



Case study



Fayette County Schools Deploy Evolv Express® Systems to Foster a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Organization Overview

ORGANIZATION: Fayette County Schools

LOCATION: Fayette County, West Virginia

DEPLOYMENT AT 3 SCHOOLS:

- **OAK HILL HIGH:** 1,100+ Students
- **MIDLAND TRAIL HIGH:** 330+ Students
- **OAK HILL MIDDLE:** 660+ Students

Solution Snapshot

Goals

- Reduce long ingress lines outside of schools
- Deliver enhanced, seamless screening for students
- Ensure students get to their first classes safely and on time
- Easy to learn and manage solution for security personnel, school administrators, and teachers

Solution

People

- GiveEvolv: Enabled school access to Express systems, accelerated delivery timeframe, and provided ongoing community education support
- Solutions Engineering Team: Helped configure and implement Express systems at 3 different schools; trained security staff on Express system management

Process

- Conducted site survey at each school, trained staff, configured Express systems and provided go-live support
- Provide ongoing technical and customer success management support

Technology

- Oak Hill High: 1 Evolv Express® Dual-lane System
- Midland Trail High: 1 Evolv Express Single-lane System
- Oak Hill Middle School: 1 Evolv Express Dual-lane System
- Evolv Insights®
- Evolv Cortex AI®

Outcomes



Awarded GiveEvolv grant to fund full Evolv Express systems and subscriptions for four years



Reduced lines of students waiting to pass through security screening



Reduced secondary security check alarms from around 40% to less than 10%



Enabled all students to get to class on time without any security disruptions



Bolstered security of students and staff to promote a learning environment



Trained security personnel and teachers on Evolv Express in less than one day



Short-lived Retirement Turns to Security

Fayette County Schools Superintendent Gary Hough has worn a lot of different hats since he and his wife arrived in the county in 1980.

He started off teaching third and fourth graders and then worked as an elementary school principal for 10 years and a middle school principal for 14 years. During these different assignments, he also found time to develop one of the first in-school wellness centers in West Virginia and served on the National School Health Council for a three-year term. After serving as the Director of Transportation and School Services and as Associate Superintendent of Schools, he retired in 2018.

But this didn't last long. When the school district asked him to return as Superintendent in 2020, the opportunity to contribute to the district where he and his wife had worked for almost four decades was too great—and he has been a very busy man since returning. One of his areas of focus is the safety of students and staff. "We see a lot of violence in the school setting, and we sought to be proactive in looking for opportunities to minimize the risks and ensure that we have a safe learning environment," he says.



We are committed to fostering a learning environment where our students feel safe and respected. We proactively pursued the GiveEvolv program on the premise that it would serve as a key enabler of this mission."

- Gary Hough, Superintendent, Fayette County Schools

Security Screening Needed and Wanted, but the County Was at an Impasse

Hough wanted to make quick and efficient advances in making the school district a safer environment.

However, Fayette County Schools were not in a position to act on the new undertakings. In 2015 the district had to make drastic cuts to address a failing school infrastructure due to budgetary shortfalls. The county had not passed a school bond measure since 1973, and school facilities were in a serious state of disrepair. Things began to change in 2016 when the district received a special grant from the School Building Authority. These monies, along with several other grants, enabled the district to repair and refurbish dilapidated facilities and pay for the building of new ones.

Amid renovations, Hough also wanted to find a solution that would enable Fayette County Schools to screen students, staff, and visitors for threats

when entering school facilities. On previous occasions, and only in severe crises, some of the high schools in the district had used hand-held metal detectors to search students for weapons upon their arrival in the morning. “We knew these weren’t a viable option,” says Katie Keffer Hayes, the Principal at Oak Hill High School, which has around 1,100 students. “We had long queues pile up at our entrances, which were a threat themselves, and many of our students missed their first period of classes. Metal detectors simply are not a viable option for schools.”



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- Katie Keffer Hayes, Principal, Oak Hill High School

GiveEvolv Brings New Opportunities

Hough and several members of the school board did their research and identified Evolv Express systems as an alternative to the intrusiveness of magnetometers.

