



Piedmont California Schools

**A** SEISMIC UPGRADE REQUIRED BY SOME OF its buildings also provided the opportunity for the Piedmont Unified School District (PUSD) to improve the security of its classroom doors by replacing conventional locks with Schlage Classroom Security Locks. Other door hardware also is being upgraded and standardized to bring it into full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines and provide greater security.

Piedmont Unified School District serves more than 2,500 students with a total of six schools, including three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and one alternative school. On California Standards Tests (CST) and STAR, PUSD is the second highest ranking unified school district in California, and more than 95 percent of its graduates pursue a college education. The city of Piedmont, surrounded by Oakland, California, has a population of approximately 10,000.

When it was determined that several PUSD buildings required various levels of seismic strengthening and

# Lock Down Classroom Security

BY BEVERLY VIGUE

▲ Piedmont Middle School was the pilot school for a program to improve security with classroom locks that can be locked with a key from the inside to protect against intruders.



Classrooms in Piedmont schools, like most in California, have outside access rather than interior corridors.

associated modernization, a bond issue was passed in March, 2006 to provide funding. Some of the structures had been built as long ago as the 1930s, and in many cases, door hardware did not meet current ADA guidelines. While the ADA law does not require immediate upgrades of existing facilities, these upgrades must be included as part of any significant remodeling effort. As a result, the seismic project triggered the need to also upgrade door hardware.

While accessibility issues such as replacing doorknobs with lever trim were an obvious part of the upgrade, they also provided the impetus to review other door hardware



Classroom security function of Schlage lock provides a key lock inside the classroom so the teacher can remain inside during a lockdown situation.



Von Duprin CD99 rim exit device used on doors leading outside incorporate cylinder dogging



issues that would improve security. Assistant Superintendent Michael Brady explains, "In terms of safety, during an intruder drill, teachers would have to exit their classrooms in order to lock the doors. We had been looking at the situation for some time, but the money needed to change all the locks to a safer design wasn't available."

Son Nguyen, whose multiple maintenance responsibilities for PUSD include all locksmith work for the district, says, "When Michael became Assistant Superintendent, he supported a pilot program at the middle school, which is an open campus where the classrooms all have exterior doors." Brady notes, "We wanted to start with the middle school so people could see the benefits of improving the locks. Because the school didn't meet the criteria for the seismic work, we used deferred maintenance funds for the project."

The main part of the project at Piedmont Middle School consisted of replacing approximately 50 door locks with Schlage locks that have a Classroom Security Function. This allows an individual to immediately lock a door from inside with a key, eliminating exposure outside the classroom in a hostile intruder situation. The ability to key-lock from inside the classroom allows the teacher to control access and egress in an emergency and prevents the compromise that could occur with an inside pushbutton or thumbturn latch.

In addition, several older push bar exit devices were replaced with Von Duprin 99 Series touch pad devices.


Where they are applied to classroom-type areas, they incorporate the same classroom security function. In the gymnasium, the devices incorporate a luminescent "soft glow" panel on the touch pad, which will make it easier to find the exit during a power failure. Brady says, "Son has a global vision of things, and he told me how the panic hardware could be chained or blocked with a chair. We realized we also needed to upgrade to the touch pad devices to provide the safety and security we needed."

The district's key system also is being upgraded and standardized. Previously, several different types of keys and keyways were used at various schools over the years. This led to a lack of key control, and anyone could have the keys duplicated. For greater security, PUSD is switching to the patent-protected Schlage Everest and Everest Primus keyways at all facilities. Key blanks are only available with proper authorization, and Nguyen controls key cutting and distribution. The specific keyway is geographically restricted for only PUSD use within a two-digit Zip Code area. The higher security Everest Primus keyway is used on exterior doors, while interior doors use the Everest keyway. An Everest Primus key will operate Primus and Everest cylinders, while an Everest key will only operate an Everest cylinder. This allows interior doors or less sensitive areas to be secured with Everest cylinders and more vulnerable areas, such as exterior doors, to be protected with Primus cylinders. A single Primus key can be used as a building master key. Since Everest keys do not operate Primus cylinders, the district has an extra level of control over how much access each user has by choosing the type of key that is issued.

Keys and locks are just one of the areas where PUSD is standardizing. This and other standards, such as the Von Duprin 99 Series exit devices and LCN 4041 door closers help to minimize spare parts inventory and simplify repair and replacement.

In addition to the security features of the new locks and exit devices, technical support played a major role in the decision to standardize on the products PUSD selected. Nguyen explains, "We have a small maintenance group that does everything, including plumbing, electrical, painting and carpentry in addition to locksmith work. That's why we need a manufacturer who has the expertise to help us."

The voluntary seismic retrofit program is being implemented district-wide, with specific upgrades dependent on the individual facility. As schools are retrofitted through this program, they also will be equipped with the new locks and exit devices. Currently, an elementary school is being done, and at least one school will be undertaken each year, with completion of the program planned by 2012.

Electronic locks are being considered to help control access for some public areas. Brady notes, "We have a unique system where we have seasonal coaches, so sometimes it is difficult to get their keys back at the end of a season. We're starting to look at card access systems for those situations, and we could just invalidate cards instead of spending an inordinate amount of time getting them back." 

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