



Safe-Environment Solutions, Inc.
The Watchful i • 100 Matawan Road, Suite 230 • Matawan, NJ 07747
Phone: (732) 888-1200 • Fax: (732) 888-4646 • www.thewatchfuli.com

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
Gene Wesley, Trenton Public Schools
(609) 656-4900 x 5758 , gwesley@trenton.k12.nj.us
Kent Ashworth, Trenton Mayor's Office
(609) 989-3828, kashworth@trentonnj.org
Shakira Johnson, Watchful i
(732) 713-1167, johnsoncomm@gmail.com

TRENTON SCHOOLS GET ONLINE WITH ANONYMOUS REPORTING

New system allows students and parents to make tips without being identified

TRENTON, NJ –In a proactive step towards improving school safety, Trenton Public Schools and the City of Trenton have partnered to make the *Watchful i* anonymous reporting and notification system available to students at Trenton Central High School's Chambers, North Clinton and West campuses.

The *Watchful i* system allows students, parents, faculty, and concerned citizens to report incidents or threats such as gang activity, depression, bullying, violence, and other crisis situations via internet or toll-free number without being identified. The information is then reported directly to school administrators who can use the system to gather intelligence for law enforcement, generate reports, and make synchronous notifications for delayed openings and emergency school closings. Students will be educated on the concept of being "anonymous" and the benefits and use of the system during several, upcoming assemblies.

"In Trenton, we have constantly emphasized comprehensive approaches to address gang and gun violence," said Mayor Douglas Palmer. *"Our regional gang interdiction and total enforcement activities are coupled with necessary social services -- because we know we must cover the full range of prevention, enforcement, and intervention to redirect lives. The Watchful 'I' represents another important tool in our toolkit for improving school safety - and I am very pleased that my Special Assistant for Anti-Gang Initiatives and Youth Development, Barry Colicelli, has been able to initiate its use here in Trenton."*

While, Trenton Public Schools already have surveillance cameras, metal detectors and controlled entrance points, until the *Watchful i* there was nothing in place that provided an avenue for communication between school officials, law enforcement, and the community. The web-based system is also in compliance with Governor Corzine's SAVE: Strategic Actions for Violence Elimination, a statewide security initiative that focuses on community collaboration and the involvement of law enforcement agencies in school security.

"Watchful i gives school and city officials a proactive tool that will help immensely in our efforts to provide safe schools for Trenton students," remarked Superintendent of Schools, Rodney Lofton. *"Administration needs the support of students, parents, staff and the Trenton community to let us know about potential problems in time for us to investigate and take appropriate action to maintain a safe environment. I expect Watchful i will be an extremely beneficial resource for the District."*

To file a report via the internet, users can access the system by visiting either the district web page at www.trenton.k12.nj.us or calling a toll-free number. Once on-line they would click the “*Watchful i*” icon and follow the system’s user friendly directions. Each toll-free number is school specific and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Both the Internet and toll free number work in English and Spanish, without operator intervention.

“Many times students or people in the community have information about crimes or children who may be in danger but are afraid to tell because they do not want to be perceived as a snitch. As a result dangerous situations that could have otherwise been stopped are allowed to escalate,” stated Kenneth Melveney Watchful i President. *“With the Watchful i, people can be proactive and anonymously report their concerns without worrying about retribution from their peers or the streets.”*

The Trenton Central High School, MAIN CAMPUS reporting system can be accessed by visiting www.trenton.k12.nj.us or via phone 1-866-603-1256.

The Trenton Central High School, MEDICAL ARTS CAMPUS reporting system can be accessed by visiting www.trenton.k12.nj.us or via phone 1-866-603-1257.

The Trenton Central High School, WEST CAMPUS reporting system can be accessed by visiting www.trenton.k12.nj.us or via phone 1-866-603-1260.

Once a report is completed, the system sends an immediate notification via email and/or telephone to a school administrator. Once reviewed, the report is validated and responded to by the appropriate parties. The Watchful I securely maintains all reports and has the ability to categorize and quickly assemble statistical analyses for in house review or state filings.

Note: The system makes it mandatory for the administrator who was notified to acknowledge they have received the report. If the administrator does not respond in a timely manner, Watchful i will automatically notify secondary and tertiary administrators until the message is acknowledged, validated, and responded to.

If the report is of a serious nature, Watchful I’s emergency notification system can notify every parent, faculty member and school employee of the crisis situation. The system will also notify law enforcement and other crisis team members of the impending danger. The notification system can also be used to alert the school population of non-emergency situations such as snow closing and early dismissals.

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The New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA) has endorsed the Watchful i Crisis Management and Emergency Notification System as a tool to increase student safety, and curtail the growth of violence and gang activity in schools throughout the state. The Watchful i is currently in use in Trenton, Newark, Long Branch, Belmar, Lake Como, Manasquan and Florham Park. Several other school districts including Plainfield NJ, Albany NY, and Miami FL are expected to come online before the end of the year. For more information contact Kenneth Melveney at 732-888-1200, kmelveney@thewatchfuli.com or visit www.thewatchfuli.com.