

San Juan County, New Mexico

On December 7th, 2017, Aztec High School in San Juan County, New Mexico, experienced a tragedy. A student entered the school and fatally shot two classmates before turning the gun on himself. The incident left the community reeling and searching for ways to avoid similar incidents in the future.

Despite local first responder training and preparation for active shooter situations, San Juan County Sheriff Shane Ferrari says the incident at Aztec High School highlighted areas where improvement was needed, especially when it came to communication.

Prior to the shooting, Aztec High School staff used radios and an intercom to communicate. However, Tandra Malcom, Operations Manager at the San Juan County 911, says this method was inefficient.

“When the shooting occurred, someone radioed the school’s front office and told the receptionist what was happening, which was relayed to 9-1-1,” she said. “It wasn’t the best process because we weren’t able to get information directly from the people who were actually on the scene.”

Because time was a huge factor in stopping the threat at the school, first responders also wanted to find a way to reduce the time frame between when the incident was reported and when they arrived at the scene.

“After the shooting, parents were concerned about it happening again,” Sheriff Ferrari said. “We put cops in school immediately after the incident, but eventually those resources needed to be reallocated. So we looked to Rave Mobile Safety to help us prepare for [faster emergency response](#) and indicate to parents that we’re still actively improving school safety.”

Intercom or phone calls between classrooms and the main office proved to be an inefficient solution during an emergency situation. Instead, the district identified the Rave Panic Button app as a [school safety solution](#) that could be accessed via personal smartphones that staff already had on hand.



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KIRK CARPENTER
AZTEC MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

When one of the five panic buttons is activated in the Rave Panic Button app, school staff, 9-1-1 and nearby first responders can be simultaneously notified about incidents such as an active shooter, fire or medical emergency at one of San Juan County’s many schools. This activation also directly dials 9-1-1, providing the incident type and location, indicating to responders exactly where help is needed.

Because the school grounds are geo-fenced, any panic button activation will report an incident directly to 9-1-1 and key personnel, consolidating and simplifying the information sharing process. Using the Rave Panic Button app also freed the school of unnecessary installation costs that would have been required for solutions such as adding security cameras or hard-wired alarms to the school building.

“Along with a series of other preventative efforts that focus on challenges related to behavioral health and creating consistent response plans for critical incidents,” Sheriff Ferrari said, “Rave Panic Button ensures that the time it takes to notify first responders and the entire staff never prevents a swift response.”

As San Juan County works to prevent future violent incidents in its schools, Sheriff Ferrari and his team have focused on impactful emergency preparation strategies, such as sharing insights in the aftermath of an emergency in order to pinpoint areas for improvement. Reviewing how emergencies are handled using the [analytics available in Rave 911 Suite](#) has helped highlight gaps and create learning opportunities for each jurisdiction after every incident.

Communication between schools has also improved, with each school informed of potential behavioral issues with students. This allows staff to be aware of students with a history of problems who are being transferred between schools.



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SAN JUAN COUNTY SHERIFF

The district has also shifted its safety focus to consider students as partners in safety. Students have been a valuable resource for authorities by alerting them to safety issues in the schools. This valuable insight and on-the-ground information is helping all stakeholders prevent future school violence.

“Our students deserve the best technology to keep them safe,” said Aztec Municipal School District Superintendent, Kirk Carpenter. “Our staff is excited to have the Rave Panic Button app to help them immediately respond to incidents and improve response times.”

Sheriff Ferrari agrees that Rave Mobile Safety solutions have helped the district become more confident in its ability to communicate and manage any school emergencies that may arise in the future.

“With the Aztec High School shooting as well as other tragedies across the country constantly top of mind,” he said, “we are proud to have instituted a technology that contributes to the daily safety of our students and staff, not to mention the peace of mind of parents and others in our community.”