

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Elizabeth (Beth) Purvis, Ph. D

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Public School Funding Oral History project

Interview # EF-A-L-2019-016

Elizabeth Purvis, Governor Rauner's Secretary of Education during legislative work on a new evidence based school funding initiative, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key - Public School Funding Oral History project*.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Apr 26, 2019 Location: Waukesha, Wisconsin

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:31 / 1.52 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 20,
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The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield,
Illinois.

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Abstract

Beth Purvis, Public School Funding, EF-A-L-2019-016

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Elizabeth (Beth) Purvis was born in Syosset, New York in June 1965, and grew up in Garden City, New York. She graduated from Our Lady of Mercy (Syosset), an all-girls high school in 1983. In high school, Beth would be active in camps focusing on children with disabilities. She graduated from Bucknell University in 1982 with a focus on education in 1987. She later earned a MA from Columbia University in the field of early childhood and visually handicapped education. She later earned a doctorate in early intervention from Vanderbilt University. Beth's work experience included five years teaching special education in Montgomery County, Maryland, five years teaching special education at the University of Illinois Chicago, and Executive Director of Chicago International which operated Charter Schools in Chicago and Rockford, Illinois. She became Illinois' Secretary of Education under Governor Bruce Rauner, serving for two and a half years. At the time of the interview Beth was the director for the Kern Family Foundation.

Purvis discusses the important years of 2014-2017 during which the question of public school funding became more heated due to the growing inequity in funds available from one district to another. She looked at the legislative action which led to the new school funding model called Evidence Based School Funding and the important bipartisan legislative commission of twenty members who set as goals to obtain more state money for K-12 education, greater equity per pupil, and an efficient method of distribution. In addition, the commission looked at a definition of adequacy which had been a problem with past legal school funding challenges. Purvis also discussed mandate relief, third party service contracts, private school tax credits, allowing referendums for the public in the wealthiest school districts (Tier 4), and providing a mechanism for the poorest high property tax school districts to swap state money for local funding. She explained why some topics were not included in the new funding model: transportation, early childhood, pensions, and school reorganization.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Legislative School Funding Commission (2106-2017); Evidence Based Funding Model; Evidence Based School Funding; legislative discussions on the school funding model; Governor Bruce Rauner; governor's amendatory veto of school funding legislation; school funding inequities between Illinois school districts; Every Student Succeeds Act; legislative history of Illinois school funding

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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