



Severe Weather Training Prepares School District for Emergencies

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Reporter – Stephanie Salvatore

In one room, Leon County School District Officials can track nearly all aspects of the school day.

They can see where buses are, how fast they're going and if they're on schedule. They can watch what's going on 24-7 at any school in the district through the motion detector surveillance cameras. And if severe weather should strike, they can walk a school through the response process.

Tuesday, every school in Leon County went through a weather training which simulated a tornado striking a school, where the crisis teams worked through preparedness, response and recovery activities.

"This particular event being a weather event, it allows us to track conditions at that particular school, and give advanced notice to those schools with the use of radar systems and the things that we have here at the center," says chief of safety and security, John Hunkiar.

Just last June, a small tornado passed through the grounds of Apalachee Elementary, damaging parts of the roof. Emergency responders were able to track lightning strikes and alert the school of where the storm was heading.

District staff members say its better to be safe than sorry, and training exercises are the way to do just that.

"This happens in real life and for us, to be prepared for it and actually see what things we did well, what things we may need to work on before an actual event occurs is absolutely just the thing to do," says associate superintendent Dr. Martin Henderson. "You really need to be prepared and our number one priority is safety."

The drill was funded by Leon County Emergency Management and is part of an on-going process to get schools prepared and ready should an emergency occur.