

SJA SECURITY JOURNAL

AMERICAS

Issue 49 | June 2026
SecurityJournalAmericas.com

Information, Analysis and Insights for Manufacturers, Installers and Senior Security Professionals



Special Report

INTERCOMMS & AUDIO SYSTEMS p31

Produced in partnership
with Zenitel

AIRPORT SECURITY

p14



QUIKSERV

USBP
U.S. BULLET PROOFING

Head to Head Exclusive

PROTECTING PEOPLE & *property* p08

Jason Epps, President and CEO of Specialty Fenestration Group, talks to SJA about the changing nature of physical security threats and evolving with customer needs

PLUS

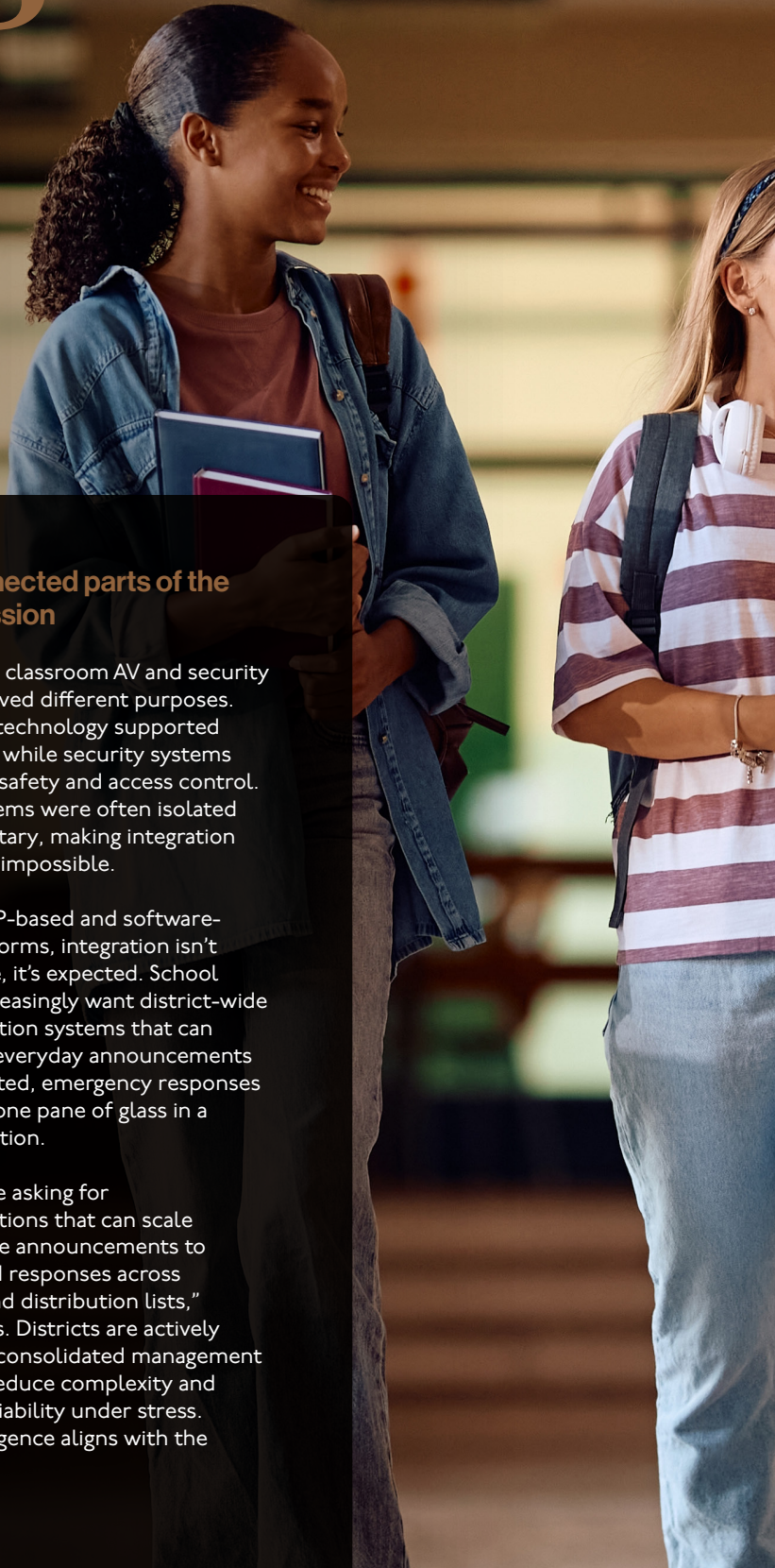
Control
Rooms

Expert
Insight

Correctional
Facilities

BREAKING DOWN *silos*

Nikki Williams, North American Marketing Manager at ICT, analyzes the convergence of education technology and security – with insights and expertise from Brad J. Roy, Director of Operations at VSC, and Jeff June, Vice President of Sales & GM - US at ICT



In today's education landscape, technologies that once operated in separate lanes are increasingly expected to function as one cohesive ecosystem. Schools no longer view classroom technology and campus safety as independent investments. Instead, they expect systems to support both daily teaching and learning and coordinated emergency response.

