their learning, and to move around throughout the school day. Teachers work in teams, drawing on each other's expertise and sharing resources.

**A common misperception is that these design principles challenge concepts of school safety. This does not have to be the case.** The thoughtful application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques balance open, connected spaces with enclosed, defensible spaces, ensuring a balance between supportive learning spaces and a secure environment.

- 1 Access Control** denies access to crime targets and discourages access with physical barriers and structural elements.
  - **Consider the location of your building's entrances and administrative offices.** Do your staff have clear lines of sight to entries, parking lots, and corridors? Do you have secure entries to your facility, and a single secure entry after student arrival?
  - **Consider a key-less or carded system to track access.** Add cameras for real-time and recorded surveillance.
- 2 Natural Surveillance** opportunities increase the visibility of any intruder by maximizing transparency and sight lines within your facility.
  - **Does your floor plan encourage supervision and interaction?** A simple floor plan facilitates emergency procedures for evacuation, lock-down, lockout, and shelter responses. Decentralized administrative offices increase supervision and encourage student interaction with staff.
- 3 Communication** devices made available to all staff members can be used to advise school occupants during times of crisis.
  - **What is the protocol for emergency communications within your facility?** Does your infrastructure support simple and direct communication?
- 4 Territoriality** establishes a sense of ownership, and a distinct sense of place to discourage unwanted intruders from entering your facility.
  - **Does your facility convey a sense of belonging?** Well maintained gathering areas and amenities provide occupants with a greater sense of ownership of your facility – a deterrent for trespassers.
- 5 Target Hardening** uses physical building features to prohibit intruder access and promote occupant escape.
  - **Where are your safe regions? What systems help secure them?** Corridor doors positioned at critical intersections help limit access to safe regions without compromising exit requirements.

### Learn More About Planning for Success

Grimm + Parker is committed to design for learning. We help educators and administrators plan for success, even before your next project is identified. Send us an email and we'll be in touch: [contactus@gparch.com](mailto:contactus@gparch.com)



## We Provide Safe & Secure Environments for Your Occupants

### Ducketts Lane Elementary

Ellicott City, MD

Howard County's new Ducketts Lane Elementary School provides diverse learning environments to enhance educational opportunities for students.

The Board of Education's environmental literacy curriculum, and the operational concerns of the facilities team greatly influenced the final design of the project. Engagement with the local and regional environment; natural daylight in classrooms and other core learning areas; energy efficiency; and water use reduction; and outdoor learning opportunities are all priorities.

The facility is designed as a teaching tool to guide and encourage environmental stewardship. Educational signage is strategically placed throughout the facility with info about the environmental literacy curriculum. The \$20M project was honored with a Wintergreen Award by the USGBC and is currently tracking LEED Gold certification.

- ✓ **Access Control** – Main administration office location and control at main building entry
- ✓ **Natural Surveillance** – Simple floor plan with clear sight lines
- ✓ **Target Hardening** – Compartmentalization and defined safe zones
- ✓ **Territoriality** - Landscaping, signage and pathways define sense of place

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