

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Geoff Deigan

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Alternatives in Illinois Education Oral History project

Interview # EA-A-L-2019-014

Geoff Deigan, executive director of the Prairie Crossing Charter School, 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: Feb. 4, 2019 Location: Prairie Crossing Charter School, Grayslake, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:30 / 1.5 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 23, 2019.

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

Interview being
processed

© 2019 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

Geoff Deigan, *Alternatives in Education*, EA-A-L-2019-014

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Geoff Deigan was born in Chicago, Illinois in April 1962. Geoff grew up in Schaumburg, Illinois and graduated from Schaumburg High School in 1980. He attended Southern Illinois University (Carbondale) majoring in social science and earned a BS in Teacher Education in 1985. He worked for Roy F. Weston Inc from 1987-1996, and in 1997 he founded WRD Environmental, with an objective of creating sustainable landscapes. Geoff served as a board member for Prairie Crossing Charter School near Grayslake, and became its executive director in 2013. Geoff has served as Treasurer and Vice President of BOD-Conserve Lake County and, is a current board member of the Illinois Network Charter School. He has received numerous landscaping awards for his work, and has published several journal articles, and is co-founder and chairman for the Institute for Integrated Environmental Education.

Deigan discussed the creation of Prairie Crossing Charter School in 1989, and its gradual development over the years into a K-8 school located in two different elementary school districts in Lake County. Geoff talked about the role of the State Board of Education and the Illinois School Charter Commission in its oversight of charter schools. He also addressed the following topics: the campus site and recent building development, the school's curriculum including before and after school program, school sports and activities, student selection via a lottery (state cap at 430 and the waiting list), sources of funding (per capita tuition), its environmental mission, the role of parents, the duties of the Board of Directors, and teacher/staff selection and retention. He defined charter schools and how they function under state law. Deigan explained how the school incorporates environmental education into the school day and in student projects. Also, reviewed is how the school cooperates with the Prairie Crossing subdivision, which itself was created with an environmental mission.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Prairie Crossing Charter School; charter schools in Illinois; environmental mission of Prairie Crossing; role of Board of Directors for charter schools; parental involvement in charter schools; Illinois Charter School Commission; Illinois State Board of Education; funding for Illinois charter schools; Conserve Lake County

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.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955