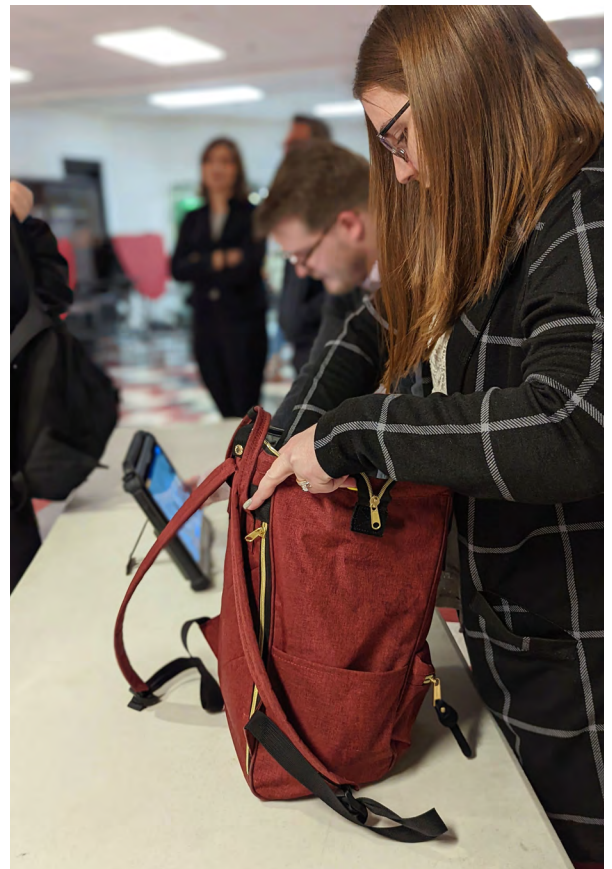
Working with the Evolv team, they scheduled a trip to an entertainment park to see them in action. All of them were sold on the technology. But the budget to purchase Express systems simply wasn't available given the county's recent financial state. During the trip to the entertainment park, Hough had a chance to meet Peter George, the CEO and President of Evolv. He noted that while Fayette County Schools needed and wanted to deploy Express systems, the budget to do so didn't exist.

Having just launched GiveEvolv, a charitable organization that donates Evolv's state-of-the-art weapons detection at no cost to schools in need, George strongly encouraged Hough to apply for a GiveEvolv grant. The GiveEvolv board evaluated his application alongside many other compelling

applications. The list was narrowed to three, and the GiveEvolv board selected Fayette County Schools, concluding they had found the perfect inaugural candidate for the program. In February 2022, Hough received a phone call from GiveEvolv Chairman Kevin Charlton notifying him that Fayette County Schools would be the first recipient of the GiveEvolv grant. "GiveEvolv gave us an opportunity to move much faster than if we had needed to wait for the funding to become available," Hough says. "We are committed to fostering a learning environment where our students feel safe and respected. We proactively pursued the GiveEvolv program on the premise that it would serve as a key enabler of this mission."

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- Moses Shrewsbury, IT Specialist,
Fayette County Schools





Getting Launched

After connecting Hough with the Evolv Solutions Engineering team, March 2022 was targeted as the go-live for three schools in the district.

A dual-lane Express system was allocated for Oak Hill High School, a single-lane Express system for Midland Trail High School, and dual-lane Express System for Oak Hill Middle School. A Solution Engineer from Evolv conducted a site analysis of each school and provided recommendations for the optimal placement of the Express systems at each. The Evolv Solution Engineering team then worked with school IT and security personnel to configure and deploy the Express systems. This included determining what objects students carry in their backpacks most frequently and configuring the sensitivity settings for each system based on those.

“The support we’ve gotten from the Evolv team has been tremendous,” Hough says. “They brought in their Solution Engineers and worked alongside our team to ensure the deployment was a great success.” On the day of each deployment, which was staggered over a one-week timeframe, the Evolv team trained and coached each school security team on how to operate the Express systems. As each school has a dedicated professional security officer, teachers and staff serve on the security team at each school. “The training of our security staff went quite smoothly,” says Moses Shrewsbury, an IT Specialist for the Fayette County Schools. “The Evolv team trained us before the students started arriving, and they worked alongside us during the screening process. The Evolv tablets are very easy to use; a red square appears when there is an alert that shows exactly where the suspected threat is located.”



We screened the students and then staff took various objects, including the sidearm carried by our professional security officer, through the system to see if we could set off the alert. It worked flawlessly.”

- Lt. Jess McMullen, School Prevention Resource Officer, Oak Hill High School

Flawless Performance, Portability, Deep Insights

Even though Hough and the team had seen the Express system in action at the entertainment venue, Christopher Marty, the IT Director for Fayette County Schools, and his team wanted to put the system through the paces before full deployment.

“We screened the students and then staff took various objects, including the sidearm carried by our professional security officer, through the system to see if we could set off the alert,” he recalls. “It worked flawlessly.”

