



VOLUSIA SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MICHAEL J. CHITWOOD, SHERIFF

Office of Chief Deputy Brian M. Henderson - Internal Affairs

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

REPORT NUMBER: IA 23-006

PERIOD COVERED: August 15, 2022 – April 19, 2023

DATE REPORTED: April 20, 2023

SUBJECT(S) NAME: Deputy Justin Lococo, #8229

INVESTIGATING OFFICER: Lieutenant Ben Gordon, #7744

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

On April 19, 2023, the Volusia Sheriff's Office received a complaint submitted by the NAACP. The complaint was filed by Cynthia Slater, who is the president of the local Volusia County Daytona Beach NAACP Chapter. Within the complaint are eight instances in which Deputy Lococo allegedly treated black students unfavorably. The allegations note that Deputy Lococo allegedly acted in a discriminatory manner and violated the civil rights of specifically black students. The allegations advise that they believe Deputy Lococo is not consistent with his decisions to detain or criminally charge, and black students are being targeted and charged at a higher percentage than their white peers. The complaint also alleges that Deputy Lococo has displayed a pattern of bias and discrimination.

OFFENSES:

GO-026-02.IV.D.9.h – Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees – Employees shall strictly adhere to the code of ethics for public officers and employees and shall not violate the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employee as set forth in Florida Law.

The code of ethics which have been adopted by the Volusia Sheriff's Office are as follows:

As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.

I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession... law enforcement.

INVESTIGATION:

On April 20, 2023, Chief Deputy Brian Henderson assigned the above incident to the Internal Affairs Unit. This report details the Internal Affairs investigation conducted by Lieutenant Ben Gordon.

Lieutenant Gordon obtained and reviewed the complaint provided by Cynthia Slater. The following is the contents contained within said complaint.

The Daytona Beach NAACP has received several complaints regarding the unfair treatment of African American students as opposed to their non-African American peers at Spruce Creek High

School against Deputy Justin Lococo. Below are details of the treatment that Deputy Lococo has engaged in while encountering African American students during this school term (2022-2023)

- 1. *Student placed in handcuffs all day by deputy. Student had to eat lunch in handcuffs and was escorted to restroom by school staff to use restroom while still in handcuffs.*
- 2. *Lied to by deputy in the presence of District Administrator and staff. Told student if he pressed charges that he would press charges on him and since he is already on probation that he would get a violation and be on adult violation.*
- 3. *Deputy lied to mother and said parent was called after being searched. Called parent a liar when parent said she didn't receive a call and was very aggressive. Parent removed student from school, said she did not feel that her son was safe in this environment. Parent requested supervisor email and number, deputy stated that he was not allowed to send out that information.*
- 4. *Student sold melatonin as Acid. Deputy said it tested positive. Accused staff of interfering with investigation because staff asked student where he got Acid/LSD from. Deputy stated that he should charge staff with interfering with investigation, Deputy immediately took white student out of handcuffs and placed black in handcuffs and charged him with felony.*
- 5. *Public official's daughter (white) was found in possession of THC on campus and it was mentioned on Facebook. No disciplinary actions.*
- 6. *Baseball team - 4.5 students (white sexually assaulted a male student while in shower. No charges (puling pants down, grabbing testicles, twisting nipples) and told students older brother they raped him. No action taken by deputy.*
- 7. *AA student stole cell phone, other student received it back. Student was charged with Grand Theft (Felony). No attempt to notify staff when student was handcuffed. Deputy stated he doesn't work for school board. Student was in deputy's office for hours.*
- 8. *Black student charged with Battery by strangulations (dating violence and child abuse. (Girlfriend white). Charged by the deputy. Parent did not press charges but deputy said he could because of the severity. Parent of girlfriend came and spoke to mother about her daughters behavior. Stating she was violent and this is how they play all the time. Daughter is even rough with the mom. Mom went to court on behalf of the young man and charges were dropped. Young man was 18, but ESE. Several days later the girl that was allegedly strangled, jumped the girl that told that she was being abused. The girls lip and eye was swollen and she had a cut on her face. No charges filed by deputy.*

It is the opinion of the Daytona Beach NAACP that Deputy Lococo is not consistent when he decides to detain students and charge students. African American students are being charged at a high percentage than their white peers with similar discipline issues (charges are not an option or the incident appears to be completely overlooked). It is the belief of the NAACP that Deputy Lococo has no business working in a school/educational environment where the role of School Resource Deputies is to, "be responsible for law enforcement, mentoring, classroom teaching and providing a positive role model for the students." This means that ALL students must be treated fairly in an environment conducive to learning. Deputy Lococo has not shown that, and should not be working as a resource officer at any school because of this pattern of bias and discrimination.

INTERVIEWS:

Interview with Cynthia Slater, Daisy Grimes, and Thaddeus Collins

On April 25, 2023, at approximately 1317 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Cynthia Slater, Daisy Grimes, and Thaddeus Collins. Lieutenant Gordon interviewed the above individuals at 123 West Indiana Avenue, DeLand, at the Sheriff's Office Administration Building. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, Cynthia Slater, Daisy Grimes, and Thaddeus Collins were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

During the interview, Cynthia Slater, who is the president of the local NAACP chapter in Daytona Beach, stated that her office had received numerous complaints in reference to the actions of Deputy Lococo; however, she did not have firsthand knowledge of any of the incidents she provided. Slater confirmed that she was the representative for the complainants and was working with them to make sure their concerns were presented to the Sheriff's Office.

Regardless, Lieutenant Gordon still went through each of the listed eight complaints with those present to obtain any possible critical evidence that could be located. Despite this effort, the members present were unable to assist in the investigation. The chief concern of the individuals present was they had received information about the actions of Deputy Lococo that they believed violated the ethical values of the Volusia Sheriff's Office and treated African American students differently based solely on their skin color.

Lieutenant Gordon explained the investigative process and that additional witnesses and individuals with firsthand knowledge of these incidents would be paramount to getting the information needed to complete a thorough investigation. Slater eventually understood and stated she would reach out to the complainants to see if they were willing to provide a statement in

reference to the investigation. Slater further explained that she would provide the contact information for the complaints that she received.

Interview with Zirvell Johnson and Cynthia Slater

On May 10, 2023, at approximately 0920 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Zirvell Johnson and Cynthia Slater. Lieutenant Gordon interviewed the above individuals at 925 George Engram Blvd, Daytona Beach. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, Zirvell Johnson, and Cynthia Slater were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

For reference, Zirvell's son, [REDACTED] was one of the students mentioned in complaint #1. Zirvell complained that his son was held in handcuffs for an unreasonable amount of time. Zirvell said he believed his son was in handcuffs from approximately 10 am until 5 pm. It should be noted that [REDACTED] was arrested on 01/26/2023 by Deputy Lococo due to a significantly large fight that occurred on the Spruce Creek School Campus in the bus loop area. The large fight occurred on 01/25/2023. When asked about the events leading up to his son's involvement with Deputy Lococo, Zirvell said it was because his son was a participant in a significantly large fight involving an extensive group of students. Specifically, Zirvell said it was between two gangs at school. Zirvell stated that he felt Deputy Lococo targets his son unfairly and believes it is due to his skin color.

When asked to clarify about his statement, Zirvell said that in the past Deputy Lococo has accused his son of theft although no charges were ever pursued. Zirvell was asked if his son has ever heard Deputy Lococo make any disparaging remarks in reference to race, to which Zirvell said "no." Although in his statement Zirvell felt like Deputy Lococo was targeting his son, he had no evidence to support any type of discriminatory actions. It should be noted that Zirvell had additional complaints, all of which do not pertain to Deputy Lococo's actions and have to do with the notification system in place at Spruce Creek High School and DJJ.

Interview with Shanisha Willis and Cynthia Slater

On May 10, 2023, at approximately 0950 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Shanisha Willis and Cynthia Slater. Lieutenant Gordon interviewed the above individuals at 925 George Engram Blvd, Daytona Beach. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, Zirvell Johnson, and Cynthia Slater were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

For reference, Shanisha Willis was the parent of [REDACTED] who was the student involved in complaint #3. According to Willis, [REDACTED] was searched by school faculty, and she was never

notified by anyone before, during, or after the search of her son. The search was done by Assistant Principal Adkins, and Deputy Lococo was present during the incident. The reason for the search, according to Willis, was due to the smell of marijuana emanating from [REDACTED] person. Willis advised her son has never been in trouble and was deeply troubled by the incident.

According to Willis, she reached out to the school for contact but was never contacted by any school administrator. The date of the incident was on March 21, 2023. The following day, she went to the office and met Dr. Rentz, who set up a meeting with Adkins and Deputy Lococo about the incident. Willis stated that during her conversation with Deputy Lococo, he told her that he witnessed Adkins call her. Willis then told Deputy Lococo that she did not receive a phone call and believed Deputy Lococo was calling her a liar. Additionally, Adkins told Willis that he never called her due to nothing being located on her son.

Willis' main complaint was that Deputy Lococo called her a liar and did not like how he and Adkins treated her son. Willis elaborated on this by saying when the incident occurred Deputy Lococo asked [REDACTED] if his family smoked illegal "marijuana," to which Willis said, *"that's not none of your fuckin business."* During her interaction with Deputy Lococo, she became upset during her meeting with him and asked him to leave, at which point he did. When speaking about Deputy Lococo's behavior, Willis mentioned that he was rude. When asked for further information about being rude, Willis said that he raised his voice while speaking to her.

During this interview, Slater mentions that a common issue during several of the complaints is the involvement of Dr. Rentz, who is also an Assistant Principal at the school. In complaint #4, it mentions Deputy Lococo saying something about accusing the school staff members of interfering with his investigation. Slater confirmed this was an occurrence that happened more than once. Slater said, *"Yeah, 'cause I've heard that on several occasions that, let me see (inaudible). It's there, deputy stated that he should change staff with, he should charge staff with interfering with the investigation."*

Interview with Alan Canetti

On May 11, 2023, at approximately 0937 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Alan Canetti. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Alan Canetti were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Alan Canetti is an Assistant Principal at Spruce Creek and is the Senior Administrator for the school. Canetti's job entails discipline as it relates to the seniors in the school. Canetti explained discipline is broken down into three groups in which three Assistant Principals are in charge of a specific grade of students. Adkins oversees freshmen, Dr. Rentz is in charge of sophomores and

juniors, and Canetti is in charge of the seniors. Because of his role, Canetti was familiar with some of the incidents; thus, Lieutenant Gordon went through all of the complaints mentioned. Below is a summary of each complaint and the level of knowledge the interviewee had:

Complaints number 1 through number 3: Canetti did not have any firsthand knowledge.

On complaint number 4, Canetti was present for parts of the incident and did not witness what occurred. Canetti said, *"I wasn't physically present when those events were taking place. I do remember having conversations with not only Lococo but having some conversations with Dr. Rentz who I believe was the TOA that might have been involved with that one as well so it was just second-hand conversations. I wasn't physically present when it occurred."*

Complaint number 5: Canetti was also not aware of any information.

