



Big Hollow School District #38 Case Study:

Accomplishing MUCH More With Less

Making School Security Affordable



A DECADE-LONG QUEST

In 2015, as a newly appointed Tech Director, Matt McCulley was excited to bring innovation to the security program at Big Hollow School District (BHSD) #38 in Ingleside, IL. However, after being handed responsibility for the brass keys for all the interior doors, and realizing the exterior electronic access control (EAC) system was running on Windows 98, he had a lot of questions. **“I found out quickly that teachers, staff and community members were gaining access to virtually all our doors with very little oversight or accountability. In fact, new school employees were simply handed a brass key and key card to the building with no process of retrieving them when they left,”** McCulley recalled. “There was a lack of accountability and process that led to chaos related to allowing access,” Holly Brama, now current Tech Director for BHSD and manager of the previous EAC system, explained. She continued, “The EAC software we were using was not user friendly at all. Creating a new group or time schedule or any changes to the program proved to be very difficult.”

1/3 OF THE COST PER DOOR WITH PROXESS

“We needed to do something at some point, and I really wanted to be able to have an audit of who went through the doors and when for ALL of our doors,” McCulley recalled. After receiving a quote for \$3,000 per door for traditional wireless EAC, McCulley was beginning to lose hope of ever being able to afford the kind of security system he knew the district deserved. However, finding Proxess and Gappa Security Solutions for the first time at an education IT conference in the spring of 2024, Matt started to regain some hope. **“Once I realized Proxess could give me the security I was looking for about a third of the cost LESS per door than everything else I had seen, I knew it was time to make the change.”**

SUMMER IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS

After taking the time to specify the project, identify every door inside and out that needed EAC and review all the bids, the time came to implement their new Proxess EAC solution for more than 400 interior and more than 30 exterior doors throughout their three school buildings on campus. “We knew the implementation of a new system like that is always critical to the overall success and acceptance by teachers and staff,” explained Brama. “In fact, the new Proxess EAC project was my first large project as the new tech director, so it was very important to me it went well.” During the implementation of the Proxess system over the summer of 2025, the Proxess and Gappa teams both welcomed and answered all the questions the BHSD team had. “I don’t feel like we get that very often and, if we do, I feel like we are just told what we want to hear rather than what is accurate. **Proxess would always answer our questions with clarity and, if there was a capability we needed but the software could not accommodate, they would tell us that while also looking to implement new capabilities when they could,**” McCulley recalled now in a new role as Assistant Superintendent for the school district.

MOBILE KEY ACCESS FOR THE WIN!

But the real test is always when teachers and staff return for the fall semester. “Any new system implemented over the summer, especially one that affects access to the school and classrooms has the potential to create chaos when teachers come back... but, not with Proxess. Everyone had the access they needed and the system worked great from day 1,” Brama explained. Even better, Holly can now issue mobile keys in seconds for teachers who forget their FOB at home. **“When teachers forget their FOB at home or when vendors come to the school, I can simply issue them a mobile key so they can use their phone as their key for their classrooms for the day, eliminating any disruption to start the day,”** Brama said. In addition to the ease of use by teachers and staff, the Proxess system also allows the BHSD security team to more effectively enforce procedures especially around building usage and access, because now access follows building usage. So, when the building usage time has expired it is inaccessible. “We can now more effectively manage access, follow procedure and no longer have to track down users for their brass keys since it is all digital for all doors with Proxess,” McCulley said.

“I WOULD RECOMMEND IN A HEARTBEAT.”

When asked what they would tell other K-12 schools about their new electronic access control system for all their doors, Brama responded, **“The product is great, and the customer service is even better.”** McCulley added, **“I would recommend it in a heartbeat.** There are products we like, but would not necessarily recommend, but with Proxess I would recommend it to my colleagues in a heartbeat.”



Electronic Access Control Functionality for ALL Doors

CYLINDRICAL



MORTISE



STOREFRONT



PANIC TRIM



End-users face a dilemma when choosing how to handle the locking hardware and access control doors in their facility. Key control is almost impossible to maintain due to lost, stolen and duplicated keys. However, controlling more than a few doors with traditional/legacy electronic access control systems, at thousands per door, is simply not feasible for most budgets.

What if you could provide the security of an electronic access control system for about the same price as most Grade 1 locks? That is what a Proxess system provides.

Here's how it works...

Typical electronic access control doors require many expensive and labor-intensive parts. Proxess simplifies these challenges centered around a family of wireless intelligent locking hardware.

As the foundation for a Smart Locking System, our all-in-one electronic locksets include a monitored emergency key bypass and provide local lockdown for each door. All the standard security components are integrated, including:

- High security card reader
- Electronic lock
- Door position notification
- Request to exit detector and switch

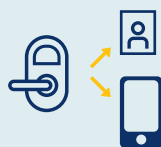
Further, the lock installs in a standard cylindrical door prep in minutes (mortise, three added 5/8" holes) so there are no unsightly holes to drill in the door. Imagine the time and labor costs saved when compared to traditional electronic access control systems. And, this is not just a typical smart lock. Proxess' unique system architecture provides users the choice to:

Connect by BLE at each door



Bluetooth Smart to Proxess Sync - Uploads Audits & Events

Automatically deliver transactions to the software using our Network-on-Card technology



Card Use Audits & Lock Events Written to Credentials

Connect On-Demand by adding BLE bridges



Bluetooth Smart to Bridge with Audits, Alarms & Updates

Connect on-line, in real-time through PoE and WiFi



Online, Real-time Doors