

ABOUT THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA



The Archdiocese of Philadelphia (AOP) is one of the oldest Catholic school systems in the country and educates over 46,000 students from Pre-K through 12th grade. The AOP operates fifteen high schools and serves a diverse student population across five counties of the Philadelphia area.

THE SECURITY CHALLENGE

Although the AOP's schools have a good safety record, administrators were concerned about the rising number of school shootings around the country. They decided to take a more proactive approach to safety across all of their high school campuses. The AOP began by working with Pennsylvania State Police to conduct security assessments.

Security recommendations from the State Police included having just one main entrance with a secure vestibule and a process for screening visitors. AOP needed to find a ballistic barrier manufacturer with the capability to design and fabricate a custom solution for each school's unique entryway and coordinate installation around other building improvements like adding accessibility ramps.

PROJECT PRIORITIES

- Enhance safety across multiple high school campuses
- Operationally friendly secure vestibules
- Custom ballistic barrier design and fabrication
- Minimize disruption to normal school hours

CREATING THE **PLAN**

The AOP began working with an engineering firm, T&M Associates, who recommended Total Security Solutions to help design and fabricate the ballistic barrier. Bob George was the first point of contact at TSS. After learning about the project's background and goals, he recommended a UL Level 3 secure vestibule with locking interior doors and a Level 3 transaction window to facilitate visitor check-in.



The teams decided to retrofit the schools one at a time. One high school, Cardinal O'Hara High School, was on an especially tight timeline since the installation needed to be complete before school started in September.

"A lot of schools approach us thinking they need a barrier rated to a high UL level. The problem with higher levels is the price point and how difficult they are to work with—everything gets thicker and heavier as you climb the UL scale. Typically for schools, we recommend a Level 3 system as it protects against most handguns and can easily blend into the surrounding aesthetic"



Bob George
Senior Sales Consultant

IMPLEMENTING THE **SOLUTION**

Designing the barrier system was an involved process as TSS had to coordinate with multiple teams—T&M Associates, school administration, general contractors, and the security vendor that handled the existing cameras and intercom system. TSS completed onsite measurements to help ensure each component was precisely fabricated to fit the existing space.



Lead times for various components were an ongoing challenge. Continued supply chain shortages made some parts, like microchips for door hardware, extremely difficult to source. Sarah Runyan, TSS Project Manager, helped the various teams stay coordinated with a shared planning tool to track order deadlines, lead times, and overall project progress.

To help work around supply chain issues, TSS mixed and matched individual door hardware parts from various manufacturers and assembled the finished component onsite.

“The school’s administrators appreciated the level of transparency we offered. The planning spreadsheet we used was an easy way to see upcoming deadlines and coordinate between all the teams.”



Sarah Runyan
TSS Project Manager

RESULTS

To create a secure vestibule at Cardinal O’Hara High School, TSS fabricated and installed a Level 3 system with storefront-style interior doors, multiple interior windows, a transaction area with a recessed currency tray, and custom-painted ballistic framing to match the surrounding aesthetic.

The original installation date was December 2022, but TSS managed to complete the project a full three months ahead of schedule. TSS Installation teams worked during the night and on weekends and did not disrupt normal school hours.



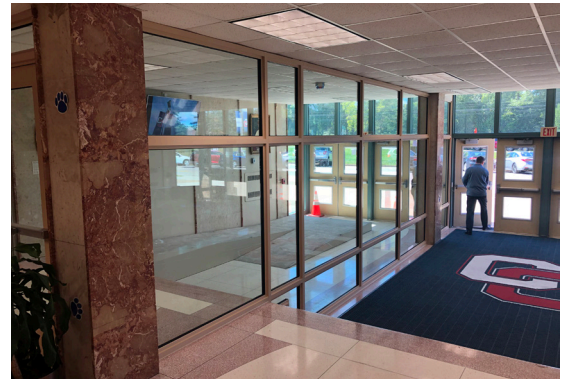
The final solution creates a secure entryway, makes it easy for staff to check in visitors securely, and blends seamlessly with the surrounding look of the building. Every detail was accounted for, including the placement of fire alarm boxes and security cameras.



“At the end of the day, it’s about creating a more secure environment and protecting our students and faculty. The barrier at Cardinal O’Hara fits perfectly in the space and looks like it has always been there. It’s still very functional and doesn’t get in the way of day-to-day operations. Our campuses are buildings from many different eras, and it’s been amazing to see how each system matches the look and feel of the surrounding architecture. We look forward to working with TSS on similar upgrades to the rest of the high schools in our system.”

David Magee

Chief Financial Officer, Archdiocese of Philadelphia Schools



ABOUT TSS

Total Security Solutions is the leading nationwide custom bulletproof barrier manufacturer and installer. Since 2004, TSS has designed, engineered, fabricated, and delivered or installed over 25,000 ballistic systems in locations worldwide. With offices in Michigan, California, Nevada, Texas, and Delaware, TSS offers ballistic solutions that provide both Safety + Aesthetics™ to fit your unique space.



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