Once trained, tested, and fully deployed, the team had the systems ready to welcome students. Unlike when the hand-held metal detectors were used, there are no lines with the Express systems. “Every student, as they arrive at school, can simply walk right through the Express lane,” Hough notes. “In the instances where an alert is received, we know exactly where the suspected threat is located on the Evolv tablet and can quickly and easily resolve it.” Compared to the hand-held metal detectors, the Express systems have a very low rate of alarms—reducing the number from around 40% to less than 10%. “But even in instances where an alarm occurs, the entire screening process is dramatically streamlined,” Hough describes. “Evolv takes all of the guesswork out of the equation by telling us exactly where the purported threat is located.”

The portability of the Express systems is also something Fayette County Schools appreciates. For example, the Express system at Oak Hill High School gets relocated depending on events and activities taking place at the school. “The Evolv team worked with us before the go-live date to set it up and tear it down multiple times to ensure that we knew the process,” Shrewsbury notes. “This was especially helpful.”

And while the team is just getting started, Evolv Insights® analytics also benefits the security teams at each school. “We can look at the number of students and staff passing through the Express lanes in five-minute increments,” says Lt. Jess McMullen, the School Prevention Resource Officer at Oak Hill High School. “This enables us to ensure we utilize our staff efficiently and allocate them at peak entry times. We also look at the scan data so that we can understand what threats exist and use that information to make the screening process more effective.”



Response from Parents and Students

Feedback from Parents:

- ▶ “I absolutely love the Evolv system. There is no special effort required by the students. The normalcy of their school day is not interrupted by security screening.”
- ▶ “As a parent learning about the Express system, I just feel safer.”
- ▶ “Our community is fantastic. We are a family and help each other out. The Express system helps us ensure that each student feels safe and can focus on learning.”

Feedback from Students:

- ▶ “Previously, when we had the hand-held metal detectors, security screening would happen on random days. I can remember the line being very long, backed up out of the school. It was a dreadful process. It literally would take an hour of our day.”
- ▶ “Every day, we walk through the doors and through the security lane. We just go straight through. It’s just like every other day. Every student who comes into our school is checked, to make sure nothing is in their bags. I feel safer going to class, knowing that everyone in the school has walked through the Express screening lane.”
- ▶ “I definitely feel safer. I know the Express system is there, but it doesn’t disrupt my day.”



An Overwhelming Response

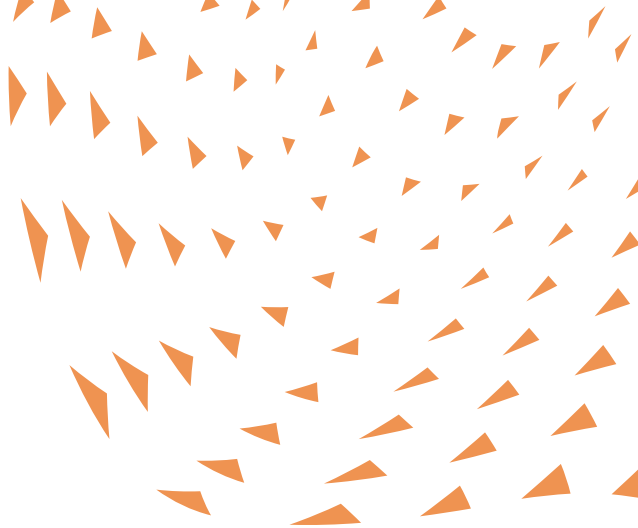
The response from students, staff, and the community has been extremely positive.

“We’ve added a layer of protection for our students and staff that make them feel better,” Hayes comments. “Our parents feel better. Our community feels better. Many of us have been in the education field for a long time, and we’re not always used to getting the very best. Because of GiveEvolv, the Evolv Express, and the Evolv team, that is precisely what we got in this case.”

A few years ago, Hayes had a chance to meet Frank DeAngelis, who was the Principal at Columbine High School when the tragedy struck there, and hear him speak at a conference. She left there knowing that nothing like what happened at Columbine High School should ever occur in Fayette County Schools. Now, Hayes feels closer to realizing that

goal. She explains, “Evolv gives me that confidence that when our bell rings at 7:15 each morning, we have no chance of a gun being in our building other than the one on the hip of our professional security officer.”

“I have been a student, teacher, and principal at Oak Hill High School,” Hayes observes. “Educators often get slighted and are second-rate citizens compared to big businesses. GiveEvolv turns this around and allows us to put school safety first. I really appreciate—from the bottom of my heart—everything the Evolv team has done for us.”



Contact us to learn more about helping to create
safer zones where you live, learn, work or play.

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