

# Hills attorney seeks BOE seat

By Tom Bae  
staff writer

Jeffrey Gabel, the youngest of Clarence and Ruth Gabel's three children, will graduate from North Farmington High School in June.

But that event won't leave the Gabel family uninvolved with the Farmington Public Schools — not if father Clarence has his way.

Clarence M. Gabel, a 51-year-old attorney with a varied and interesting background in education and industry, hopes to enter the school system as a member of the board of education at the same time his youngest child leaves it.

Gabel is one of six candidates vying for one opening on the seven-member board. The top vote getter in the June 13 election will serve a four-year term. Gabel, whose law office is in the historic Centennial Place Building on 13 Mile, said he wanted his children out of the schools before he tried for the board position.

"It (having children in the system)

was one reason why I didn't get deeply involved in the schools before this," Gabel said in a recent interview. "A parent with a child in school just seems to have a little different perspective."

"I have no argument with people who want to serve and have children in the system. That's fine for them. It just didn't seem consistent for me."

NO STRANGER to education, Gabel taught mathematics and science Livonia, Birmingham and Chicago high schools as well as adult education courses at Wayne State University and Oakland University.

"Then I went into industry and worked with computers," said Gabel, "and then I went to law school."

Gabel holds a master's of business

administration as well as law and undergraduate degrees, but he's quick to point out that "they (the degrees) don't pay for any groceries."

Gabel, who lives with his family on Glastonbury Circle in Farmington Hills, has resided in the community for about 15 years and thinks highly of the school system.

"Obviously, there are always places to make improvements," he said. "Right now, I don't even know where those places are, but I'm willing to attend board meetings, help in studies... anything it takes to identify them."

"I'm not saying I have all the answers, but I think I have the capacity for developing some answers."

If he's voted in, Gabel and the other board members will be seeking answers to the problem of declining student enrollment and the resulting teacher layoffs or displacement.

"In a lot of districts, we've seen too many teachers teaching courses for which they're not really qualified," Ga-

bel said. "Being in math, I'm very sensitive to that."

GABEL FEELS that his past experience in computers will be useful in developing programs for the Farmington schools.

"I'm very much in favor of the development of computer courses in the schools," he said. "We need them, not just in the high schools, but the junior high and elementary schools as well."

"But I'm concerned with the approach their using at this time. I'm not sure they're teaching the things that are vital in regards to computers. Their emphasis seems to be on teaching computer language rather than computers."

Concerning the amount of money he intends to spend on his campaign, Gabel said, "I don't think this is the type of position that warrants spending a lot of money. I don't anticipate taking up collections."

"Whatever I do collect, I'll report, of course."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer  
Clarence M. Gabel, candidate for the Farmington school board, reads the law in his Centennial Place office.

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