Complaint number 6: Canetti was heavily involved and had first-hand information which could assist in the investigation. Canetti said, *"That incident came to me first even though they weren't mostly seniors and so I was heavily involved with that one and I know that all the investigations were done. I did a bunch of them from the school side of things, I was calling in kids and getting statements and I was doing some interviews as well, so I know Dep. Lococo investigated it."* When speaking about what occurred, Canetti explained, *"I do know that the allegations that I saw on the social media post across the cell phones that we obtained, the boys were mentioning things such as rape and some of those very serious allegations but through personal interviews and face to face and written statements as well, they had done one of those things where they overblew it and they were overexaggerating things. There was some inappropriateness in the shower and some things that the boys were disciplined for."* Canetti went on to explain that he believed that the activity that occurred was inappropriate; however, did not rise to the level of law enforcement involvement. Through his own investigation, he determined it was students horseplaying and not a serious criminal act.

Canetti went on to explain the school's role in student discipline and trying to figure out the best course of action for the students involved and the safety of the other students attending school. On the topic, Canetti said, *"You know there's many things that happen, you know. A kid can, two kids can have a fight they can you know slap each other, box, I don't necessarily ask him to charge every single one of them. Yes, it's criminal activity as far as law enforcement is concerned but there's a lot of things that historically, you know, so a small fight I try not to get Lococo involved. We're gonna deal with it through school suspensions, you know, parent conferences, and things of that nature. When it blows up into something more major where a major campus disruption, you know we've had a couple of those this year. You know more than six, eight, ten guys all fighting and you've got a couple hundred people all gathered around with cell phones. That's such a major incident that we usually go and say, 'Okay, we need to get some charges because we can't allow*

this kind of activity.” As far as discipline, Canetti explained, *“We had most of the parents on board and there was a lot of discipline, suspensions, and they were thrown off baseball teams and things of that nature. I felt confident that it was handled appropriately.”* Canetti also mentioned that none of the students' parents, to his knowledge, wished to pursue any possible criminal charges in reference to the incident.

Complaint number 7: Canetti advised he was not familiar with it.

Complaint number 8: Canetti believed the incident involved a student [REDACTED] however, he could not remember any specifics.

While speaking to Canetti, Lieutenant Gordon asked several questions about Deputy Lococo's behavior, work ethic, interactions with students, and other areas that could provide any evidence of unethical actions. On the topic, Canetti said, *“So my entire time I've worked with him and all five years I've been in charge of safety, security, and facilities, so he and I have had to work hand in hand up until right about December of this year. His office was actually physically right next to mine so you come out of my door just pop to the left and there was his door, and so we would work, you know, pretty closely together... He and I have worked really well together to the extent of you know when he's involved in a criminal investigation you know I know what I can and can't do. For instance, you know. He gets frustrated sometimes when other staff members will just go in and barge in his office and he's in the middle of an investigation and they're trying to question and talk to these kids and all, but he's already engaged in an investigation. Whereas, I know the boundaries, I don't, you know if I need to go talk to him I go knock on the door, is it ok for me to come in? Because I don't want to interfere.”* During the interview, Canetti advised that not all of his co-workers are aware of the laws in place sometimes interfere with Deputy Lococo's investigations. Canetti went so far as to say, *“A lot of them [referring to his other co-workers] have even in my opinion done some very inappropriate things where they think that they're protecting the students.”*

When speaking about Deputy Lococo's role as a Student Resource Deputy, Canetti said, *“He has done a very good job I would say in helping us sometimes when there's a non-criminal but he's just helping us as another adult on campus. And I think he's done a pretty good job of making those distinctions.”* Canetti was asked if he had witnessed any behavior that he believed was unethical or that Deputy Lococo was treating students differently due to race. Canetti replied, *“In my opinion, no. I've got a couple of staff members here who I've been highly upset with who are unfortunately African American and they seem to want to get involved in areas and have activities that I find very racist.”* And *“Lococo I think has a hard time here because what I see is a large majority of our discipline issues here at Spruce Creek are from our Daytona buses and our Daytona buses are mostly African American. You know there's no doubt they have a different culture, they come from different upbringings and backgrounds. And sometimes they have a very*

hard time what I call becoming a Hawk. You know Spruce Creek we have our own culture here and we do things differently than some of the other high schools. Every high school's got its own culture. And so some of the kids that come in from those buses have a hard time adjusting and leaving neighborhood issues back at home and just learning how to be a good student and you know coming here to get their education. And that on the face looks different because many of our Caucasian students coming from different backgrounds act differently. Well, I've always been the type and especially with me being ex-military from day one I've always been around all different people of all different races all different cultures and I've been, you know, we've learned at a very early age you treat people based on their actions and their behaviors not on how they look. And so if some people have a different way of acting your response is gonna be a little bit different. And that's what I see happening here is you know if I have an African American student who is reacting negatively and he's not following directions and he's not being cooperative that's gonna elicit certain responses from the adults. If I have a Caucasian [student] who is following directions and every time you give them a command they follow and they listen that's gonna get a totally different response. I think that's normal and natural. But we have some adults here that look at it and say, 'Well, you're treating the African Americans differently.' Well, yes we are but that's based on actions it's not based on the skin color."

Canetti explained that in contradiction to the complaints made against Deputy Lococo, he believes the opposite is true. He has observed Deputy Lococo mentoring students that were all different races and genders and has had a positive impact on their lives. When speaking about Deputy Lococo taking law enforcement action, Canetti said, *"You know, the only thing I've ever seen with Dep. Lococo is, you know, based on the student's actions he has to respond based on how they act. And sometimes they act very severely when they're in the wrong. Especially if there's a physical fight or something like that involved, they don't de-escalate too easily."* When making the determination on whether to pursue charges, Canetti said that Deputy Lococo usually contacts him to see how the school would like to respond first if appropriate. However, if the incident is severe or involving a serious crime, then Deputy Lococo usually makes the determination.

While specifically speaking about the School Resource Deputy program with Canetti he had this to say, *"One of the things I think that we get from Lococo is, I think we get more buy-in than the average deputy and like I said I don't have lots of other examples to go off of, it's just my gut feeling. Lococo especially being that he graduated from here, you know, went through the Army junior ROTC program here I think he really feels invested and I think he takes this on more than just a job. I think he really feels like he's here not only to keep these kids safe but that he's invested in seeing them being productive and successful citizens just like this school was able to help him become. So I think we get more buy-in and investment from him than others that we may have."*

Interview with Wes Porter

On May 11, 2023, at approximately 1035 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Wes Porter. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Wes Porter were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

For reference, Porter is the Data Assistant Principal, and he was asked about any firsthand knowledge of any of the eight complaints listed previously. Porter advised he had heard rumors of some of the instances; however, he was not present for any of the alleged issues.

Porter explained that he has worked in teaching since 1993 and has worked with several different School Resource Deputies (SRDs). Porter was then asked several questions about Deputy Lococo as it pertains to his job performance, interactions with students, and other responsibilities as an SRD. According to Porter, *"I think he's excellent. He, like I was going to explain before, he works to get the facts, de-escalate. He's taken situations over. I will say that he's said, 'Okay, now let's kind of figure out what's going on' so that you know, like with this fight, there was a lot going on out there and he came out and started, you know, settling everybody down and he waited, he talked to the mom. But the other thing he does is he's very calm and composed when he speaks to parents. He's really good, he doesn't... I think as far as him doing his job, he understands what is a sheriff's job and what is our job. And sometimes that, his job takes over. And he'll say that but he doesn't, it's not anything other than, you know, I'm making an arrest, I'm doing an investigation, something along those lines."*

According to Porter, he has never witnessed any behavior or instance where Deputy Lococo treated any student or faculty member based on anything other than their actions or merit. While speaking about this topic, Porter recalled a recent incident. He said, *"Yeah, we had four kids pull in the other day and there was some marijuana in the car, and he searched them, he treated them all very kindly. They were four different kids, four... two of them were white and the other two were, one was African American, the other one was Asian. And as it went through, he said, 'You know, these are bad choices you're making, and you need to understand the consequences of what you're doing.' So yeah, he talked to them for five minutes out there as far as, like, you know how they ought to approach things and who you hang out with and those kind of, you know."* Talking about the complaints further, Porter stated, *"Yeah, he's... he has no agenda. He's not, he's very calm all the time and you know, as far as I've ever dealt with him, he's helped me, you know, every time I do something because it's... it is a, you know, it's that balance where sometimes I won't know how things are supposed to proceed and he goes, 'No, we're gonna do this' or... And I think that we lean on him probably a little more than we should, you know, and he's made that clear that he has a role to play and we have our role to play, but sometimes like I don't, campus advisors, the people*

that are outside, sometimes they'll call him and I have to intervene and say, 'Hey, we'll get somebody out there for you' because he's, he wants to help. You know, he's always lends a hand in whatever we need to do, he's like you say, he's really friendly to the kids and friendly to everybody."

During the interview, Porter spoke about a large fight that occurred in the bus loop area. It was clear that Porter was referencing the large fight that involved [REDACTED] on January 25, 2023, who was the juvenile involved in complaint number 1. Porter spoke about the incident to describe how violent the fight was. Porter recalled, *"So I was over there they called on the radio fight whatever and by the time I got over there one kid was shielding another kid like literally over top of him. Several other students were stomping on the back of that kid's head. It was, it was... I don't wanna get emotional because it was, it was, and I, I've done other, I mean I've seen bad things and that right there when I got the kid up and I pulled the other kid off the ground somebody was punching that kid so we it was I would describe it absolutely as a melee and we moved into this area right here outside the front door. And as I was coming around it was very chaotic. I had the two boys that were getting beat. They weren't, they weren't fighting they were getting beaten."* Porter also stated the students that were involved were all from the same buses mentioned by Canetti, which have had several fights and other issues on campus.

Interview with Brett Clark

On May 11, 2023, at approximately 1111 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Brett Clark. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Brett Clark were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Clark is currently the Senior JROTC Army Instructor at Spruce Creek High School and is currently a JROTC Teacher. Clark has held several high-ranking positions within the US Army and knows Deputy Lococo personally through both the military and from working at Spruce Creek.

While speaking about complaint number 1, Clark was unaware of the incident but recognized the name of [REDACTED] as a student who is, *"a repeat offender against school standards; that's why he's in trouble all the time."*

In regards to all other complaints, Clark was either not present or had no knowledge of any of the instances mentioned in the complaint form.

