

## Safe and Secure Facilities

### Spotlight on the Montgomery County Public Schools Safety & Security Initiative:

In an effort to provide safe and secure learning environments for all students, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) conducted a comprehensive review of its security protocols, practices and infrastructure at its schools facilities. The review, which was conducted in 2017, began with the county's high schools and the interim report identified key priority areas along with an initial set of recommendations for facility modifications to enhance security and to restrict or limit access to more isolated areas of school buildings and grounds.

MCPS contracted Keller Brothers, Inc., an ASBO Business Associate Member, to provide security facility enhancement services on its first set of high schools under this safety and security initiative. Keller worked with MCPS to develop specific approaches and scopes of work to address the individual needs of each school. Keller completed the facility enhancements over the summer of 2018 on eight of MCPS' high schools. Work included:

#### Building Control Improvements:

- Controlled entrances and vestibules
- Cross-corridor doors
- Gates
- Reconfigure door hardware
- Reconfiguration of entrances to direct visitors to the main office upon initial entry to the school

#### Facility Enhancements Limiting Access

- Facility enhancements to restrict or limit access to more isolated areas of the school building and grounds.

#### Lighting Improvements

- Both additional and replacement

This security initiative positively contributed towards MCPS' goal of "maintaining safe, secure, and orderly learning environments for all its students."

### How Can This be Replicated by Other School Districts?

Safety and security is a one of the top concerns facing school systems today. The *Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018* (Senate Bill 1265) was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Larry Hogan. This legislation includes statewide standards and guidelines for improving school safety in Maryland schools. The State has made grant funding available for local school systems to enhance school security including: \$2.5 million in safety assessment grants to be administered by the Maryland Center for School Safety; \$10 million in MSDE administered school safety grants; and an additional \$10 million in grants to be administered by the Maryland Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC) for safety-related operating and capital projects.

Utilizing the available grant funding, there are many measures that can **be** implemented by school districts, similar to what MCPS has done, to help promote safe and secure facilities. Suggested measures include:

- Contact state agencies and become familiar with available grants and funding, as well as timelines required to be met
- Conduct a system-wide safety and security needs assessment addressing overall needs, as well as the needs of each individual school
- Develop system-wide safety standards
- Prioritize projects and identify a timeline for performing work and utilizing grant funding
- Select a project delivery method that will assist with these goals and ensure enough time for design, bidding, and construction. If work is required to be completed quickly, a design-build delivery may be the best option. Another option to increase efficiency is utilizing a Job Order Contract (JOC) or a cooperative purchasing contract
- Develop scopes of work for each school project and a roll-out schedule for facility enhancement projects
- Ensure constant communication with the Board of Education and all stakeholders throughout the process

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