

1. I am a wife, mother of two Edwardsville High School (EHS) graduates, career educator, former EHS Band Booster Treasurer, and current District 7 Board Member. My husband retired from the US Air Force after 20 years of active duty service and currently works for the Department of Defense. Our son, a former EHS band member, is a senior at Columbia College Chicago studying Illustration. Our daughter, a former Interact member and treasurer, is a junior majoring in criminal justice at Quincy University. Because of the nature of my husband's career, I have varied educational and teaching experiences. After earning a BA in Mathematics with a concentration in Secondary Education, I seized opportunities to teach middle school math in Texas public schools, Panama – Department of Defense Dependent Schools, and a New Jersey private Christian academy. After our transfer to Germany, I served as a high school math teacher at Ramstein High School and was able to earn a M.Ed. in Administration, Supervision, and Curriculum Development. Our family returned to the states after my husband's military retirement, and I had an exciting opportunity to work in a CTE focused alternative education program in Oklahoma. Four years later, our family relocated to Edwardsville. After unpacking boxes for the last time, I accepted a position in a Metro East school district as an Assessment Specialist and was promoted to Director and, finally, a Chief Academic Officer in charge of curriculum, assessment, school improvement, and oversight of technology, Title allocations and federal, state, and local grants.

2. Our family moved to Edwardsville in June, 2012. No matter where we lived as part of my husband's military career, I served as a teacher for the children in our community. We follow a motto of buy local, work local. For the first time, I am not in a community classroom or building. Instead, I have volunteered in school-based activities in District 7 schools in an effort to support the programs our children participated in as part of their middle and high school experience. While both of our children are now in college, I still work to find ways to participate in the educational scene in Edwardsville. Wanting to contribute more, I am seeking re-election for a seat on the District 7 School Board so that I may put my collected experiences to work in the continued development of our community and its schools. My current two-year term included decision-making in the worst of circumstances within a global pandemic and in the best interest of students and the community-at-large. I have found school boards should encompass community representatives with varied backgrounds and experiences. A good balance between those who can speak to local tradition mixed with those who have outside experiences create growth opportunities for the district without compromising the culture of the community. My hope is to continue to support the district and the community. I am excited about the chance to continue collaboration with fellow community members to support the educational vision of the district as an extension of the community and not be afraid to challenge it when growth opportunities arise. My unique background in education will help provide that growth opportunity for District 7.

3. Thirty years of college education mixed with on the job experiences coupled with the past two years of school board experience makes me well suited to act as a school board member. While I loved teaching math in the high school setting, my favorite post-graduate classes centered around educational law and policy. Through my professional memberships, I am able to keep up-to-date on current trends in education and the policies governing those trends. The additional duties of my current employment include working with the community's school board and specialized sub-committees to include Buildings and Grounds, Curriculum, Policy, Personnel, and Finance Committees. Serving on the school side of these committees has given me a perspective conducive to building relationships between the school and community. The best asset that I can bring to the board is current knowledge of state and federal funding, opportunities for grants and partnerships, and current legislation. I have studied education law through my Master of Education in Administration degree program and stay

current on Supreme Court decisions and changes in Illinois laws as they related to education mandates.

4. While there are many challenges facing public education, the three needing the most attention, in my opinion, are focused on equity.

- a. Educational opportunities for students in the middle to include post-secondary plans: Prior to the pandemic, our school district did an excellent job of providing educational opportunities for our top students. Increasing scores on college readiness exams along with the number of college credits students earn prior to high school graduation is phenomenal. Additionally, students from the Tiger Den are learning skills they will take into life after high school. While these are great milestones, I can't help but wonder what happens to all of the kids in the middle? Parents and students, alike, are expressing their desire to have vocational and Career Technical Education (CTE) courses in their middle and high school schedules. While students in the arts have choices non-existent in other districts, they struggle with assistance in post-secondary and career planning. Students who are "average" fly under the radar. What is most heartbreaking as an educator are the stories told by parents of students with special needs. Families who report lack of access to vital resources for their children are leaving schools in favor of homeschooling or moves to other districts. Some families are paying for intervention supports for their children outside of school time to keep them on-track with their peers. None have blamed teachers. All have questioned policies and resources. These students, like the CTE students, are in the middle. All students should have access and opportunity to pursue and explore their gifts, talents, and passions. All of this can be possible by being fiscally responsible with existing federal dollars and acquiring new funding through program specific grants.
- b. Support for Post-COVID Response: Many parents and students experienced a shift in the delivery of education. For some, this virtual opportunity proved to be a good experience for some students. For most, it left students and families wanting and expecting more. The local community is supported by several businesses who support education (ie. Sylvan Learning Center, Kumon, Brain Balance, etc). These have thrived in the past, and, I expect, they will continue to see their businesses grow. As a school board, we will support the efforts made by the district to provide intervention support, curriculum revisions, and technology enhancements.
- c. Technology Expectations: If we learned nothing else during the pandemic, it is that not all students and families have the same access to technology in the home for the purposes of school and work. When families were quarantined, parents and students competed for access to the family computer and internet. The district's response was to provide laptops to high school students and hotspots to families requesting support. While this response was beneficial to older students, children in grades preK – 8th grade were left without acceptable access to their teachers. The district will need to provide for the technology to enhance and further the education of students. The district will need to form partnerships with local businesses to secure the equipment and infrastructure to support such an endeavor at the middle and elementary schools.