Clark explained that earlier in Deputy Lococo's life, he was a student at Embry Riddle and was in JROTC. Clark at the time was active duty and was a professor of military science. Because of this, he has taught Deputy Lococo and has known him for over six years. Clark said, *"I did know him*

to be an upstanding student.” Clark was asked if he has ever observed any moral or ethical violations that stem from any form of racial discrimination. Clark responded, “Never, and I take personal exception to that. Those, those complaints which I may not have been in the room for, very similar to the complaints levied against me just a year ago from the same individual.” Clark went on to elaborate that he believed these complaints came from Dr. Rentz and were false. Clark continued and said, “I’ve seen him with African American kids, I’ve seen him with white kids, Asian kids, the entire school population knows our resource officer. He is engaged. I can’t by verbatim give you the discipline for the Volusia County Sheriff’s Department, but I will tell you that as a student all the way up to how I see him interact now, he is nothing but a professional. I would never accuse Justin Lococo of any type of racist action. Actually had ethics classes with him. I gave ethics classes to the MS4’s who are the seniors getting ready to receive their commission. I personally did that, so I know they were taught because in my 33 years, it doesn’t matter whether you’re black, Asian, white, red, purple; we all bleed the same and we’re all part of the same team. And that’s why I take such personal exception to these allegations...” Clark summed up his thoughts on Deputy Lococo by saying, “What I see is a professional individual trying to make the school safer by virtue of his position as the school resource officer. Cut and dry.”

Interview with Dorothy Mitchell

On May 11, 2023, at approximately 1152 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Dorothy Mitchell. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Dorothy Mitchell were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Mitchell is a teacher at Spruce Creek High School and has regular contact with Deputy Lococo. Lieutenant Gordon asked Mitchell about complaint number 1 and if she witnessed any part of the incident in question. According to Mitchell, she witnessed the large fight and specifically had to grab [REDACTED] by his clothing and pull him away from the incident. Mitchell said she observed [REDACTED] kicking a student who was defenseless on the ground. To add to the matter, while being escorted away from the incident by Mitchell, [REDACTED] circled back around and became involved in the altercation a second time. When asked about how the students behaved while in the custody of Deputy Lococo, Mitchell said, “Well, what I did see when I went to see Officer Lococo, he [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was in handcuffs at the time, but from my knowledge I heard that he got a little rowdy and kept getting up. He even came to the door when I went to the door. [REDACTED] did.” Mitchell went on to explain that [REDACTED] and the other students were less than cooperative and made it difficult for Deputy Lococo to complete his report and other responsibilities.

Mitchell did not have any knowledge of complaints number 2 through number 8. Mitchell was then asked several questions in reference to Deputy Lococo and how he interacts with the students

at the campus. Mitchell was specifically asked if he treats black students differently because of their race. Mitchell responded, *"No. To be honest, I think he tries to help the black kids a little bit more, you know."* And *"So, he's not prejudiced. I don't see that in him in any shape or form, really."* Mitchell went on to say that she has observed him mentor several kids who were all different races and genders. Mitchell explained, *"We had a kid, Moncrell Richardson, and he did everything in his power because he knew Moncrell had problems and that he's always into something, but he would come and he'd talk to him real gentle. I can't, whoever is saying this is full of bull...I don't wanna say it, but they're full of bullcrap for real."* Mitchell said that if anything, she wishes Deputy Lococo was a little stricter with the students who refuse to follow directions.

Interview with Danyalle Miles

On May 11, 2023, at approximately 1152 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Danyalle Miles. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Danyalle Miles were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Lieutenant Gordon spoke with Miles in reference to complaint number 1. During the incident, Miles said she witnessed a large brawl involving approximately 13 students attacking 2 students in the bus loop at the school campus. Miles stated that [REDACTED] was one of the students involved in the violent attack. Miles was not directly involved in the fight itself but helped separate the two victims from the incident. In reference to the amount of time it took Deputy Lococo to complete the paperwork, she was unable to provide any information. However, Miles did state she believed Christopher Zablo was one of the school staff members who assisted Deputy Lococo in taking the students to the restroom. Miles was unable to provide any information on the other complaints mentioned above.

Miles explained that she had worked with Deputy Lococo since he became the School Resource Deputy and has worked at Spruce Creek since 2005. When speaking about his interactions with African American students, Miles had the following to say, *"He's [Deputy Lococo] had conversations with them, you know, even a kid that just graduated this year. He's a troubled kid, but he's always tried to talk to him. He'll sit down, he'll use tangible items as a motivator for him to do positive things. So when someone said that he was kind of racist, I'm like, well, you know, I've always said it from the beginning, he's always fair. He's always fair, prior to the other SRO's that we've had. I think he's been one of the fairest kids and some of our African American kids come from not so great environments. And they're, you know, bussed from Daytona, so they have a lot of issues and he's tried to work with them in a positive manner."*

Miles went into even more detail about a recent incident where an African American student was killed in Daytona by a stray bullet during a shooting in the neighborhood. Miles said, *"So you*

know, a lot of the kids, they do come and talk to us, and he [Deputy Lococo] was asking me if I knew anything and I said, well, I'll just talk to the kids and see what they had to do, and we were just talking about the incident and stuff. And he actually broke down and started crying, I felt bad. And he had to gather himself before he went out, and I said, well, you know, here I am, you know he's a black male [referring to the child that was killed], I'm touched by it but he was really, you know, because he knew the kid too, the kid was not a bad kid at all."

Miles was asked if Deputy Lococo has ever made any disparaging remarks in regards to race or treats students differently because of race. Miles explained, *"ok, well, for somebody to say that he's racial profiling or he's a racist, I don't see that in him at all. I don't see him, I think he treats everybody fair. Yes, sometimes we may not think the fairness is just for us, but again if you do something then unfortunately there are consequences that come with it."* Additionally, Miles said, *"he's the first one [referring to SRDs] I've seen interact with our population, meaning the African American groups. Like really interacting, getting to know them and understanding their struggles and trying to help... ..you know, unfortunately in our community that's where the gap is, a gap and he's trying to bridge that gap between law enforcement and the black community."*

While speaking about the incidents that have occurred during the most recent school year, Miles explained that the majority of the issues come from the same bus and it is usually the same group of students who cause the issues that come from a certain location in Daytona Beach. Regarding investigations completed by Deputy Lococo and the potential for school faculty members to interfere with his investigation, Miles advised she had heard rumors of Dr. Rentz interfering with his investigations. Additionally, Miles is aware that Dr. Rentz believes Deputy Lococo treats African American students differently based on skin color. When speaking about Dr. Rentz's beliefs, Miles stated she believes the opposite and thinks Deputy Lococo has had a significant positive impact on many students, including African Americans. Miles said Deputy Lococo accomplishes this by remembering their names and engaging with students who have issues with following the rules on a continual basis. Miles spoke very highly of Deputy Lococo and did not provide any information that would suggest Deputy Lococo was treating the African American students at Spruce Creek unjustly.

Interview with Jess Cupp

On May 11, 2023, at approximately 1422 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Jess Cupp. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Jess Cupp were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Jess Cupp is a School Guardian at Spruce Creek High School and has been at the school since September of 2022. Regarding complaints 1 through 3, Cupp was familiar with some of the

incidents but did not have any firsthand knowledge of the events. When speaking about complaint number 4, Cupp advised he was present while both students were originally in handcuffs. Cupp did not observe any type of inappropriate behavior and believed the African American student was arrested due to selling fake illegal drugs, while the white student was released because possessing fake drugs is not illegal. Cupp was unaware of any information from the other complaints 5 through 8.

Cupp was then asked questions about how Deputy Lococo interacts with the students at the school. Cupp replied, *“I actually told him a few months ago that I was like, man, the way you talk to these kids is amazing. Like the way that he explains things to them, he’s slow, methodical, he makes sure he does it. From what I see, I feel like he’s doing everything by the book, you know what I mean? He’s talking, explaining to the kids, really talking to them before they even go into handcuffs or restraints. If they’re going to the facility or whatever, like they’re, he’s talking with them, he’s communicating with them, very, very not really monotone but he’s like, he doesn’t get agitated that quickly. And like I said, I’ve told him before I’m like, man, you do a great job at this, you know, cuz I can see a lot of people may not, you know.”* Cupp went on to say he has personally observed Deputy Lococo interact and mentor several students of all different races and genders. At no point has Cupp witnessed any action or statement by Deputy Lococo that would lead him to believe Deputy Lococo was treating students solely based on the color of their skin.

Interview with Donna Baker

On May 15, 2023, at approximately 1026 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Donna Baker. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Donna Baker were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Lieutenant Gordon went through each of the complaints listed above one by one. In reference to complaint number 1, Baker was aware of the incident due to its scale but was unable to provide any firsthand information. For complaints 2-3, Baker also had no additional information regarding the incidents.

During complaint number 4, although Baker did not have a deep understanding of the criminal elements required to make either arrest, she did witness behavior by Dr. Rentz. This behavior led to Deputy Lococo becoming frustrated due to her interference with the investigation. Baker recounted, *“She [Dr. Rentz] jumped right over him [Deputy Lococo] and was basically just taking over the whole thing. So he couldn’t do an accurate investigation on this because she had done blown it by saying to the student, the black student, well the medicine tested for this, you know.”* Baker added that Dr. Rentz questioned the students involved and attempted to investigate the matter herself while Deputy Lococo was handling the incident.

Regarding complaint number 5, Baker had no specific information. However, in reference to complaint number 6, Baker stated that all students involved in the incident of misconduct were disciplined by the school. Concerning complaint number 7, the complaint was too vague for Baker to pinpoint the incident it referred to. On complaint number 8, Baker was familiar with the incident but did not possess any firsthand knowledge.

Lieutenant Gordon then discussed Deputy Lococo with Baker, specifically in relation to any possibility of an ethics violation in regards to race. Baker expressed, *"I can't say that I have because he's put white people in cuffs, he's put the black children in cuffs. He yells at the white ones just like he yells at the, you know, to get his point across. As far as physically, you know, he puts them in cuffs and that's it. I don't see where he did an ethics violation. He treats both of them the same. Yeah, that's it."* According to Baker, she has never heard Deputy Lococo make any racist remarks nor treat any student at the school based on anything other than how they reacted to being in trouble.

Baker then discussed the issues between Deputy Lococo and Dr. Rentz. Baker explained that she remains neutral during these disputes but has had Dr. Rentz come to her to complain about Deputy Lococo. Recounting an incident, Baker said, *"I'll hear a comment from Dr. Rentz, oh, he's just being that way, you know, because of whether, like you said, black or white, or, you know, I bet if he [referring to a student in trouble] was white he wouldn't have done that."* Conversely, Baker also hears from Deputy Lococo about his frustration with Dr. Rentz's interference in his investigations. Deputy Lococo voiced concerns about the school staff, specifically Dr. Rentz and Adkins, not following through on the discipline handled by the school. In an example, Baker explained, *"Dr. Rentz, she'll let stuff slide. And I honestly think it's because of race. If they're black, she gives them a pass. If they're white, oh, it's, you know, she buckles down hard. I've been in there when she strip searched or not strip searched but searched them... You know if they have a vape she makes them do this, and it's just she, she shows the favoritism, not Dep. Lococo."*

Baker concluded the interview by expressing her belief that Deputy Lococo does an amazing job, interacts with and mentors students regardless of race and gender, and has a positive impact at the school.

