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Success Story: Newark Central School District & Convergint

Nov 2026

Newark Central School District improves school security operations by unifying systems



Key outcomes

- Streamlined operations by unifying video, access control, alarms, communications, and sensors
- Accelerated emergency response with automated lockdown workflows and centralized management
- Reduced vaping incidents by approximately 93% using integrated sensors, video, and automated alerts
- Protected investments with an open, scalable platform and strong integrator support

The school district

Newark Central School District (NCSD) sits at the heart of a close-knit community in upstate New York, US. For this public school district, success means giving over 1,800 students the experiences and opportunities they need to reach their full potential, both in and out of the classroom.

Nearly 600 staff work across seven buildings, including a high school, a middle school, an intermediate school, two elementary schools, a district office, and a bus maintenance facility. They're committed to creating an environment where everyone feels safe, supported, and empowered to thrive.

The challenge

Adding more school security technology doesn't always mean better protection. When systems operate in silos, they can create complexity for the people managing them. That's exactly what happened at NCSD.

Though the district had invested in Genetec™ Security Center, staff were still managing some systems separately and weren't getting full value from the technology. When the district team wanted to add vape sensors, they hit a crossroads with the number of school security systems they managed. NCSD decided to find a partner that could help them build a more unified ecosystem within Security Center.

After discussing options with various system integrators, NCSD turned to Convergint.

Name
Newark Central School District

Industries
K-12 Schools

Location
Newark, New York, United States

Partner
Genetec™

> We wanted to build a more centralized approach to improve situational awareness and response. Convergint became a valuable partner in helping us develop and implement that vision using Security Center.
>
> — Susan Hasenauer, Superintendent at NCSD



Why Newark Central School District chose Genetec and Convergint

Security Center was flexible enough to let NCSD build on existing investments and make upgrades in phases to manage costs. They retained the existing Axis Communications camera infrastructure while expanding the system with additional Axis cameras featuring the latest surveillance technology. The upgraded cameras provide enhanced capabilities, including built-in infrared (IR) illumination for improved visibility in low-light and nighttime conditions, high-definition image quality, wide dynamic range (WDR) to maintain image detail in challenging lighting, and intelligent video analytics. These enhancements provide improved coverage, image clarity, and overall situational awareness while maintaining an open architecture.

The biggest win of working with Convergint came from connecting their security systems into a single operational view. “With Security Center, we manage all our security systems in one place,” said Jack Freer, Co-Director of Technology at NCSD. “Cameras, doors, emergency communications, and other sensors all work together on a single platform. And whenever we talk to Convergint about something new, there’s a way to make it happen. We know we always have the freedom to expand with the Genetec platform.”

The solution

Consolidate and automate school security operations

The NCSD team manages over 400 cameras, 200 doors, 500 cardholders, and 30 vape sensors, all from Security Center. The Convergint team helped them set up many automations so they can work smarter and faster. That includes making sure specific personnel receive alarms with linked video, as well as automating lockdown procedures based on threat levels.

They’ve also streamlined cardholder management through integration with Microsoft Active Directory (AD). Now, as soon as the IT team adds an employee or student, they’re automatically assigned the right cardholder group and building access based on their role.

Implement faster school emergency response

At NCSD, activating a lockdown sets a coordinated response in motion. Security Center automatically notifies key personnel, restricts building access to first responders and specific individuals, and turns on sirens and strobes.

“Using Security Center, our security team and local community agencies can remotely assess the situation and coordinate response from the command center at our district office. An automated and centralized approach helps us respond quickly and effectively when it matters most,” explained Mike Ishler, Co-Director of Technology at NCSD.

Decrease vaping incidents

Having quick access to information has helped the district tackle vaping. Any time a vape sensor gets triggered, Security Center automatically bookmarks the event, along with related video, and alerts the school's administration team and resource officers. After the initial monitoring period, "vaping incidents declined by approximately 93%. We average fewer than ten alerts per month," explained Hasenauer.

Protecting investments through strong partnerships

NCSD plans to keep evolving its security foundation. Through an ongoing service agreement, Convergint provides remote support, maintenance, and on-site help, giving the NCSD team a trusted partner to turn to when new questions or projects arise.

"NCSD had a top-tier solution in Security Center. We helped them bring everything together and fill in some gaps to strengthen their school safety efforts. Everyone involved shared the same goal: help the security operators and administrators create an environment where students and staff feel safe," said Lisa Kinyon, Account Executive at Convergint.

"The automations in Security Center have helped our district become much more responsive. With the AD integration, for example, as soon as we add someone, they're automatically assigned the right building access based on their role. When a cardholder needs to be removed, it's easy. We don't worry about missing a step.".

Mike Ishler, Co-Director of Technology at NCSD

Results

Handling investigations with Genetec solutions is easier. The NCSD team can quickly find video by scrolling through bookmarked events or using intuitive maps to locate the right cameras. When they need to dig deeper, they turn to the intelligent search and visual tracking capabilities, which help expedite the investigative process.

"It was a multi-year project, but we can confidently say it was worth it. With the help of Convergint and Genetec, we've improved our processes and have a clearer picture of what's happening across our district. Our students and staff feel safer, and our community has greater confidence in what we're doing to keep it that way. You can't put a price tag on that," said Ishler.

Effective security and safety is a multi-layered approach involving people, processes, and technologies. Convergint-provided products and services are only one part of this multi-layered approach, will not detect or prevent all threats or solve every risk, and should not be your sole method of security or safety. Please see the "IMPORTANT PRODUCT SAFETY AND SERVICE INFORMATION" documentation, available at convergint.com/terms, prior to using a Convergint-installed system

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