After decades of developing in parallel, these two domains are now converging in practice. Brad J. Roy, Director of Operations at VSC, an education technology reseller and integrator with more than four decades serving the security industry, has witnessed this shift firsthand. "The conversation has moved from 'instructional technology' or 'security technology' to one unified expectation," Roy says.

This evolution reflects a broader reality in education: technology must simultaneously serve educators, administrators, safety personnel, students and the wider community, reliably in everyday operations and decisively when it matters most.

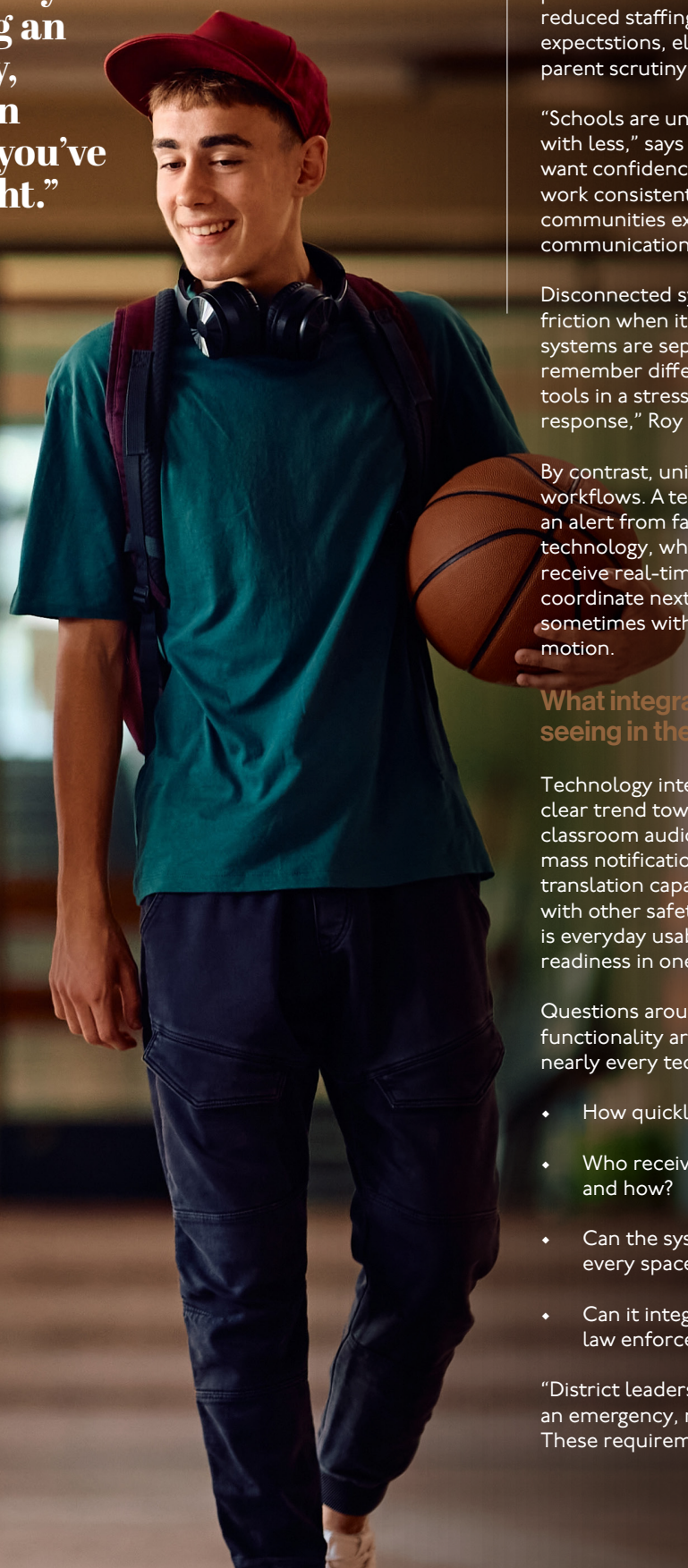
Interconnected parts of the same mission

Historically, classroom AV and security systems served different purposes. Classroom technology supported instruction, while security systems focused on safety and access control. Legacy systems were often isolated and proprietary, making integration complex or impossible.

Now, with IP-based and software-driven platforms, integration isn't just feasible, it's expected. School leaders increasingly want district-wide communication systems that can scale from everyday announcements to coordinated, emergency responses – all under one pane of glass in a unified solution.

"Schools are asking for communications that can scale from routine announcements to coordinated responses across buildings and distribution lists," Roy explains. Districts are actively looking for consolidated management tools that reduce complexity and increase reliability under stress. This convergence aligns with the

“When a system works the same way every day and during an emergency, that’s when you know you’ve done it right.”



way educators think about safety and learning: as interconnected parts of the same mission.