Interview with Mark Bradham

On May 15, 2023, at approximately 1100 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Mark Bradham. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Mark Bradham were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

During the interview, Bradham, the Assistant Principal of Curriculum, stated that he was unaware of any firsthand information related to the 8 complaints previously mentioned. Lieutenant Gordon explained to Bradham the reason for the investigation, which stemmed from allegations of unethical behavior, specifically treating African American students differently from others. Bradham shared his background and work history, mentioning his experience with restorative practices and helping youth stay out of trouble. He noted that he and Deputy Lococo worked well together in mentoring and guiding students to avoid behavioral issues. Bradham mentioned, *“So Dep. Lococo and I worked really well together doing those types of things when I was down there. He and I were like a team where we would like, you know, mentor kids and have discussions about, you know, appropriate behaviors at school and how not to get in trouble and like setting up like mentoring for kids to help them come from the wayward direction.”*

Bradham continued, stating, *“The practices that I’ve seen him do are fair and equal according to behavior.”* When discussing Deputy Lococo's approach to his duties, Bradham mentioned observing Deputy Lococo using de-escalation techniques multiple times and employing deferment programs to assist students. He expressed shock at the allegations made in the complaints, as they contradicted his personal observations of Deputy Lococo.

Lieutenant Gordon asked Bradham if he has witnessed Deputy Lococo making any disparaging remarks about race or treating African American students unfairly, Bradham responded, *“Absolutely not. If anything, I’ve seen him [Deputy Lococo] be more lenient on African American students in the sense that he works with, I mean he works with all students pretty well, but I think that his approach to really trying to reach the kids goes a lot further, especially with out-of-control, troubled kids.”* Describing Deputy Lococo's interactions with students, Bradham believed that Deputy Lococo's actions aligned with restorative practices rather than the contrary. Bradham commented, *“Actually, I’ve heard Dep. Lococo comment like, ‘Why are people really messing with those kids? They’re not really doing too much trouble right now,’ you know, like, well, like the black kids, in specifics. You know, like, why do you have to be so heavy? I don’t think that he’s saying that they’re being racial or anything like that, it’s just that, where’s your understanding for differences and being patient? So that’s the heart that I see in Dep. Lococo, is a heart of patience and understanding for all the kids, but especially, you know, considering that kids are bussed in from inner-city Daytona.”*

Interview with Shelia Browning

On May 15, 2023, at approximately 1247 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Sheila Browning. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Sheila Browning were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

During the interview, Lieutenant Gordon discussed each of the eight complaints with Browning. Browning had direct knowledge of only complaint number four. While discussing the incident, Browning stated that she was unaware of the criminal aspects of the situation and why the white student was not arrested while the African American student was charged criminally. However, she was able to provide context regarding Dr. Rentz's interference with the criminal investigation. Browning recalled Deputy Lococo telling Dr. Rentz to stop interfering with the investigation, but despite the warning, Dr. Rentz continued to involve herself unnecessarily.

Regarding the relationship between Deputy Lococo and Dr. Rentz, Browning commented, "*Dr. Rentz says he's racist but he's not,*" and followed up by stating, "*She's always after him.*" Browning mentioned that she had noticed issues between Dr. Rentz and Deputy Lococo over the past few years. Despite this, Browning expressed that Lococo does an excellent job and she has not observed any behavior that would lead her to believe he is racist or treats students differently based on their skin color. When asked if she had seen Deputy Lococo mentor students, Browning said, "*I think he tries to mentor the blacks more than he mentors the whites. You know, he tries to have a conversation with them. You know, he has, Willy's gone, Charles gone, all these boys I'm naming, they just left this year, they graduate this year, and when I first got here, they didn't, I didn't like the way they were talking to Lococo. But now they give him the utmost respect.*"

Browning explained that Deputy Lococo works well with every other school administrator except for Dr. Rentz. Lieutenant Gordon asked further questions about the issues present, but Browning did not feel comfortable providing additional information related to the problems involving Dr. Rentz.

Browning stated overall she believes that Deputy Lococo does a great job and did not have any concerns related to the previously mentioned complaints.

Interview with Michele Passamonte

On May 15, 2023, at approximately 1317 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Michele Passamonte. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Michele Passamonte were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

During the interview, Lieutenant Gordon discussed each of the eight complaints with Passamonte. Passamonte explained that she did not have any firsthand information in reference to any of the eight complaints mentioned above.

Passamonte stated that she is currently a campus advisor and is responsible for ensuring students are in classes, school safety, and enforcing campus rules. When asked about her impression of

Deputy Lococo, Passamonte replied, *“I’ve been here eight years, he’s been the best deputy we’ve ever had. He’s very hands-on. The kids, to me, in a whole respect him, like him. Like I said, my son was here, and he’ll always ask about my kids. He’s a very personable guy and a likable guy, and I think he’s very fair here, very fair, and I know his hands are probably tied because it is through the schools but I find some, all that a little hard to believe. It’s very farfetched and I just think he’s great and I don’t want him to be gone from here. He’s been the best one and the most successful one here, you know.”* Passamonte continued to say that she has worked with four total School Resource Deputies (SRDs), and Deputy Lococo is the best by far.

Passamonte was asked about whether she has witnessed Deputy Lococo mentor students and how he interacts at the school. Passamonte said, *“He is very active with the kids, and I think on the whole, the kids love having him here too. I think he gets his job done; he’s stern when he needs to be, he’s nice when he needs to be because you need to, they need to respect him, he is law enforcement, and I said there’s a fault with that here as a whole with discipline.”* Passamonte concluded that she has never witnessed Deputy Lococo make any disparaging remarks, act in a way that would lead one to believe he treated students differently because of race, nor acted in a way that was unethical.

Interview with Christopher Zablo

On May 15, 2023, at approximately 1352 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Christopher Zablo. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Christopher Zablo were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

During the interview, Lieutenant Gordon discussed the complaints previously mentioned with Zablo. Zablo advised that he was involved in complaint number 1. Although he was not part of the decision-making process for the criminal aspect, he assisted with watching the students who were in custody and helped escort them to the restroom. Zablo described how during the incident, Deputy Lococo made sure the students in custody received lunch and water, and he personally arranged these provisions. Additionally, Zablo noted that the students in custody had their handcuffs in front of them and were seated in regular chairs. Zablo couldn't remember if any of the students made any complaints and couldn't provide a specific timeframe for when the students were in custody.

Regarding the other complaints, Zablo did not have any information to provide that would assist in the investigation. Zablo was asked several questions about Deputy Lococo and how he interacts with the students at the school. Zablo stated that he has never seen Deputy Lococo act in any manner consistent with being racist and believes he treats everyone at the school fairly and equally. He has never heard Deputy Lococo say anything insulting to any students and has observed Deputy

Lococo working with kids and the school to best help the students. In Zablo's opinion, Deputy Lococo collaborates effectively with the school to find the best ways to assist students during various situations that arise throughout the school year.

Interview with Thomas Johnson

On May 18, 2023, at approximately 1306 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Thomas Johnson. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Thomas Johnson were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

During the interview, Thomas Johnson, a school advisor at Spruce Creek High School, was asked about each individual incident listed in the complaint. Johnson stated that he had no firsthand knowledge of any of the complaints. He was asked if he had ever seen Deputy Lococo discriminate against anyone based on the color of their skin. Johnson responded by saying, *"The actual opposite of that,"* and added, *"Kids will come by, fist bump, say 'man how you doing today,' girls, you know, 'hey your shoe's untied,' you know something like that. It's to all of them. It's everyone's treated the same. I've never, never seen or heard anything about what you're talking about."*

Johnson went on to express his surprise at the allegations and stated, *"Because I see the total opposite in him."* He indicated that Deputy Lococo would always prioritize the students' best interests and would defer to the school in such matters.

Johnson concluded the interview by saying, *"I just think that you asked the question earlier about treating kids equally across the board, absolutely he does and he has never, and I... it's funny probably three or four days ago I actually made the comment about how fair he is. I was talking to one of the guardians about how fair he is across the board and always has been, so I'm really disappointed in this, to tell you the truth. I really am because I don't think it's right."*

Interview with Wanda Jones

On May 18, 2023, at approximately 1323 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Wanda Jones. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Wanda Jones were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

During the interview, Wanda Jones, a reading teacher at Spruce Creek High School with 30 years of experience in education, was asked about each individual incident listed in the complaint. However, she stated that she had no firsthand knowledge of any of the incidents.

Wanda was then asked about her interactions with Deputy Lococo and his ability to provide fair and impartial treatment. She responded, *"You know, and I've always known him to be fair, you know, to all the students and to try to build a positive relationship with them. I'm not aware of him mistreating anybody or being discriminatory against any of the students."* She emphasized that Deputy Lococo acted not just as a law enforcement officer but also as a mentor to the students.

Wanda further expressed her positive opinion of Deputy Lococo, comparing him to other school resource officers she had known over her years of teaching. She mentioned that she had her students fill out a journal assignment asking if they felt safe at Spruce Creek and what could be done to make them feel safer. She mentioned that many students had expressed feeling safe at the school because of Deputy Lococo's presence.

In conclusion, Wanda reiterated that none of the students had ever said anything negative about Deputy Lococo during her time at the school since 2016. She emphasized, *"None of them, and I've been here since 2016, then when he came in 2017 no one ever said, 'Oh, you know he's this or he's that,' and they've said that about some people here. You know, and I've never heard any of them say anything about Dep. Lococo in a negative way."*

Interview with Ronald Emerson

On May 18, 2023, at approximately 1340 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Ronald Emerson. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Ronald Emerson were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

During the interview, Ronald Emerson, a JROTC instructor at Spruce Creek High School, was asked about each individual incident listed in the complaint. However, he stated that he had no firsthand knowledge of any of the complaints.

Ronald mentioned that he had known Deputy Lococo since his time as a cadet at Embry Riddle University and that they had stayed in contact over the years. He expressed disbelief at the accusations made against Deputy Lococo, stating that they were *"absolutely ridiculous"* and out of character based on what he knew of him.

When asked if he had ever observed Deputy Lococo discriminate against individuals based on race, Ronald emphatically stated, *"Not at all. I mean I would call him out on it, that's kind of what we, you know, developing young kids to serve in the military, you know, those are the things that we watch out for and make sure do not happen."*

Ronald also indicated that the complaints against Deputy Lococo might have originated with Dr. Rentz, an administrator at the school. He mentioned that he and Colonel Clark had received similar complaints from Dr. Rentz in the past, all of which had been investigated and found to be unfounded by Professional Standards. Ronald expressed that when there's a disagreement with Dr. Rentz, she tends to attack the situation from a different angle, using the word "*attack*" to describe her actions.

Interview with Shantell Adkins

On May 18, 2023, at approximately 1401 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Shantell Adkins. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Shantell Adkins were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

The interview began, and Adkins explained that he is the Assistant Principal over discipline for the 9th graders. Lieutenant Gordon went through each of the eight complaints with Adkins and discussed them one by one.

