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SCSO News Release

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From the Desk of Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma

Over the past several days, many people have reached out to me directly regarding the Code Red Drill that occurred at Lake Brantley High School last Thursday morning. I wanted to take a moment to explain the position of the Seminole County Sheriff's Office and highlight changes to the drills moving forward.

The State of Florida mandates that we conduct exercises as often as we conduct other emergency drills and we have been conducting them in Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools. However, the definition and requirements for the unannounced drills are developed locally to meet the needs of the schools and based on a myriad of security assessments. SCSO developed the process we use in conjunction with SCPS to best prepare students, faculty, and staff in the event of a real emergency. As you can appreciate everyone involved in these drills has always had the purest intentions of protecting our kids and securing our campuses.

I was briefed about what occurred at Lake Brantley High School at the conclusion, and I immediately suspended all Code Red drills until we could determine what led to the incident and make the necessary changes.

The bottom line is this – we are no longer going to do these unannounced Code Red drills in that manner anymore.

I met with the Superintendent, and we both have agreed on a new plan moving forward. This plan will include both announced and unannounced Code Red drills. Announced, meaning that we will provide notice in advance of conducting the drill. To prevent a recurrence of what occurred on the campus of Lake Brantley High School, effective immediately when an unannounced drill is conducted we will notify everyone (faculty, staff, students, and parents) at that very moment that what is occurring is a drill.

I want to highlight the positive working relationship that the Seminole County Sheriff's Office has with the Seminole County Public Schools. Long before there was a mandate to keep schools safe, we came together to proactively make sure that happened. Over the past several years, as the environments and concerns changed, so have our strategies. During this time, SCSO and SCPS have worked incredibly close to ensure kids, faculty, and staff are kept safe in their learning environments.

The safety and security of our campuses and the people that inhabit them day in and day out has remained and will remain, our top concern and priority.

Dennis M. Lemma
Sheriff, Seminole County