5. At a time when innovation is needed to meet the challenges of a pandemic, a focus on cutting expenses is hard to do. The district has already examined how to meet the missing income from this past year in the form of paid services provided to families while considering the need to meet the challenges of needing additional technology resources years ahead of schedule. All districts in the state are faced with these challenges. District 7 must seize the financial benefits

of grants and community partnerships. Understanding the main focus of the past has been on restoring financial resources while making fiscally responsible decisions, the district has not explored the benefits of private, state, or federal grants based on intended outcomes. In the past, educational grants have been solely based on need. That is no longer the case. The district needs to target grants to help expand technology hardware and software and restore Career and Technical Education programming. Aside from state and local funding, the district takes advantage of other non-traditional income sources. Within the community, parents are picking up many costs through booster fundraising for some extra-curricular activities. The support of the local foundation assists as it is able with approved special projects for the district. But one has to wonder - Are there other community resources to tap into? The district has access to corporations and businesses in Edwardsville who are eager to be a part of district's success.

6. Dr. Henderson's resignation, while unexpected, is not uncommon in today's educational climate. The pandemic proved to provide challenges to district leaders that were unprecedented and never planned or trained for in the education world. It will be my job to support the incoming superintendent. The benefit of being a current board member is that I will have completed the process to hire him or her. The expectations and mutually agreed upon goals will be set prior to the beginning of the new school year. The board will support the development and implementation of a strategic plan. My unique knowledge of access to state and federal resources, mandates, and programs will allow me to assist the superintendent to maximize opportunities.

7. Having been attracted to Edwardsville because of its schools, I understand the relationship between successful schools and profitable businesses. If schools are in poor shape or fall short in serving the needs of the residents, then families stop moving in and some families move out of the district. For this reason, should the school board and district leaders deem schools to be unsafe or fail to offer a 21st Century experience for students, I would support a 1% county-wide school facilities sales tax as long as other financial options have been exhausted. Soliciting needed funds through increased taxes acts as a long-term investment for the entire community. If schools are thriving, then so will the economy of Edwardsville and its surrounding communities.

8. The District 7 School Board does an excellent job celebrating the academic, athletic, and character successes of its teachers and students. It is on the road to ensuring a Illinois Standards aligned curriculum in all core areas, and has a plan for bringing the district out of financial warning with the state. Within the last two years, we have partnered with a local union and a neighboring district to provide additional CTE opportunities for students. The district added much needed technology infrastructure to elementary and middle schools while providing laptops to teachers and high school students. And while these are achievements to praise, there are concerns from the community that must be addressed. While we had the opportunity to begin our work on equity and strategic planning, it did fall by the wayside as the district focused its response to the schools' closures. Personally, my most important accomplishment in this short two year term is what I have learned from my peers on the board. Each person carries a strength that makes for balanced discussions and decision-making; thus, making us a stronger and more informed board.

9. A key component to a successful school system is the partnership between schools and their community. "Teaching is the profession on which all other professions depend." -- Author Unknown, but who gets it. Schools cannot produce the next generation of a community without knowing what the community needs. Likewise, business partners can discover potential by

listening to the innovation of future residents. School and business partnerships ensure the survival of growth for the community. For that reason, the Chamber of Commerce acts as a resource for the district to locate partners in education. As discussed in my priorities, we must continually work to build upon all parts of the business community to include trade-based, public safety, services, and white-collar businesses. Internships and collaborative projects help create a better next generation workforce. This new workforce creates sustained and successful businesses feeding back to the Chamber of Commerce. Each system depends on the other.

10. Success of our collective efforts on the school board will be highlighted by comprehensive programs serving all students along the educational continuum. When District 7 is known to be the district of choice and when we have all members of a graduating class who collectively have post-secondary plans to include vocational training, military, college, and workforce entry skills, I will consider my term on the board to be successful.

11. Changes:

a. One area of improvement expected in the coming year is an improvement in system-wide communication and collaboration. Because of social distancing, face-to-face meetings have not been possible. Longer strategic sessions have been reduced to virtual meetings that bring about a zoom-fatigue.

b. The district has the responsibility to educate students per mandates of the state of Illinois. When unfunded mandates are directed towards schools, the district must find ways to make those mandates a reality. The primary

c. Having access to the state's educational agenda and newest focus on innovation, I would like to see Edwardsville take part in some of these initiatives. One program in particular, Competency Based Education, would be wonderful for all students on the educational continuum. As a fellow educator, I rarely see or hear about Edwardsville's involvement as a leader in the educational landscape of the state. In terms of readiness for the workforce, the district needs to build pathways to careers through long range planning from high school through post-secondary planning to include coursework on soft skills required by employers. In all, District 7 School Board is working to provide the framework and support for student and community success. As part of a continuous improvement model, changes are expected and needed to continue moving District 7 forward toward excellence.

d. As mentioned in earlier sections, we must offer robust CTE courses and provide pathways for students as they move from high school into the workforce. This means enhancing our existing programs and resources.

e. District 7 has managed the COVID-19 situation as best it can to keep students in school and face-to-face with their teachers. The unpredictable peaks in cases has forced inconsistency at a time when families and the community were wanting a return to normalcy. To respond to those inconsistencies, teachers have been working together, learning from one another, and building a stronger community of collaboration. As we continue to move forward, the district would benefit from using these professional learning communities to build on these experiences and produce more data responsive solutions to student and school needs.