During complaint number one, Adkins advised that he witnessed the incident at the bus loop and was present when the students were in handcuffs the day after the incident. Adkins explained that the students were in handcuffs for four or five hours and were handcuffed in front. Adkins also said that he assisted in helping the students use the restroom. Adkins admitted to not understanding when or why the students were handcuffed but felt the students were in custody too long. According to Adkins, the students were cooperative and did not make any complaints of injuries or pain while they were detained.

Adkins did not witness complaint number two. While speaking about complaint number three, Adkins said he was involved in that incident. Adkins advised that he searched a student that smelled like marijuana and did not notify the parent of the child due to not locating any contraband. The parent in question was upset that she was never notified about her son being searched. Adkins explained that Deputy Lococo believed he contacted the parent of the student; however, he said that he never contacted the parent. An altercation ensued between the student's mother and Deputy Lococo. According to Adkins, he was not present during the argument and could not provide any further information. In regard to complaint number four, Adkins did not have any firsthand knowledge of the incident.

When asked about complaint number five, Adkins explained that he believed the student in question was possibly a public official's daughter but could not provide any specific information about it to narrow down the incident.

On complaint number six, Adkins said that no action was taken by Deputy Lococo as there were no criminal charges filed against the students involved. The school brought up each involved student for expulsion. Adkins was unsure why Deputy Lococo did not take action in the incident and was ignorant of the criminal elements required to pursue the incident. Adkins appeared upset that the school board allowed the students to come back to school after the incident. In reference to complaints seven and eight, Adkins did not have any information to add to the investigation.

It should be noted that during this interview, another incident was discussed that involved [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. This occurred when Lieutenant Gordon was asking questions about Deputy Lococo's fair treatment of students. The two students involved were [REDACTED] while the other was later discovered to be her sister, [REDACTED]. The incident in question occurred when [REDACTED] and her sister arrived at school and emanated the odor of burnt cannabis. As far as Adkins understood, both girls were found to be in possession of cannabis, a stun gun, and other incriminating evidence. Adkins' complaint was that [REDACTED] was expelled from school while [REDACTED] was not. Adkins cited the fact that [REDACTED] was "bi-racial" and believed [REDACTED] was white. This complaint was misplaced for several reasons. The first was that Deputy Lococo had no involvement in whether either child was expelled from school as it was the decision of the school board. Secondly, a review of the report generated by Deputy Lococo in the incident (VSO Case #23-6026) advised that [REDACTED] told him the narcotics belonged to her and not her sister, [REDACTED]. Third, as stated earlier, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are sisters and are both listed in the school database as "multiracial." Lastly, Deputy Lococo's discretionary decision based on the totality of the incident led him not to arrest [REDACTED] for the narcotics, which kept a "bi-racial" student from receiving a criminal charge. The weapons found during Deputy Lococo's investigation were determined to be contained legally within the vehicle, and no threats were made in relation to the weapons.

Lieutenant Gordon, then asked Adkins about his interactions with Deputy Lococo and if he has observed any that would warrant the complaints listed above. Adkins stated that this year he has had little involvement with Deputy Lococo due to the majority of the issues occurring in the main atrium. As stated earlier, Adkins is in charge of the 9th graders who mainly stay in a separate location from the main atrium. When asked about mistreatment of students based on race, Adkins advised he felt that more students were getting charged with crime than in previous years but was unsure what the cause was. Lieutenant Gordon specifically asked Adkins if he observed any behavior that he felt was discriminatory by Deputy Lococo. Adkins said Deputy Lococo was more "aggressive" this year. When asked to clarify, Adkins said, "*This year he looked to get more involved with the discipline stuff... you know there's more engagement with the kids, you know, than before.*" Lieutenant Gordon asked if the engagement was in a negative way or a positive way. Adkins relayed that it depended on what the student did, whether it was positive or negative. Adkins then made an allegation that some of the students feel like Deputy Lococo was targeting them. Adkins said, "*I've heard Lococo when he's on looking at video, you know, and then he's saying, you know, there are some kids hanging around here, somebody needs to go check that out.*"

I ain't got no problem with that, you know, but in the past, we didn't look at the videos just too, we looked for video after something happened we would go. But to sit in there watching videos, who has time to do that? I ain't got time to do that. But it's more of that this year, the kids do feel like they're following them." Adkins was asked if Deputy Lococo watches and follows just African American students or both white and black students. Adkins said, *"I think he follows both, I do."*

Adkins then said that he believes Deputy Lococo puts African American students in handcuffs "quicker and longer." But followed up his comments by saying, *"But yeah, our black kids are fighting more than the white kids, I ain't gonna lie about that. You know, and our black kids are doing the group fighting more than the white kids, yeah they are. You know, I mean it is what it is."* In the same vein, Adkins also acknowledged part of the reason for the increase in arrests this year was due to the increase in group fighting in contrast to previous years. Adkins explained that crime is on the rise in schools and every year the new freshmen he gets are more aggressive and using narcotics more frequently.

Adkins ended his interview by saying, *"As far as Lococo, I mean, I think the guy's a good guy... I never thought that he was racist or anything like that, you know. We've always gotten along well."*

Interview with Keshia Rentz

On May 24, 2023, at approximately 1005 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Keshia Rentz. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Keshia Rentz were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Dr. Rentz is a Teacher on Assignment and in charge of handling discipline for students who are 10th and 11th graders. Lieutenant Gordon went through each of the eight complaints in order to obtain information that was pertinent to the investigation.

While speaking about complaint number one, Dr. Rentz said she was present while the students were in custody, specifically [REDACTED]. According to Dr. Rentz, the students were cooperative and did not provide any issues. Dr. Rentz said that the students were in custody for a lengthy period and had to eat lunch while in handcuffs. Dr. Rentz also confirmed there were several students in custody because of the incident, and the fight which occurred the day before was a significantly large group fight.

Dr. Rentz told Lieutenant Gordon she was directly involved and was present during complaint number two. The student involved was [REDACTED] and he was in Dr. Rentz's office when Deputy Lococo spoke with him. At this time, Dr. Rentz also mentioned Nicholas Prince was present, which

was later determined to be the School District Administrator who was mentioned in the original complaint. The complaint alleged Deputy Lococo lied to Hill and tried to influence the decision to pursue charges. In reference to the complaint, Dr. Rentz said, *“But the way it was brought to him about pressing charges it was almost kind of like maybe encourage him not to because if you press charges then the other parents wanna press charges and you’re already on probation so you can end up on adult probation. So he, he was on the phone with his mom and he told his mom no I don’t wanna, no don’t press charges cuz I guess he was assuming that he was gonna have charges so he’s like no I don’t wanna press charges now mom just forget it no, no, no. And mom I think she just got frustrated and hung up.”*

While speaking about complaint number three, Dr. Rentz said she was present for that incident as well. According to Dr. Rentz, *“Dep. Lococo came in and was just very just aggressive and short with the parent, the parent just wanted to know why she didn’t receive a call. And he was like Mr. Adkins did call you I was standing right there. And I think he called her a liar. And she was just really done with the conversation. And then Mr. Adkins came in and she reexplained her concern and Mr. Adkins said well I didn’t call. He’s like I didn’t call I didn’t make a phone call and then she was like see he just lied to me and I was like ok that’s really not the issue.”* Dr. Rentz was clear to say Deputy Lococo did not use any foul language nor did he call her any derogatory name other than a liar.

On the topic of complaint number four, Dr. Rentz said she was present for that incident as well. During the incident, Dr. Rentz admitted to speaking with the students involved several times after Deputy Lococo had already taken over the investigation and was interviewing the subjects involved. Dr. Rentz told the student who was in possession of the suspicious substance that it tested presumptively positive for Acid before Deputy Lococo was able to speak with the student in question. Dr. Rentz was unaware that she was interfering and lacked the knowledge of criminal proceedings. While speaking about this incident, Dr. Rentz did not make any complaint about the difference in pursuing charges against the African American student and not the white student.

While discussing complaint number five, Dr. Rentz said the incident in question occurred while on a school field trip not on the grounds of the high school. Therefore, Deputy Lococo would not have been involved in the complaint itself and would fall in the purview of the school administration.

On complaint number six, Dr. Rentz questioned why charges were not pursued but did confirm that all of the students involved were disciplined by the school district. Dr. Rentz made allegations, *“yeah I don’t even know if people agree how the school handled it.”* Despite this statement, Dr. Rentz did not provide any information that would make the incident criminal in nature. While discussing complaint number seven it was determined to be too vague for Dr. Rentz to recall specifics.

Lieutenant Gordon spoke with Dr. Rentz about complaint number eight. Dr. Rentz provided the names of the students involved. The students were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. In reference to the incident, Dr. Rentz believed that both subjects should have been arrested and was unaware why charges were not pressed due to an unwilling victim. During the interview with Dr. Rentz, she disclosed she was not aware of Florida State Statutes (FSS) that pertain to Dating Violence and the requirements contained therein.

In addition to the complaints listed, Dr. Rentz brought up two other incidents that she believed Deputy Lococo should have taken action. Although Dr. Rentz never alleged Deputy Lococo was prejudiced in his decision-making process, she questioned why both incidents involving white students were not criminally charged. The first incident Dr. Rentz brought up involved a substitute interpreter that was at the school to aid a deaf student. Dr. Rentz alleged that the interpreter smelled of marijuana and should have been charged. Dr. Rentz did not understand why Deputy Lococo advised it was outside his purview. It should be noted that the person involved was an adult, and although Dr. Rentz had authority to search the suspected vehicle, she did not search the vehicle to confirm or disprove her suspicions. Also during the interview with Dr. Rentz, she specifically mentioned marijuana and understood that as a general practice Deputy Lococo defers to the school for discipline in cases involving marijuana. This was confirmed by Dr. Rentz's own statement on the topic when she said, *"I know we're not doing anything with THC anymore."* Dr. Rentz also brought up the same incident mentioned previously by Adkins, which involved [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (VSO Case #23-6026). Dr. Rentz alleged that due to the race of the students, no criminal charges were pursued. Dr. Rentz was mistaken on the race of the two students as mentioned previously, both are listed in the school database as multiracial. In addition, the alleged weapons mentioned in the report were not used in any criminal activity and through Deputy Lococo's investigation were determined to be contained legally within the vehicle in question.

Dr. Rentz was asked if she believed Deputy Lococo treated students or her differently because of the color of skin. Dr. Rentz said, *"Like treat, no."* Dr. Rentz was asked if she believes Deputy Lococo is racist, she responded, *"Like I said I can't say he's a racist but I do think you are giving kids charges that shouldn't be charged. It just needs to be consistency cuz as an administrator when I have a parent saying well my kid is telling me this kid did the same thing and he didn't get charges..."* And, *"Like I can't say Dep. Lococo does not like black people. Like he's not carrying himself in a way consistently that would make me believe that he's a racist."*

Dr. Rentz was asked if she contacted the NAACP and made the complaints listed in this investigation. Dr. Rentz said, *"no"* and *"I mean I've had complaints about this school and when I, I didn't even go to the NAACP."* Dr. Rentz did say, *"I did go to it's not really a complaint but I did go to Dr. Sparger and I did call the district with that mom."* Referring to complaint number three.

