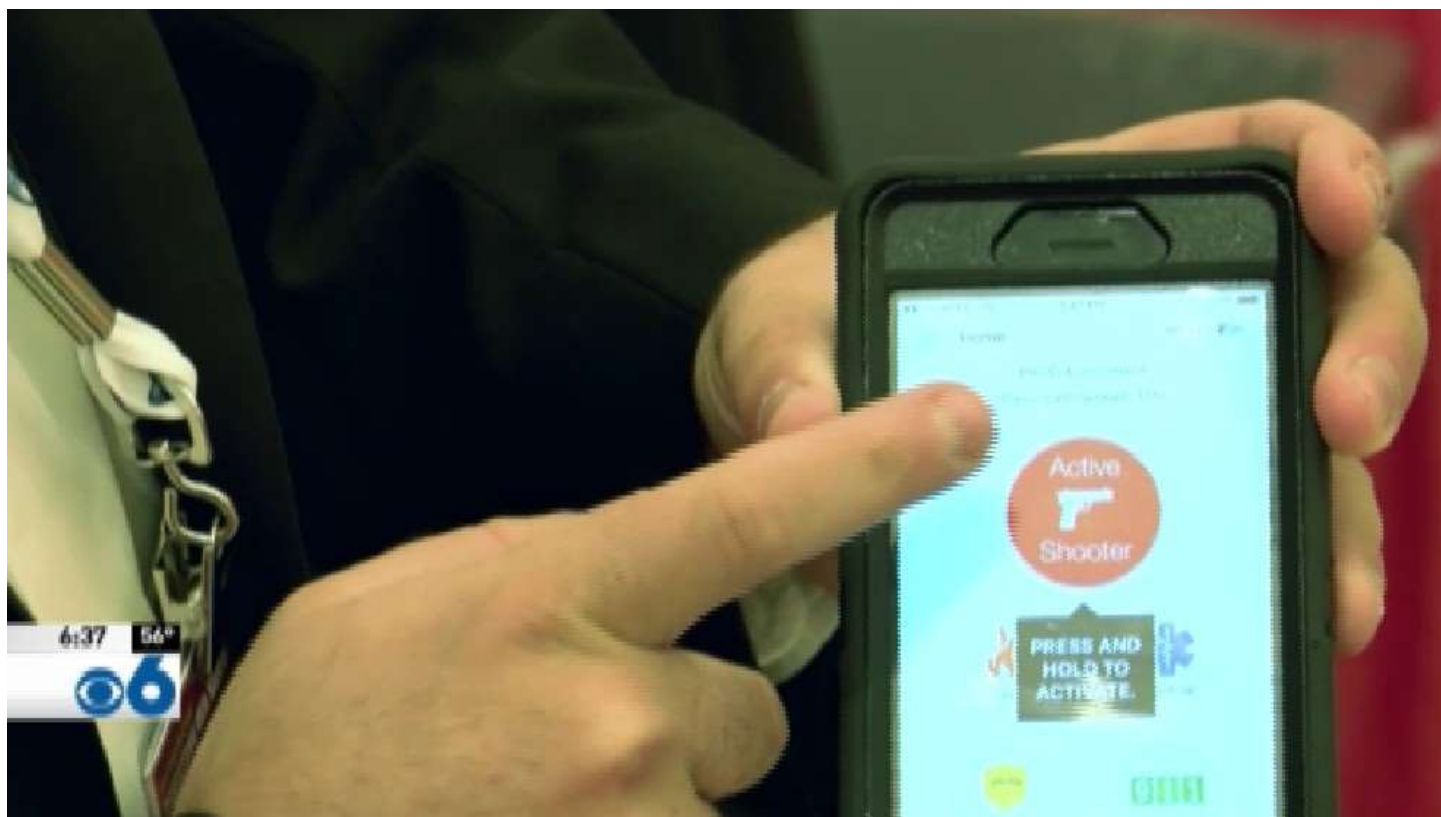


School administrators explore options to improve safety

BY LYNZI DELUCCIA
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A conference in Saratoga showed school administrators new ways to keep their students safe.

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SARATOGA -- School shootings in the past few years have led to a number of lockdowns - causing school districts nationwide to look for the best safety systems. That's what many school administrators were doing Sunday in Saratoga.

"It's a shame that we have to think about it, but we're as prepared as we can be for it."

Bob Schongar was one of many school administrators in attendance Sunday at the state's annual conference for school facilities managers - looking for new safety measures to implement into his schools.

"I'm looking to always learn what's the best out there, unfortunately schools are a little bit behind getting things, we're not the leaders of technology so it's always good to pick up what we can," Schongar said.

Everytownresearch.org (<http://everytownresearch.org/>) shows almost 200 active shooter situations in America's schools since 2013. With that - and the growing technology field - educators are recognizing the need for increased security.

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"Unfortunately, the day of keeping the front door open has long passed, it's not a warm and welcoming environment, we have to vet out everybody that walks in the door," Hewlett-Woodmere Director of Facilities Kim Parahus said.

A number of exhibitors showed up to Sunday's conference, including Intralogic Solutions - a Long Island-based group that's created a system to speed up the process of a lockdown drill.

"Ultimately, if we save even 30 seconds, that can save many lives in a really serious situation," North Merrick Schools' Director of Facilities Jim Saita said.

North Merrick schools in Nassau County is one district that utilizes Intralogic's system.

"The safety and security of the staff and the students to create a really healthy learning environment is the ultimate goal and if we can provide even a little more of a safety feature, that speaks volumes."

Exhibitors at the show say live-feed cameras play a large role these days in safety and security in schools - one technological advance that many systems are implementing.

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