

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jo Anderson

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
1985 Education is Key-1985 Educational Reform Act
Oral History project

Interview # E85-A-L-2014-045

Jo Anderson, who worked on the implementation of the 1985 Educational Reform Act while at the IL Education Association and later, at the Department of Education, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key-1985 Educational Reform Act* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Nov 17, 2014 Location: IEA/CEC Building in Lombard, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: Susan Burke, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Audrey Sloan & Janice Culp, ALPL volunteers

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The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Jo Anderson, *Education is Key*, E85-A-L-2014-045

Biographical information: Jo Anderson was born in Mobile, Alabama in 1944. He grew up in the New England area and graduated from St. John's Prep school, Massachusetts in 1962. Jo earned a BA in Philosophy from Boston College in 1965, then moved to Chicago, earning an MA from the University of Chicago in 1971. His masters work was in the field of social thought. Jo has spent much of his career with the Illinois Education Association and was its executive director from November 2005 to March 2009. From 1987 to 2005 he served as executive director of the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC). The Consortium is a network of eighty-five school districts, working in a collaborative labor-management relationship to reform their districts and to improve student learning. In April of 2009, Jo became a senior advisor to US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. In January 2014, Jo returned to the CEC, serving as co-executive director.

In this interview, Jo details the impact of the 1985 Education Reform Act on the teaching profession, Illinois Schools, and Illinois students. Among the reforms covered were the purpose of schooling, learning goals, assessments, alternatives to social promotion, principal/teacher evaluation, new school funding sources, kindergarten full day/prekindergarten, educational service centers, the Illinois Math Science Academy, Casimir Pulaski Day, staff development, testing of potential new teachers, school safety requirements, teacher compensation, modifications to the newly created Educational Labor Relations Board, and some Chicago reforms. Jo also reviewed the difficulty that the School District Reorganization language found throughout the state.

Subject Headings/Key Words: 1985 Educational Reform Act; "A Nation at Risk;" impact on teachers of the Reform Act; teaching evaluations in Illinois; staff development in Illinois; developing standards/assessment for Illinois; collective bargaining and its relationship to school governance; the partnership of the federal, state, and local education groups; No Child Left Behind.

Note 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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