

VOTE MICHAEL TAPLIN

DISTRICT 7 SCHOOL BOARD 

Dear District 7 Community,

My name is Michael Taplin, and I am excited to announce my candidacy for the District 7 Board of Education.

I have lived in the Edwardsville–Glen Carbon community my entire life and graduated from EHS in 2018. District 7 helped shape who I am, and I want to give back to the schools and community that have given me so much. As our community continues to grow and our students' needs evolve, we have an opportunity to build on District 7's strong foundation while preparing for the future.

I believe District 7 is strongest when it remains deeply connected to the community it serves. That is why listening to students, parents, teachers, staff, and taxpayers is essential. Through my service on the District 7 Equity Advisory Committee, I have gained a greater understanding of both our district's strengths and the challenges we must address together. Those include expanding support services for students who need additional academic support; providing teachers with high-quality curriculum and the flexibility to deliver engaging instruction; recruiting and retaining outstanding educators; and ensuring taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly while advocating for increased state funding as District 7 remains below full funding under Illinois' Evidence-Based Funding formula.

Professionally, I help lead strategic initiatives, manage marketing programs, and make data-driven decisions for a national company. Those experiences have strengthened my skills in planning, communication, accountability, and thoughtful decision-making, all qualities I will bring to the Board of Education.

My commitment to public education is deeply personal. As a young child, I had a significant speech impediment that made it difficult to communicate. My parents enrolled me in District 7's pre-kindergarten program for three years so I could receive the speech therapy necessary to learn how to speak and form sentences. Those educators gave me the confidence and skills that changed the course of my education. Years later, I had the honor of delivering the welcome address at graduation, a reminder of the lasting impact educators can have when students receive the support they need early on.

Because of the support I received, I graduated prepared for the opportunities that followed. Every student deserves the same opportunity, whether their path leads to college, a skilled trade, military service, or directly into the workforce.

While District 7 gave me opportunities that shaped my future, it also taught me systemic challenges school districts face. When I was in fourth grade, I watched my teacher lose her job during district-wide layoffs following the 2008 budget crisis. The next academic year, bus routes were shortened, class sizes increased, yet new technology was introduced across the district.

Looking back, I understand that school budgeting is far more complex than it appeared to a fourth grader. But I also learned that every budget decision affects real people. That experience taught me the

importance of proactive, long-term financial planning so that difficult budget decisions have as little impact on classrooms. Respecting our teachers means keeping our district fiscally sound so we never face those devastating layoffs again. Teachers build relationships, inspire confidence, and help students succeed every day. While technology and facilities are important, they should never come at the expense of the people who make learning possible.

Our teachers and staff are the reason District 7 has earned such an impressive reputation. Supporting and keeping great educators is not simply good for morale; it is the single best investment we can make in student success.

As a board member, every decision I make will come back to one question: ***“Will this decision help students succeed while supporting the teachers and staff who make that success possible?”*** The answer will not always lead to the easiest decision, but I believe it will lead to the best one for classroom success.

While I do not currently have children in the district, I have friends who do, and I understand the immense trust families place in our schools. I also recognize that school board members serve the entire community. Whether you are a parent, grandparent, educator, student, taxpayer, or a resident without children in the schools, you deserve to have your voice heard and the confidence that every single tax dollar is being invested wisely, transparently, in ways that directly benefit students. Education is one of the best investments we can make because strong schools create stronger communities.

Over the coming months, I hope to meet as many residents, parents, teachers, staff members, and students as possible. I want to hear what is working, what can be improved, and what you want the future of District 7 to look like. I do not claim to have all the answers. I believe the best leaders are those who listen before they lead. That is why I am running—to listen, ask thoughtful questions, and make decisions based on what is best for students, educators, and our community, not personal agendas or politics. Regardless of our backgrounds or viewpoints, I believe we all share the same goals: safe and welcoming schools, outstanding teachers, responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources, and students who are prepared to succeed after graduation.

The District 7 School Board election will be held on April 6, 2027. If you would like to learn more about me, my priorities, and how I hope to serve our schools, please visit michaeltaplin.com.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I would be honored to earn your trust, your support, and your vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Taplin", with a stylized, flowing script.

Michael Taplin

Candidate for District 7 Board of Education