Interview with Kevin Clark

On May 24, 2023, at approximately 1233 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Kevin Clark. The interview was conducted at Spruce Creek High School located at 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Kevin Clark were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Kevin Clark is an Assistant Principal at Spruce Creek High School and is sometimes involved in the student discipline process. Because of this, he often has interactions with Deputy Lococo. Lieutenant Gordon went over the complaints previously mentioned with Clark. Clark mentioned that he had knowledge of complaint number one and was present for portions of the incident. According to Clark, Deputy Lococo arrested four or five students during that day and had them in custody for approximately five hours and nine minutes. During the timeframe, Clark witnessed the students being difficult by way of not listening to Deputy Lococo's instructions and being loud. On the topic, Clark said, *"you know a little bit of yelling I didn't hear it at all so I don't know. I heard that they were some of them were running their mouths quite a bit."*

In regards to the other complaints listed, Kevin Clark did not provide any new information that had not previously been discussed, and for the majority of the complaints, he was not present.

Clark was asked if during his involvement while working with Deputy Lococo, has he ever observed any conduct he would deem discriminatory. Clark said, *"No. No, I wouldn't say discriminatory at all, no. You know I think situational it just depends I mean like I said I'm not the one in there with four kids cuffed up in my office I'm trying to do paperwork whatever and they're running their mouths and losing their minds or whatever like that."* Clark continued and explained what he believed because of the nature of the complaint. Clark told Lieutenant Gordon, *"in my opinion, this is someone going after somebody just you know going I mean I don't think he's ever arrested somebody or charged somebody you know for anything race-related discriminatory-related you know I mean there's you know you can't just it's whoever's might have done that crime well then there you go you know."* It should be noted, Clark did not want to elaborate on who was responsible for the complaints made against Deputy Lococo, although it was implied to be Dr. Rentz. This conclusion was made based on the totality of the investigation coupled with the other interviews completed by Lieutenant Gordon.

Interview with Nicholas Prince

On June 06, 2023, at approximately 0841 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Nicholas Prince. The interview was conducted at 123 West Indiana Avenue, DeLand. Lieutenant Gordon and Nicholas Prince were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Nicholas Prince is a Minority Achievement Specialist with Volusia County Schools. Prince explained the only incident he witnessed was complaint number two, which involved [REDACTED]. Prince's chief complaint was the manner in which Deputy Lococo chose to handle the situation when he discussed whether or not [REDACTED] and his mother wanted to pursue charges in the incident. Prince alleged Deputy Lococo intentionally misled [REDACTED] and his mother, which caused them to not want to pursue criminal charges.

Prince explained that he does not have normal interactions with Deputy Lococo and has not had sufficient firsthand experience to comment on whether or not his actions could be considered discriminatory. Lieutenant Gordon asked Prince if he had any contact with Cynthia Slater of the NAACP and discussed the nature of any of the mentioned complaints. Prince advised, "no, not me."

Interview with Sergeant Sturup

On June 06, 2023, at approximately 0841 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Sergeant Christy Sturup. The interview was conducted at the Internal Affairs Office located at 123 W Indiana Ave, Deland. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Sergeant Sturup were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Sergeant Sturup advised she is the current supervisor over Deputy Lococo and has been since January of 2023. All eight complaints previously mentioned were discussed in order to determine Sergeant Sturup's involvement and knowledge of each complaint.

In reference to complaint number one, Sergeant Sturup was aware of the incident. Sergeant Sturup said the incident was a very large fight that ended with four students arrested at the same time. Sergeant Sturup explained, "anytime that they have a larger party like that he has to review the video surveillance from the school to start narrowing down who could potentially be the primary aggressor but there's multiple videos within that area so it takes up more time." Sergeant Sturup went into more detail about what was required of Deputy Lococo for processing. Sergeant Sturup advised, "Each individual juvenile gets a separate charging affidavit depending on what they're arrested for. He also has to contact me and Director Quann regarding the juveniles to get their juvenile background information, their probation information he has to speak with DJJ to see what their standing is etcetera. Information regarding whether or not they'll be held secure which also has to be in the affidavit so that when he does get out to the Family Resource Center they're aware of what to do with the juvenile. So when you multiply that by four it ends up being a lot of work that has to get done prior to them transporting."

During the discussion of complaint number two, Sergeant Sturup was unaware of the incident. On complaint number three Sergeant Sturup remembered Deputy Lococo contacting her and asking if he could provide her cell phone number to the complainant (Willis).

On the topic of complaint number four, Sergeant Sturup recalled the incident in question. Sergeant Sturup said, *"I got a call from Dep. Lococo. I don't remember exactly what time, in reference to a student that was located in the restroom with narcotics that was initially believed to be acid or LSD. Through further investigation they ended up with a second student who was taken into custody from I guess Lococo received information that the second student was subject who sold the first student the alleged narcotics. He explained to me that he had the first subject that was located in handcuffs and through his investigation he determined that it was not an actual narcotic that it was melatonin that the second student sold to the first student. At that time I explained to Dep. Lococo there's no actual law for possessing a fake drug but there is an actual law for selling a fake drug. I informed him he's gonna have to unarrest or unsecure the first student and place the second student in handcuffs. And that was later when I received a call from administration who was upset about the swapping of handcuffs..... I was the one who made the judgment call on who was going to be placed, arrested under arrest and that there's no actual law for possessing the fake drug but there is an actual law for selling the fake drug."* Sergeant Sturup explained that at no point did Deputy Lococo mention the race of either student and that the white student was going to be arrested; however, he could not be due to the alleged narcotic being fake.

Complaints five, six, and seven Sergeant Sturup did not have any first-hand knowledge. Despite the lack of knowledge Sergeant Sturup explained the process for how criminal charges are pursued in relation to a willing victim wanting to pursue criminal charges. Therefore Deputy Lococo is unable to enforce whether students are criminally charged with property crimes or not.

Sergeant Sturup also commented on complaint number eight. Sergeant Sturup explained, *"Reference to that case I'm not familiar with it. However, with the two females there's no domestic relationship as it would be defined in state statute. Whether dating violence or domestic violence so therefore we do not have the ability to physically arrest somebody against their will if we don't have a cooperating victim. As to the other one which it is dating violence, dating violence is very similar to domestic violence in the sense of they have to be related by blood or marriage or have an established relationship within the past six months, but they just do not reside together. Dating violence per state statute allows us to, and states that we will find the primary aggressor and arrest said person.....it appears as if during this investigation he determined that there was a dating violence i.e. a domestic relationship they just did not reside together and the male was the primary aggressor."*

Sergeant Sturup provided, *"Dep. Lococo often gets praised from several administration and teachers and facility people at Spruce Creek High School in reference to his ability to work with*

the students and just always being there when they need them, being fair when it comes to the students.” Sergeant Sturup added, “I stop at a lot of the schools and just checking on the SRD’s and see how they’re engaging with the staff and the students. There’s been multiple times where we’re just standing there between class changes that multiple students regardless of race are coming up and talking to him or even pulling Dep. Lococo aside like hey can I talk to you you know I have information on this or I have a problem with that and there’s never been an issue when it comes to him talking to the students or being one on one with them or the students not feeling or even showing that they can’t trust Dep. Lococo.” According to Sergeant Sturup, she has never received any complaints about Deputy Lococo or his behavior.

Lieutenant Gordon asked Sergeant Sturup if she was aware of any issues between Deputy Lococo and faculty members at the school. Sergeant Sturup advised, *“Yeah there’s been a couple times where Dep. Lococo has called concerned about things that he’s been told by administration. He [Dep. Lococo] once contacted me and he received a call from Canetti and another I don’t know who the other person was stating more or less that Dr. Rentz had it out for him and just to be careful. There was another recent incident where Lococo called me and said that one of the staff members approached him [Dep. Lococo] and said that they overheard Dr. Rentz Ms. Rentz and a parent having a conversation in reference to and I’m assuming it possibly was the mom that was upset about a subject being searched etcetera and the mom made the statement [to Dr. Rentz] if he [Deputy Lococo] wasn’t in uniform I’d kick his ass and Dr. Rentz replied don’t worry about that I’ll get you the number to my attorney. We’re currently trying to sue him, you can get him too. And that information was relayed to Dep. Lococo and he was, he was concerned about the information that more or less Dr. Rentz was telling parents and not communicating with him.”* While speaking about Deputy Lococo, Sergeant Sturup remembered an incident in which Deputy Lococo identified a prejudicial incident which was determined to be unfair based on past practices. Sergeant Sturup explained, *“there was an incident back in April where a male student a black male student had caused damage to the school and the school chose to press charges and he was arrested. And then shortly thereafter it was a couple weeks later a white male student did the exact same thing he actually ended up causing what appeared to be more damage to the school overall when it came to the door that he damaged, and the school was going to not pursue charges. Dep. Lococo had emailed the administration stating hey you know you had already set a precedence with arresting this student stating we’re not gonna allow any students to damage this campus and then three weeks later they were stating that they didn’t want to. He’s like I think you should continue to stand with your precedence that we’re going to arrest all students if one is arrested for said crime then all need to be continued and not pick and choose...I know there have been other incidences where he’s had to bring it up to administration that they’ve arrested one student and have not arrested other students in reference to the exact same incident.”*

Interview with Deputy Justin Lococo

On May 24, 2023, at approximately 1005 hours, Lieutenant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Deputy Justin Lococo. The interview was conducted at the Sheriff's Office Internal Affairs Office located at 123 W Indiana Ave, Deland. Lieutenant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, Deputy Lococo, Attorney Lambert, and Representee Sergeant Sean Gowan were present for the interview. Prior to the beginning of the interview, Deputy Lococo was provided a chance to review all documentation and material evidence pertaining to the investigation. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

The interview began with Deputy Lococo saying that he has been a School Resource Deputy for the Sheriff's Office for the past six years.

