

Building Safer Schools

Recent events have shattered our view that schools are safe places for teaching and nurturing our young. Reality forces us to face the truth. Evil and destruction is no longer restricted to news in other parts of the world. We must do more to ensure our schools are sanctuaries from all possible threats.

An Act-of-God or Man-Made Terror

A Security failure is unforgiving. Whether natural or man-made, disasters threaten our way of life. This includes our schools, from the physical facility to the staff and students. How can we proceed to ensure our schools are constructed to not only withstand tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and floods, but also the hard-to-believe attacks of terrorists and lunatics of the world?

The solution must start with awareness that there is currently a gap between our existing school security policies (e.g., [FEMA's primer for designing safe schools](#)) and how they are implemented to deal with today's threats. But awareness is not enough.

People in our community are asking many questions and want answers. For example, [MarketWatch.com](#) reported architects were fielding such questions as:

- Should the school be built on higher ground?
- Should bullet-proof glass be installed?
- Is it worth installing safe rooms, or adding layers of zoning and locked doors?
- Will fool-proof alarms improve certainty of success?
- Will fortress-sized fences and walls create safety, or simply produce a suppressed prison mentality?

Construction and technology experts must step up to the challenge of providing answers and strategizing the best ways to implement a remedy. The challenge is how to balance design that continues to promote a more nurturing educational student environment with security methods that detect and prevent ever-evolving threats.

Looking Beyond Conventional Wisdom

Your construction advisor should not only be able to answer these questions based on expertise in established construction delivery methods, but also be willing to look beyond what has been done in the past. This means assessing and identifying the gaps where conventional strategies may fail in the face of today's threats, and suggesting a viable construction plan that will achieve its objectives.

For many years, Meridian Construction has been building elegant, functional and secure spaces where institutions and businesses can grow and thrive. This includes many school projects, including: Spaulding High School, Mount Washington Technology Village and Education Center, Gorham Middle/High School and Ed Fenn Elementary School, Amherst Elementary School, Central and West High Schools, and Chateaugay Central School District.

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To continue providing innovative construction solutions for today and into the future, Meridian continually invests in its people, education, safety, equipment and technology. It strives to stay current and ahead-of-the-curve in workplace safety, as well as in advanced construction technology.

Our mission is to make you comfortable at every phase of the construction process, whether you need design direction, end-to-end construction management or simply a reliable and financially strong general contractor to deftly execute your project.

For further information how Meridian can help you harden your school's security to threats – natural or man-made - while continuing to promote a nurturing and safe learning environment, give us a call.