The need for unified systems

School districts face significant pressures on multiple fronts, including reduced staffing, higher safety expectations, elevated community and parent scrutiny and budget constraints.

“Schools are under pressure to do more with less,” says Roy. “Administrators want confidence that procedures will work consistently across buildings, and communities expect timely, accurate communication.”

Disconnected systems can create friction when it matters most. “If systems are separated, staff have to remember different procedures and tools in a stressful moment. That slows response,” Roy continues.

By contrast, unified systems streamline workflows. A teacher might initiate an alert from familiar classroom technology, while administrators receive real-time information and can coordinate next steps immediately, sometimes with automation already in motion.

What integrators are seeing in the field

Technology integrators are observing a clear trend toward platforms that unify classroom audio, paging and intercom, mass notification, visual alerts, translation capabilities and integration with other safety tools. “The trend is everyday usability plus emergency readiness in one ecosystem,” Roy says.

Questions around emergency functionality are now common in nearly every technology conversation:

- ◆ How quickly can alerts be initiated?
- ◆ Who receives notifications and how?
- ◆ Can the system reliably reach every space?
- ◆ Can it integrate with door access or law enforcement notifications?

“District leaders want fewer steps in an emergency, not more,” Roy notes. These requirements reflect a broader ▶

understanding that communications and access control are foundational elements of school safety, not optional extras.

Designing unified ecosystems

At its core, physical security in education must be intuitive, adaptable and aligned with how campuses operate every day, not just during emergencies. Schools are dynamic environments filled with busy hallways, shared spaces, substitute staff, visitors, extracurricular activities and after-hours events. Security strategies that fail to account for these realities often create friction instead of clarity.

The most effective approaches unify access control, intrusion detection and building systems into a cohesive operational framework. When designed thoughtfully, this kind of integration strengthens safety without adding unnecessary administrative burden or technical complexity.

Strong education security programs prioritize:

- Clear, centralized oversight, allowing administrators to quickly assess campus status and make informed decisions
- Flexibility to match the unique needs of each campus, whether a single elementary school or a multi-building district, while aligning classroom audio, intercom and notification systems with broader safety procedures
- Streamlined workflows, leveraging a single pane of glass approach to minimize multiple dashboards, logins and disconnected tools
- Everyday usability that supports emergency readiness, leveraging classroom technology teachers already use, such as audio systems, displays and communication platforms, as trusted tools for alerts and coordinated response

Jeff June, Vice President of Sales & General Manager - US at Integrated Control Technology (ICT), underscores the importance of unified architecture in achieving these outcomes: "Schools don't need fragmented tools that create friction or force costly rip-and-replace

decisions every few years. They need unified security that brings together access control, intrusion detection and building automation into one cohesive platform, while seamlessly integrating with the classroom A/V and communication systems already in place. When districts invest in an open, scalable architecture built for interoperability, they protect today's technology investments and remain flexible enough to support tomorrow's innovations. The result is a true single pane of glass that reduces total cost of ownership and creates safer, smarter campuses without constant system replacement."

“At its core, physical security in education must be intuitive.”

When classroom A/V, communication systems and physical security platforms are intentionally designed to work together, schools gain more than integration, they gain operational clarity. Teachers rely on familiar tools. Administrators gain centralized visibility. IT teams manage fewer fragmented systems. And response protocols become consistent across the district.

Integrated security visibility

One of the greatest benefits of aligning classroom and safety technology is centralized visibility. Roy explains how unified systems help staff respond decisively: "Unified visibility lets teams verify what's happening and respond appropriately. Instead of guessing, staff can quickly see relevant information, like door status or camera context, and choose the correct response."

This approach reduces training burdens and increases confidence among staff who may not use emergency systems daily. For security integrators, prioritizing unified visibility in design and deployment means empowering districts to stay ahead of potential incidents with clarity and confidence.

Security shouldn't be an afterthought; it should be part of long-term planning. "Decide what your end goal

is going to be," Roy advises. "If you know you want systems A, B and C integrated eventually, plan for that. Make technology decisions with future integration in mind."

This planning philosophy helps districts modernize responsibly, stretch budget dollars and avoid costly rework down the road.

Success in education technology integration isn't just about the installation phase, it's about behavior change, confidence and day-to-day reliability. Staff can use systems confidently, communication is clear and consistent and emergency procedures are streamlined. Roy summarizes it succinctly: "When a system works the same way every day and during an emergency, that's when you know you've done it right."

The bottom line

Today's school technology strategy can no longer afford to separate classroom enablement from campus safety. By aligning communications infrastructure, classroom systems, access control and centralized visibility, districts can achieve operational clarity, stronger safety preparedness and long-term sustainability.

In the education space, security integration isn't just about systems, it's about creating an environment that supports learning, protects people and builds trust with the communities that schools serve. The future of education technology isn't about choosing between innovation and safety – it's about designing systems that deliver both consistently, intuitively and reliably. ■

