1 — Teacher sends alert

2 — *Beacon* tells teacher the alert got through

SCHOOL

6 — Push maps or instructions to displays

7 — Notify off-campus responders via text and pop-ups

3 — Strobe, tones, and pop-ups notify staff who can confirm the problem; if needed, they launch automated *Campus Alert (4-7)*

EMERGENCY!

5 — Speakers play pre-recorded announcements and instructions

4 — Lock doors if needed

Making your school EPP-ready

3 points for aligning technology with Emergency-Preparedness Plans

EPP READY

Many schools use networked systems daily for paging, intercom, and bells. But only in the last several years have they recruited networked technology to support crisis situations where clear communication and speed are critical.

As part of an effective Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP), schools need to support their life-safety systems with communication technologies that help keep staff and students aware, informed, focused, and out of harm's way. And to do that, the communication platform must provide three basic functions:

1. **Activation:** Multiple ways for staff to activate an alert
2. **Notification:** Redundant ways to inform responders
3. **Response:** A suite of effective, automated actions

ACTIVATION

A strong communication system gives teachers and other staff members multiple ways to tell the rest of the school there's a problem. Ideally, teachers should be able to send an alert from a combination of: their microphone, a call button, a wall control panel, an under-desk panic button, or a virtual button on a computer or mobile device.

Using the teacher mic as an alerting device demands special consideration. Foremost, the mic should only be a secondary option since it's mobile and battery-powered.
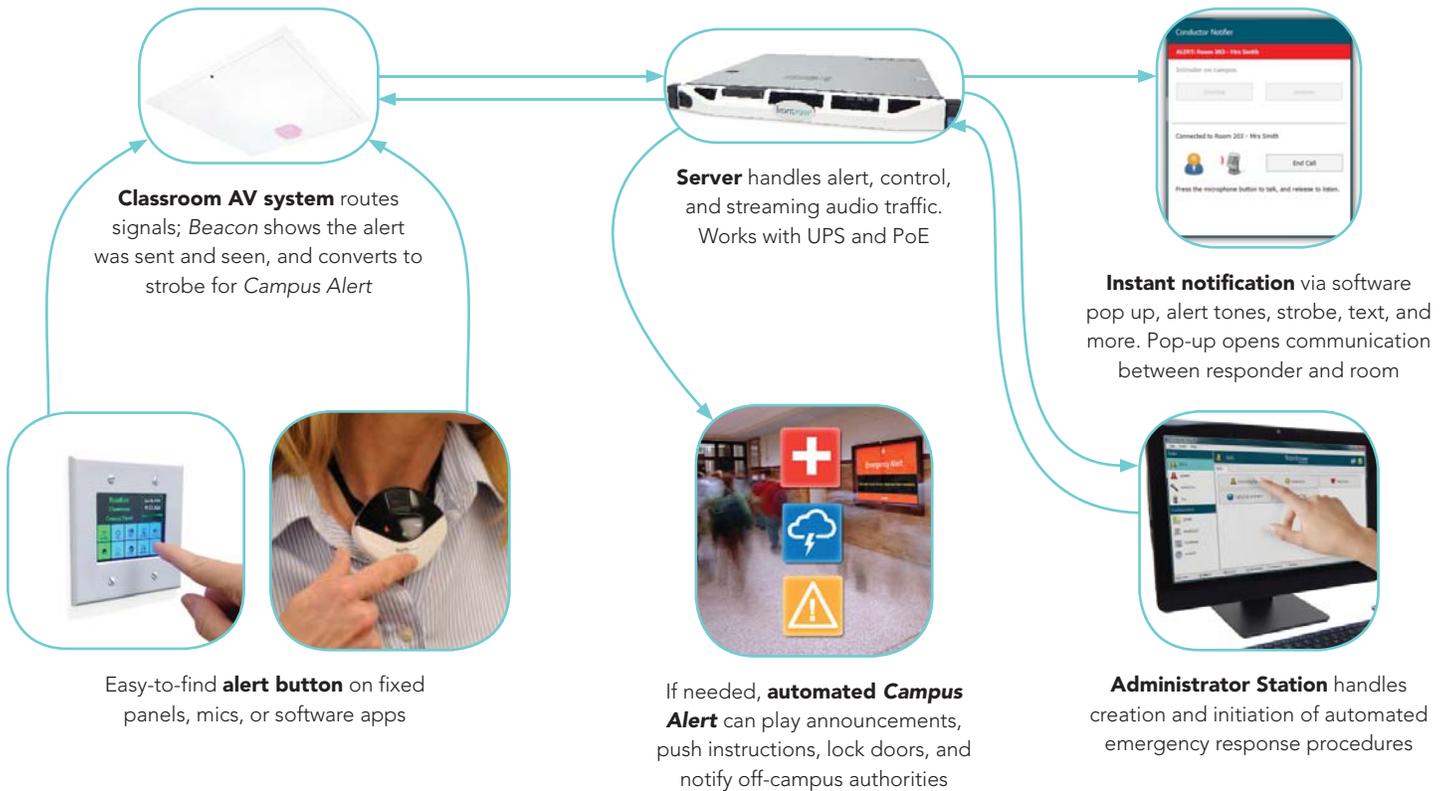
The 'panic button' must also be easy to find in a stressful situation, and the mic signal must be strong enough to get around most obstructions from furniture or people. It's also important that a mic can trigger an alert in any room (since teachers may be moving, paired devices may be an issue). Finally, the mic alert must work even if the hardware has gone into an energy-saving sleep mode or if there is an active intercom call or page in progress.

