

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Dr. Charles Abelmann

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

Interview # EA-A-L-2018-052

Charles Abelman, the Director of the University of Chicago Laboratory 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.

Interview dates & location:

Sept. 10, 2018 Interview conducted at the University of Chicago Lab Schools,  
Chicago, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

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

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

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 1:24 / 1.4 hrs.

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

Interview being  
processed

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## Abstract

Charles Abelmann, *Alternatives in Education*, EA-A-L-2018-052

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Charles Abelmann was born in November 1965 in Boston, Massachusetts. He attended Fenn School in Concord, MA and graduated from Milton High School, where he participated in speech, drama, and theatre. Charles graduate from Duke University in 1987, earning degrees in English and religion. He was then a visiting scholar at St. Peter's College, Oxford University. In 1988-89 he taught Language Arts at the Carolina Friends School. As a Luce Scholar in 1989-90, he worked in Malaysia. During the early 1990's he worked in the state of Mississippi and in 1993 he earned master's degree and in 1996 a Doctorate from Harvard Graduate School of Education with a concentrating in Administration, Planning and Social Policy. While at Harvard he taught in that department, did research on educational policy, and worked with the Boston Public Schools on educational reform. Abelmann worked at the World Bank from 1999-2006 specializing in East Asia and Pacific areas. He was principal at Janney Elementary (2001-04), and Head of the Barrie School in Maryland from 2010-2017. In 2017 Dr. Abelmann became Director of the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools.

This interview covers the history of the University of Chicago Lab Schools, established in 1896, as developed by John and Alice Dewey. The Lab School currently has two campuses. The newest campus was created in 2013 and houses Pre-K through 2nd grade, while the historic campus houses grades 3-12. The total student population at both campuses runs between 2,000-2,200. Dr. Abelmann discusses such topics as enrollment/eligibility, relations with the University of Chicago (financial, shared services, joint classes), the influence of John Dewey, current course offerings, unique educational programs, teacher selection, parent/alumni/citizen advisory involvement, the schools' role in Hyde Park, numerous athletics and activities, and the Lab Schools networking with other schools in Chicago.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** University of Chicago Laboratory School; John and Alice Dewey; development of the Lab Schools; University of Chicago; mission and philosophy of the lab schools; Earl Shapiro Hall; sports and activities at the Chicago Lab School; development of Chicago Laboratory School facilities

**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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