

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Dr. Genevra Walters

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Education is Key - Alternatives in Education* Oral History project

Interview # EA-A-L-2019-026

Geneva Walters, superintendent for the Kankakee School district who now uses the competency-based learning model, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key – Alternatives in Education* Oral History project.

Date: May 22, 2019    Location: Kankakee, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview being  
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Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_    Total Time: 1:02 / 1.03 hrs

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The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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## Abstract

Dr. Genevra Walters, *Alternatives in Education*, EA-A-L-2019-026

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Geneva Walters was born in November 1968 in Chicago, Illinois. She attended Kankakee public schools. Her freshman year of high school was at Westview when the Kankakee School District had two high schools. For her last three years, she attended the unified Kankakee High school, graduating in 1986. She graduated from the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) in 1990, and then earned an MA degree in Social Work in. Genevra next attended Illinois State University, where she earned a special education endorsement. She also attended Western Illinois University, earning her superintendence endorsement. Her work experiences include teaching in Head Start, being a school social worker, and serving as principal at Mark Twain Elementary, all in Kankakee. She then worked at SPEED Special Education in Chicago Heights, Illinois serving as a human resources director and then as Executive Director. In 2013, she returned to Kankakee as its Superintendent.

During this interview Dr. Walters discusses how competency learning became a part of the Kankakee #111 school district, and how it was implemented in the high school's freshmen class. She explains the involvement of parents, the community and employers and how the program was implemented into all high school grades as well as for elementary, middle, and junior high schools. A yearlong training course for staff and administrators was important for its success. The high school's curriculum was also adjusted to meet the new teaching team strategies. Genevra discussed how this model was shared with the community college, area career center, and area universities. She shared some of her favorites stories about implementing the new program in Kankakee district #111. The school is an ISBE Pilot School receiving a state grant connected to the Post-Secondary and Work Force Readiness Act of 2016.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** competency based learning model; Post-Secondary and Work Force Readiness Act (2016); Illinois State Board of Education; Kankakee School District #111; high school construction in Kankakee; High School Academies (Business, Medical-Health Services, Leadership and STEAM)

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