Deputy Lococo was asked about complaint number one and what his involvement in the matter was. Deputy Lococo said, *"We had a big fight, a melee out at the bus loop, consisted of at least 20-25 people, pretty much 25 versus two. At which point I conducted an investigation. I spoke with the parents; the parents wanted to press charges, clearly they were victims. And at which point I started to identify the subjects involved that were in the videos that I reviewed. [REDACTED] was one of them. So that day [the day after the fight] I conducted interviews with four; I can get their names, they're in here, but [REDACTED] was one of them. At which point I developed probable cause to make an arrest on each of them. So I had four individuals in custody, including [REDACTED]. At which point I had to do the paperwork, I had to complete the affidavits for each of them, so they were in my office. And during that time [REDACTED] seemed to be the more aggressive of the four. Just verbally giving verbal dialogue a lot. Not really paying attention to what I was telling him to just sit down, you know, and stay seated. I had four in my office, and my office is extremely small. So he continued to not listen and to be more resistant, so they all stayed in handcuffs because of the flight risk, things of that nature, and just so that I can kind of get my job done and get them out of there as fast as possible. At some points, they had to go to the restroom, and I utilized our staff, including myself, guardian, and some administrators, to kind of form a line to the restroom, which was approximately 30 feet from us, to where we were constantly monitoring them and letting them use the restroom and then also have lunch. So I ended up getting lunches for all four of them."*

Deputy Lococo said he believed he made the decision to coordinate lunches and made arrangements for the students to eat and use the restroom while in custody. All of which took considerable effort and time away from completing the necessary reports in order to turn over custody to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Deputy Lococo went into further detail about the added tasks for this incident that were different from a routine juvenile arrest. Deputy Lococo explained, *"I still had to coordinate with DJJ, Director Quann, my supervisor, let them know what I had and things of that nature. Coordinate with parents as well. There was a lot of, you know, and then I had to write the affidavit; I had to send it up for approval, I had to wait for them to review*

it and make sure it was good to go to be sent off and then obviously had to transport, and since there's four, then I had to call a secondary unit to come and assist with transportation. So, and especially we had a juvenile female too, so that kind of complicated the mix." Deputy Lococo advised he utilized approximately four other law enforcement officers and multiple staff members from Spruce Creek High School to assist with the care and custody of the students involved. Deputy Lococo also added that this was a rare occurrence, and a large fight of this magnitude does not occur often. While discussing the incident, Deputy Lococo said, "it's something I've never had before. I've never had a big melee like that before. Normally it'd be maybe two to three versus one, and that would be it, not 25 or however many there was versus two people." When speaking about putting students in custody, Deputy Lococo explained that normally as soon as probable cause is developed, he puts students, regardless of race, into handcuffs. On the topic of pursuing charges, Deputy Lococo commented, "Okay, well yeah, the school makes the decision ultimately on campus disruption so major things like that like that fight, it's always in the school's hands to charge for campus disruption. They're kind of like the victim. And then the parents come in for battery aspect. So we'll just say, for example, just a simple battery. I'd have to get permission from the parents because they're juveniles and then I also have to get permission from the school if it causes a large-scale disruption."

While addressing the concern, Deputy Lococo mentioned that several issues stem from the Daytona bus and that the large fight that occurred on campus was due to a neighborhood gang disagreement. When speaking directly about issues with [REDACTED] Deputy Lococo advised the following, *"we've had extensive issues with [REDACTED] and discipline issues before, and I've been called multiple times for him. Campus disruption, fighting, things of that nature."* Deputy Lococo described his contact with [REDACTED] as reactive and has been called several times because of something others have witnessed about the student. Lieutenant Gordon then asked Deputy Lococo about complaint number two. Deputy Lococo provided the following statement in response, *"I did speak to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] was on probation at the time. So I spoke to him in reference to the entire incident because it was a mutual combatant type situation. And initially it was the school was gonna handle it and then I was called. Dr. Rentz called me back in there, and I spoke to him about the proceedings and said this is how this is gonna go, and just understand you are on probation and if I conduct an investigation I find out that you're a mutual combatant then you're gonna be charged because if that parent wants to press charges they're gonna wanna press charges and so forth. I gave him the information because sometimes they don't know. A lot of times the juveniles will just read over the probation rules and you know kind of throw it away, but they don't understand that these are governed by a judge and these are rules that are set forth and if you violate them then we obviously have a right to do ... so I explained it to him just so he was aware and after that he's just like ok well that's it you know."* At the conclusion of his investigation, Deputy Lococo determined the incident in question was mutual combat. Deputy Lococo said that he did not want [REDACTED] (who is an African American male) in trouble and due to his probation status, [REDACTED] pursuing charges may lead to a probation violation. It was

explained that because of this Deputy Lococo presented the case as he did. In reference to complaint number three, Deputy Lococo stated the following, *"I guess her [Ms. Willis] son [REDACTED] was coming to school late where I was alerted to him smelling like marijuana. So as he crossed by me in the atrium he definitely smelled like marijuana, it was pretty bad. So I found out what grade he was. At that point I gave him to Mr. Adkins because he was a 9th grader, so I just told him I said let's go to Mr. Adkins' office and go from there. We proceeded to go into Mr. Adkins' office. Mr. Adkins detected the odor of marijuana as well. He conducted a search on him, at which point nothing was found, we didn't find any marijuana, anything of that nature. So at that point in time he let him go back to class, and I spoke to Mr. Adkins about it, and he said he was gonna call the parent. When I left, he looked like he was picking up his phone to call. And so I let him handle it and that was that, and I went back to doing what I was doing. So then I guess the next day the mother came in, and she was upset that she was never contacted. Well, come to find out by Mr. Adkins that he didn't call. So I spoke to the mother, I attempted to tell her the situation. She was a little agitated; she was with Dr. Rentz at the time, which I don't know why she was with Rentz and not Mr. Adkins because Mr. Adkins was the one who knew about the situation. At which point I tried to explain to her who we were and what we were doing and what the situation was, and she just wasn't having the conversation. She just didn't want to talk to me; she basically told me to leave, and I said ok, well, that's that. You know, I tried to explain it to her nicely."* Deputy Lococo went on to explain how he approaches incidents involving marijuana and usually provides the information over to the school to see how they wish to proceed. Deputy Lococo further clarified that he normally does not pursue criminal charges for marijuana for small amounts of the substance.

When it came to Willis wishing to speak with Deputy Lococo's supervisor, Deputy Lococo explained, *"She [Willis] wanted her number, and so I told her if you can stand by, I'll go see if that's ok because I just don't want to freely give out my supervisor's number."*

Complaint number four, Lieutenant Gordon asked Deputy Lococo why he arrested the white student and charged [REDACTED] (African American male) criminally. During the incident, it was originally thought that the substance bought by the white student was an illegal narcotic. It was determined the substance was not illegal and was in fact melatonin. Deputy Lococo said, *"we determined that maybe this wasn't what it was so I called my sergeant [Sergeant Sturup] let her know and she's like well unarrest him [white student] and you know because we don't have a positive hit anymore, you know, it could have been just the coloration of whatever's on the pill, and it was purple. So I kind of for me was like well wait, this isn't right, something's not right here, you know because normally a test kit would stay the same color over a long period of time."* Deputy Lococo explained his supervisor gave him direction to unarrest the white student and to charge [REDACTED]. It should be noted Deputy Lococo never provided the race of the two students to his supervisor who made the decision.

While speaking about complaint number five, Deputy Lococo advised the complaint was too vague for him to recognize and could not provide any additional information. Lieutenant Gordon then asked Deputy Lococo several questions that pertain to complaint number six. The complaint was in reference to the baseball team at Spruce Creek. Deputy Lococo said, *"So I was contacted reference to some allegations of a like a sexual assault or simple battery type situation between boys in the locker room. At which point it looked like the investigation was already completed by the school, and I was coming into the ballgame late, so basically I had to figure out what's going on, who the players were, what happened, you know, has the parent been contacted."* Deputy Lococo completed an investigation into the incident and determined that the incident was not criminal in nature and would be best handled by school administration. Additionally, the parents involved did not want to pursue criminal charges in reference to the incident. Deputy Lococo contacted his supervisor and provided him with all pertinent information. Deputy Lococo relied on the guidance he received from his supervisor, and that Canetti would discipline those involved through the school. Deputy Lococo explained he was made aware that those involved were put up for expulsion. Deputy Lococo was unsure which incident complaint number seven referenced. This was due to the large number of incidents of that nature that occur during the year. Deputy Lococo then explained his involvement in complaint number eight. Deputy Lococo said, *"So I was contacted about some kids being out of class and one girl was observed to be visibly shaken up, upset, crying, at which point I kind of figured out where they were, and I got on the camera, and I can see in the camera that she's with a male, [REDACTED] And they're in the LM hall, which is the hall that really isn't that monitored, so kids kind of like skip there and hang out. At which point I see him like pushing her, grabbing her, and at one point pushing her up against the locker, and he had his hands around her neck, and she's trying to push him away, and you can see there was some force there. And he held her there for, you know, a couple of seconds, so I'd have to say maybe five to ten, you know, enough to where you can see her visibly trying to push him away, and she's in pain. At which point I do my investigation, I determine that the young man and the young female are in a relationship, and they've been in a relationship for more than six months. I believe it was like more than a year. At which point I determined that he committed battery by strangulation after speaking to the victim; she told me that he did cut off her airway, she wasn't able to breathe when he did that, and it was considered dating violence. So I charged him with dating violence in the incident, and he got arrested, and we transported him out."* Deputy Lococo made the decision based on the requirements set forth in Florida State Statute 784.046 coupled with the fact he determined [REDACTED] to be the primary aggressor.

Deputy Lococo then addressed the incident that involved [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] brought up by Dr. Rentz and Adkins. Deputy Lococo said he encountered the two females in the parking lot of the school and smelled marijuana. When questioned, [REDACTED] was honest with Deputy Lococo and advised she had marijuana in her vehicle and provided the location of the substance. Deputy Lococo advised that both students are not white and are considered multi-cultural or bi-racial. After a search of the vehicle, a small amount of marijuana (1 gram or less), a spray-painted toy

gun, taser, and paraphernalia were located. Deputy Lococo took the suspected marijuana and paraphernalia for disposal and contacted the student's parent. The parent of those involved was able to provide a reasonable explanation for the other items mentioned besides the substance and paraphernalia. Deputy Lococo determined the best course of action would be for the school to handle discipline of the involved students. This decision was also presented to Deputy Lococo's supervisor who also confirmed the intended resolution.

