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Written Response Question #1

Our district shows impressive math and reading scores overall, with about 3 out of 4 students performing at or above grade level. However, a closer analysis shows that some areas of our district are high-performing while other areas are lower-performing schools. What specific approach would you take to address this disparity while maintaining our overall academic excellence?

The phrase “Everyday, Everyone, Everything Matters” has long guided my approach to leadership. It emphasizes that success is not measured solely by district-wide averages but instead by how well we serve each student daily. While our district should be proud of our overall academic strength, some schools face greater challenges than others, and those challenges require intentional and personalized support.

I value the superintendent’s use of advisory groups to stay connected with those doing the work. These conversations offer more than feedback; they reflect a leadership model prioritizing listening, collaboration, and responsiveness. I would like to continue this practice alongside direct engagement with schools to guarantee informed decision-making.

The district’s current tiered school support model, which aligns resources based on performance indicators, demonstrates that strategic and sustained support has proven effective. A prime example is the recent Title I initiative led by our Elementary and K-8 Regional Superintendent. This approach focused on improvement through embedded and ongoing assistance where district teams joined school-based teams in real time. They consistently reviewed student data, co-taught lessons, and modeled instructional strategies, especially in small group settings. This collaborative work strengthened Tier I instruction, accelerated student progress, and helped one school improve from a grade of D to an A in one year.

Reflecting on school performance, we must consider what children carry with them when they walk through our doors. Some students arrive ready to learn, while others need additional academic or emotional support. Their potential should never be viewed as less;

it simply takes more to unlock it. Our goal is not to standardize every school's path to excellence, it is to elevate all schools by meeting them where they are.

To achieve this, I would focus on three strategies. First, listening with intention. Leadership requires presence, and I believe in visiting schools and hearing directly from staff and families as these experiences provide insights no report can capture. Second, it is essential to continue to provide tiered and targeted support based on need. Supporting a tier 3 school differs from supporting a high-performing campus. This might mean additional staff for behavior and mental health assistance, early literacy intervention, or funding for extended learning time.

Finally, we must celebrate our successes. While addressing areas for growth, it is important to uplift what is working. High-performing schools offer a blueprint, but the goal is not to copy and paste. Instead, we can foster collaboration, allowing best practices to be shared and adapted in ways that fit each school's culture.

At the heart of this approach is the belief that people matter most. Teachers want to feel supported, principals want to lead with confidence, and families want to know their students are seen. True success comes from consistent and compassionate leadership and a shared commitment to helping every student and every school thrive.

Written Response Question #2

Our district projects significant growth in the coming years. What do you identify as the three most critical factors a superintendent must address to ensure successful expansion while maintaining educational excellence? How would you develop sustainable systems capable of accommodating continued growth?

Growth brings both opportunity and responsibility. In a district like ours, expansion cannot just be about keeping up with numbers, it must reflect who we are and what we value. It is not enough to add buildings. We need to grow in ways that protect our standards, meet our communities' needs, and support those that are doing the work. For me, it comes down to people, planning, and purpose.

I have led through growth before. At both Ocean Palms Elementary and Palm Valley Academy, I saw the realities of rapid expansion up close, managed staffing gaps, rezoning, construction delays, and community concerns. And yet, student learning could not take a back seat. With the support of district leaders and sitting principals, I facilitated the opening of Palm Valley Academy and a short three years later ensured a successful transition of students and staff to Pine Island Academy. Those experiences grounded me in

the belief that growth is not just logistical, it is personal. It affects people, trust, and culture. If we want to get it right, we must plan with those things in mind.

First, we invest in people. That means retaining who we have and preparing for who we will need. Leadership pipelines, coaching models, and job-embedded professional learning give our teams tools to grow into future roles. It is also important to clearly and consistently show potential hires why St. Johns County School District is a great place to work. People don't just join districts for salaries. They join for culture, clarity, and support.

Planning goes beyond building schools. It requires real alignment across departments and agencies. I would work closely with district leaders to help city and state officials understand what it takes to sustain a high-performing, fast-growing district, whether that is advocating to maintain our current referendums, making a case for increases to the base student allocation, or forecasting school construction in sync with new housing developments. We also need to involve our families. That means holding conversations early, being transparent about rezoning, and making sure students and staff know what to expect before change arrives.

Purpose is what keeps it all grounded. As we grow, we cannot lose sight of the classroom. Every student should have access to challenging academics, thoughtful support, and pathways to accelerate. Whether a student needs intensive intervention, enrichment, or an advanced course offering, our systems must be designed to meet them there. That includes a strategic funding approach and programmatic decisions that serve all learners.

Growth does not have to feel chaotic. When we lead with people in mind, make smart, forward-facing plans, and stay true to why we are here, growth can be manageable. My commitment is to make growth an asset not a disruption by leading with purpose and building systems that ensure every school is ready, every team is prepared, and every student has what they need to succeed.