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Dear Voter,

As an Okaloosa County School District employee and voter, I want you to know how much I value your opinion when you cast your vote for the next Superintendent of Schools. It has been four years since we've elected a school superintendent in our county, and with the election just a few months away, it is important for me to share with you my vision, leadership philosophy, and my reasons for running for Superintendent of Schools. I know we all want to make informed decisions as we prepare to vote on August 18th, and I am excited to share what "A New Day with Ray" will look like.

"IT'S A NEW DAY WITH RAY" – LEADERSHIP

My main motivation for running for Superintendent of Schools is that my leadership approach is vastly different than my opponent's approach. I firmly believe that it is a leader's responsibility to step up and lead, no matter the circumstances. I believe that leading should not be easy, but in fact many times leading should be difficult and challenging. During our district's darkest hour, my opponent proved that he is not willing to step up and lead. He did not lead all the departments he oversaw through it (i.e. ESE), but instead protected himself and his own career. As a result, our district bears the scars of fear and mistrust.

When I say that it will be, "A New Day with Ray," this is what I mean: as your elected Superintendent, I will daily move toward the messy parts (the bad and the ugly), so that you can do your job without fear. In my opinion, this is the only way that our district will heal and get back on track.

"IT'S A NEW DAY WITH RAY" – REDUCING DEMANDS

Right away, I will clean out the clutter! My fundamental approach is bringing steadfastness and simplicity to schools. I will initiate a review of every state and local requirement that impacts you, as school personnel, to "clean out" or eliminate redundancy, paperwork, and unnecessary demands.

When I say that it will be, "A New Day with Ray," I am making a commitment to you that if there is a state requirement that does not make sense, I will personally lobby the legislature to make a change. If it is a local requirement, I will work directly with our school board to eliminate it. My experience as a former state representative and as a former local county commissioner will be valuable in working on this project with the state and School Board. I believe that this will result in allowing our teachers to have the freedom and time to use their natural and creative skills.

"IT'S A NEW DAY WITH RAY" – CLASSROOM CULTURE

I have personally seen the challenges teachers face on a daily basis as my wife is a middle school math teacher here in Okaloosa County. I understand that it is impossible for teachers to teach the state standards at an optimum level when they are left unsupported regarding classroom disruptions. I will ensure that we create a consistent structure for discipline across the district by applying my approach of steadfastness and simplicity. It is a teacher's job to teach our state standards... and that is a BIG job...with all of the creative planning, assessment, and communication required.

"IT'S A NEW DAY WITH RAY!"

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When I say that it will be, “A New Day with Ray,” I am planning to minimize disruptions in the classroom by swiftly moving them from the teacher’s responsibility to the designated discipline administrator. A consistent approach with the support of the superintendent is the only way teachers will know they are being supported.

“IT’S A NEW DAY WITH RAY” – EXPERIENCE IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE

A common misconception is that many decisions for our school district are made at the local level, however, oftentimes they are not. Each of these components and more were put into law at the state level:

- Over 50% of the OCSD budget
- All standards to teach
- Graduation requirements
- Bright Futures scholarships
- Evaluation requirements
- Class size requirements
- Number of school days/year
- Take Stock in Children funds
- Child abuse reporting requirements
- School safety mandates
- Teacher certification requirements
- Mental health mandates
- Threat assessment team mandates
- “In God We Trust” signs
- Superintendent’s job requirements
- All major Covid-19 decisions

I am excited to use my unique experience as a state legislator to benefit our school district. My experience allows me to have a rich understanding of how these requirements were created and how to make changes when they are no longer relevant.

While serving in the legislature, I was appointed as Budget Chair and elected 84th Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives. While Budget Chair, I oversaw a \$73 billion budget for the state. Part of my budget experience was during the housing crisis in the 2000s, and I worked to make sure that education received one of the best budgets of the last 10 years. In the wake of Covid-19, we could see budget challenges again in the near future.

When I say that it will be, “A New Day with Ray,” I will use my experience to ensure that our school district is treated fairly, even in the midst of a challenging economic situation.

My opponent has had plenty of opportunities to make these changes, yet he did not.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If you have any questions you can contact me at voteray2020@gmail.com. If you want more details about me or the campaign you can visit my website at www.ray2020.com or join our Facebook page.

Sincerely,



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