Take the opportunity to automate other functions at this stage — for example, recording audio, activating a security camera, or even starting an immediate lockdown.

In addition, a clear method of silently confirming alert delivery is important for keeping staff calm — for example, via the *Beacon* on FRONTROW EZROOM systems.

NOTIFICATION

Just as crucial is ensuring that the alert has many ways to reach a group of people who can render help. The primary delivery point will likely be the front office, but other members of a response team either on or off campus should be informed too (e.g., nurse, campus security, facilities, superintendent's office, etc). Delivery methods to consider include a strobe light in key locations, the NOTIFIER application included with FRONTROW CONDUCTOR, text and email, as well as the *Campus Attention* feature of CONDUCTOR that gives a silent series of flashes on the EZROOM *Beacon* to all classrooms.

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Classroom AV system routes signals; *Beacon* shows the alert was sent and seen, and converts to strobe for *Campus Alert*

Server handles alert, control, and streaming audio traffic. Works with UPS and PoE

Instant notification via software pop up, alert tones, strobe, text, and more. Pop-up opens communication between responder and room

Easy-to-find **alert button** on fixed panels, mics, or software apps

If needed, **automated *Campus Alert*** can play announcements, push instructions, lock doors, and notify off-campus authorities

Administrator Station handles creation and initiation of automated emergency response procedures

RESPONSE

Possibly the most important factor in designing EPP-ready communication technology is giving schools the power to *respond* to an emergency at hand. Immediate action paired with clear and concise communication can make all the difference in an emergency. That includes using CONDUCTOR's NOTIFIER pop-up app to acknowledge an alert so that teachers know help is on the way. Staff can then use NOTIFIER to open an intercom channel to the alerting room — either to talk with the teacher or to simply listen in to understand the nature of the problem.

If the team members responding to the call for help determine a campus-wide alert is needed, they can trigger one with a single click from the front office, a local computer, or a mobile device. A *Campus Alert* can consist of any combination of automated actions including:

- Pre-recorded audio announcements, customizable by zone, to let students and staff know what is happening and what to do

- Emails, texts, or PC pop-up messages to off-campus responders, district personnel, and more

- Control of campus hardware, including door locks, classroom displays and digital signage, hallway strobes, and *Beacons* on FRONTROW AV systems.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Getting your communication technology EPP-ready takes planning, but is well within the reach of school personnel. For a free guide to building strong communication infrastructure, **ask for a copy of the *Conductor Deployment Guidelines* at gofrontrow.com.**

Key Points for Choosing EPP-Ready Communication Technology

- Provide *multiple ways to activate an alert* — at least one per room with a fixed location
- Use a mic as a secondary means of alerting. Be sure the panic button is *easy to find* and can get the message out despite obstacles

- Look for *multiple ways to receive the message* — strobe, computer pop-up, email, text — and send it to a *group* of people who can respond
- Offer *silent confirmation* to an alerting teacher that the message has been received

- Demand *ways to actively respond to the alert*, including automated pre-recorded announcements, locking doors, and displaying evacuation maps on digital signage

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