

SCHOOLS



ROB BENCHLEY/The Independent

Security cameras at the schools will take note of passersby, including school building supervisor Sean McGrady (left) and director of facilities Jack McFarland (right).

Schools keep an eye out with new security cameras

BY STEVE SHEPPARD
INDEPENDENT WRITER

New security cameras are in place at the high school and Cyrus Peirce School, giving administrators a useful tool in keeping watch over the busy buildings.

"They've been up and running for two weeks," the schools' director of facilities Jack McFarland said Friday.

The 70 Bosch cameras are located at strategic interior and exterior spots at both schools and run all day, every day. The cameras were installed as a safety measure, and also because of the schools' use by the community, where meetings, adult recreation and public events take place both day and night.

"I don't think there's a single night where I've worked late that there isn't something going on," assistant schools superintendent Dr. Carlos Colley said. "This school gets used all the time."

"We basically wanted to have coverage for all common areas," McFarland said. "There's an increased use of the buildings by the

whole island; with so much activity there's a need for more security."

McFarland said the cost of the cameras was "just under \$100,000," and was paid for with public funds from the county sheriff's department.

Both McFarland and Colley agreed that the installation of the cameras is an unavoidable fact of modern living. Colley said schools where he previously worked in Oak Bluffs and New York state also had security cameras.

Camera access will be limited to a few school administrators, McFarland pointed out. "I want people to be assured it will be very, very controlled," he said. "Very few people will have access."

The system was installed by Signet Electronics of Norwell, the same firm that recently upgraded the fire alarms at the elementary school, where up to 29 new cameras will be installed over the summer.

McFarland said the cameras have already come in handy. "One thing they've prevented is the dumping of old TVs and computers in the back of the school," he said. ■

Galley

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