While speaking about the complaints, Lieutenant Gordon asked Deputy Lococo about the issues mentioned by other staff members at the school specifically involving Dr. Rentz. Deputy Lococo had the following to say on the topic, *"Well this is, yeah this has been kind of going on for a long period of time with Rentz and I, and you know again ultimately I work the same with everybody. I have a standard and that standard is if we have a situation we work together. Cuz you know we work together in regards to the Sheriff's Office and the school board. And ultimately that's gonna help the students out when we can kind of work together communicate and do the right thing. And unfortunately over the course of, geez, I mean five years I'd have to look at my notes but I mean it's been going on since 2020 to where there have been issues with Dr. Rentz impeding my investigation, getting involved in investigations where she doesn't need to be involved in coaching."*

During complaint number four which involved [REDACTED] Dr. Rentz continued to involve herself beyond her authority. Deputy Lococo said, *"[REDACTED] was in her [Dr. Rentz] office and basically she [Dr. Rentz] was already asking him questions, you know, and basically trying to undermine my investigation... what she was telling him or he was telling her is not gonna be admissible for court."* While addressing Dr. Rentz, Deputy Lococo explained that she has been witnessed coaching students on what to say in order to not get into trouble. Deputy Lococo continued, *"A good example would be the [REDACTED] case. While I was interviewing the mom and the victim I had him sit out in the dean's office like right near my door. So and I shut my door just to make sure that he's close by and I had somebody watch him. Well, during that time I guess they, he went into Rentz's office I don't know if he was told to go in there by her but he was in there with Dr. Rentz, Coach Hamm and one of the secretaries and they were talking about the case. Cuz when I went to go back out and talk to him he wasn't where he was supposed to be and I was told that he went into that office. As I approached they were talking about the case. Now I've already told them beforehand that this is a law enforcement investigation, all questions will be stopped at this time or whatever I said. I mean at that point in time it's I'm trying to get the meats and potato of the investigation and figure out what's going on. So at that point you know obviously I can see what was going on and I can I interviewed him at which point he did admit to me what they were trying to tell him to say during the investigation."* According to Deputy Lococo, Dr. Rentz told [REDACTED] not to talk to Deputy Lococo and not to admit to any crime. Despite Dr. Rentz efforts, Deputy Lococo said luckily he has known [REDACTED] since his freshman year and had built a good rapport with him which led to an eventual confession. Deputy Lococo went on to say he is

very frustrated with how the school is handling the situation. Due to the lack of assistance, Deputy Lococo said, *"I started documenting well in advance because I you know again I love my position I love being there as a school resource deputy I like interacting with the kids you know and there's a, there's a major need for us to be there because we do have a purpose and you know these kids do turn out to be really good adults when we can get that positive interaction in. And unfortunately when I'm there I feel like it's, it's like I'm gonna you know almost in a sense be ambushed and I started to document it because I saw the writing on the wall what she was doing and it was getting to be very counterproductive and harder for me to do my job with what she's been doing. So since 2020 I started documenting incidents and incursions with us. After multiple accounts of instructing her not to do things."* The document provided started in 2020 and went all the way through to the most recent school year. Deputy Lococo provided a copy of the personal documentation of the issues he has observed. The issues mentioned capture an assortment of incidents detailing Dr. Rentz's behavior. From parking illegally in a handicap parking spot, making sexually inappropriate jokes with students present, to calling co-workers with skin pigment discoloration "cows," Deputy Lococo documented Dr. Rentz's conduct. Deputy Lococo advised Dr. Rentz is telling students to not trust him and that he is a racist which is affecting his job and ability to work efficiently.

Deputy Lococo was asked if he has spoken to Dr. Rentz before about her involvement in his cases and that she could be jeopardizing the criminal cases she's involved in. Deputy Lococo stated, *"I have, I have told her I have told the staff we have had meetings I've sent numerous emails about my standards and about the process."* Deputy Lococo went on to say he has had multiple meetings with the assistant principals and especially Principal Sparger. Despite these interactions, the school has done nothing to stop Dr. Rentz from interfering with Deputy Lococo's investigations and has failed to stop it from occurring. Deputy Lococo has been unsupported in his efforts to prevent it from occurring.

Deputy Lococo explained that at no point has any of the school staff members approached him and expressed concern about the number of students being arrested or potential issues with African American students being arrested at a higher rate. During the process of investigating incidents, Deputy Lococo defers to the school first to see if the issue can be handled in school to prevent students from receiving charges unnecessarily. While talking about the equal treatment of students, Deputy Lococo spoke about an incident that occurred in April. Deputy Lococo explained, *"Yeah, so basically vandalism was, you know, a black kid...yes, so the black male ended up causing some damage to the school where the school chose to press charges. At which point I think it was less than a month later a white student did almost the same thing maybe even a little less of, you know, the damage and they, or actually it was more, and they chose not to press charges on the white student, and I said well this isn't fair. So I wrote an email and I said hey we need to keep our standards the same at which point they were in compliance with what I was saying and, you know, they ended up I think pressing charges on him too as well after that."* At no time has Deputy Lococo made a decision on whether to arrest a student because of the color of their skin. In closing,

Deputy Lococo was asked if he violated the following General Orders, and his responses are detailed below:

GO-026-02.IV.D.9.x

Code of Conduct

No

Investigative Summary:

Complaint Number 1:

Body-Worn Camera (BWC) footage correlated with Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD), which showed the students were in custody at Spruce Creek High School for approximately five hours and ten minutes. While this timeframe was significant, there were several contributing factors that caused this delay. The factors included, but were not limited to, subject interviews, coordinating resources, collecting evidence and information for the investigation, assisting with giving the students bathroom breaks and lunches, coordinating with DJJ (Department of Juvenile Justice), notifying parents, and completing extensive paperwork on the students in question. Additionally, the students were uncooperative by way of being argumentative, threatening Deputy Lococo by lunging at him, and attempting to flee the room they were arrested in. In reference to the allegation that Deputy Lococo specifically targeted [REDACTED], this incident VSO 23-1608 was the only time Deputy Lococo has ever arrested [REDACTED]

Complaint Number 2:

In contrast to the complaint made against Deputy Lococo, the BWC footage shows Dr. Rentz as the first person in the video to tell [REDACTED] about the possibility of his probation being violated if he or his mother pursue criminal charges. Additionally, Deputy Lococo clearly explains the repercussions of a probation violation to make sure [REDACTED] fully understood the justice system and its processes.

Complaint Number 3:

BWC shows that there was an argument with Ms. Willis over the search of her son; however, it was determined through the investigation that Adkins was responsible for the search. Deputy Lococo was mistaken and believed Adkins notified the student's parents, but never did. Ms. Willis advised she spoke with Deputy Lococo's supervisor but was still unhappy with the situation that occurred.

Complaint Number 4:

██████████ was arrested based on the facts determined by the investigation conducted by Deputy Lococo. Sergeant Sturup, who was unaware of the race of either child, made the decision to charge ██████████. In addition, during a BWC review of the incident, it showed Canetti tell Deputy Lococo that Dr. Rentz made comments about Deputy Lococo to the student and their family. Canetti told Deputy Lococo this while Dr. Sparger (Principal) was present. According to Deputy Lococo, there were no repercussions for Dr. Rentz's interference.

Complaint Number 5:

This complaint was determined to have occurred outside the jurisdiction of the Volusia Sheriff's Office, thus negating this complaint in its entirety.

Complaint Number 6:

BWC footage shows that Deputy Lococo made contact with the alleged victim's mother who was already speaking with Canetti in reference to the incident. The mother advised she did not want law enforcement involvement, and Deputy Lococo concluded during his preliminary investigation that the incident was not criminal in nature. To note, the school board did discipline those students involved, but the decision was made outside the scope of law enforcement.

Complaint Number 7:

This complaint was unfortunately unable to be identified due to a lack of information provided by the NAACP. Thus no conclusive evidence or relevant data was able to be collected.

Complaint Number 8:

The incident was determined to be a dating violence issue which, by Florida State Statute, requires law enforcement to make an arrest if probable cause exists, regardless if a victim is willing to pursue criminal charges. Deputy Lococo determined ██████████ was the primary aggressor which led to him being arrested for the crime. The other two white females involved were not classified as a dating violence incident; therefore, if the victim was unwilling to pursue criminal charges, the incident would have been considered resolved.

Lastly, in regard to the overall concern about a lack of consistency in Deputy Lococo's decisions to arrest students based solely on the color of their skin, during this investigation, Lieutenant Gordon found no discernible statistics that support this allegation. The overwhelming majority of interviews stated otherwise.

On August 16, 2023, the Internal Affairs investigation was presented to Chief Deputy Brian Henderson and the executive command staff. Upon completion of the presentation, Chief Deputy Henderson determined the citizen complaints made against Deputy Lococo and the violation of GO-026-02.IV.D.9.h – Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees in this incident were **unfounded**.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Report of Investigation
- B. Official Correspondence
- C. Complaint
- D. RMS Reports
- E. Transcript of Interview with Cynthia Slater, Daisy Grimes, and Thaddeus Collins
- F. Transcript of Interview with Ziryell Johnson
- G. Transcript of Interview with Shanisha Willis
- H. Transcript of Interview with Alan Canetti
- I. Transcript of Interview with Wes Porter
- J. Transcript of Interview with Brett Clark
- K. Transcript of Interview with Dorothy Mitchell
- L. Transcript of Interview with Danyalle Miles
- M. Transcript of Interview with Jess Cupp
- N. Transcript of Interview with Donna Baker
- O. Transcript of Interview with Mark Bradham
- P. Transcript of Interview with Sheila Browning
- Q. Transcript of Interview with Michele Passamonte
- R. Transcript of Interview with Christopher Zablo
- S. Transcript of Interview with Thomas Johnson
- T. Transcript of Interview with Wanda Jones
- U. Transcript of Interview with Ronald Emerson
- V. Transcript of Interview with Shantell Adkins

- W. Transcript of Interview with Keshia Rentz
- X. Transcript of Interview with Kevin Clark
- Y. Transcript of Interview with Nicholas Prince
- Z. Transcript of Interview with Sergeant Christy Sturup
- AA. Transcript of Interview with Deputy Justin Lococo
- BB. Deputy Lococo Personal Documentation
- CC. Digital Evidence (BWC and Interview Audio Files)

WITNESSES:

**Volusia Sheriff's Office
123 W. Indiana Avenue
DeLand, FL 32720**

Sergeant Christy Sturup

Deputy Justin Lococo

**Volusia County Schools
200 North Clara Avenue
DeLand, FL 32720**

Alan Canetti

Donna Baker

Wanda Jones

Wes Porter

Mark Bradham

Ronald Emerson

Brett Clark

Sheila Browning

Shantell Adkins

Dorothy Mitchell

Michele Passamonte

Keshia Rentz

Danyalle Miles

Christopher Zablo

Kevin Clark

Jess Cupp

Thomas Johnson

Nicholas Prince

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
308 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Daytona Beach, FL 32114**

Cynthia Slater

Daisy Grimes

Thaddeus Collins

Ziryell Johnson

Shanisha Willis

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing document and that the facts stated in it are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

AND

I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, under the penalty of perjury, that, to the best of my personal knowledge, information, and belief, I have not knowingly or willfully deprived, or allowed another to deprive, the suspect of the investigation of any rights contained in ss. 112.532 and 112.533, Florida Statutes.

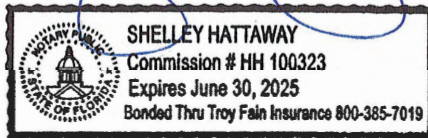
DETECTIVE: [Signature] DATE: 10-04-23

**Lieutenant Ben Gordon
Internal Affairs Lieutenant**

**STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF VOLUSIA**

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me by means of physical presence or online
Notarized this 4th day of October, 2023 by Lieutenant Ben Gordon

[Signature]
SIGNATURE OF NOTARY PUBLIC-STATE OF FLORIDA



PRINT, TYPE, OR STAMP COMMISSIONED NAME OF NOTARY PUBLIC

PERSONALLY KNOWN OR PRODUCED IDENTIFICATION

TYPE OF IDENTIFICATION PRODUCED

APPROVED BY: [Signature] DATE: 10/04/2023

**CHIEF DEPUTY BRIAN HENDERSON
VOLUSIA COUNTY, FLORIDA**