

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Maria Medina Seidner
Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key-1985 Educational Reform Act Oral History project

Interview # E85-A-L-2015-003

Maria Medina Seidner, former Illinois State Board of Education Bilingual Director, 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: Jan 27, 2015 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Springfield, IL
(phone interview)

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:25 / 1.42 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on September 1, 2015.

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

Transcript
being processed

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Abstract

Maria Medina Seidner, Education is Key, E85-A-L-2015-003

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Maria Medina Seidner was born in _____, Puerto Rico in _____ (?). She was from a military family and attended school in Switzerland. In 1950, she went to school in Texas and graduated later from Killeen (Texas) High School. She earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Texas majoring in French and Spanish. She began her work with the Texas State Agency. Fluent in English, Spanish, French, Italian and German, she moved to Illinois and began working for the state Bilingual Center, first in Mt. Prospect and then Arlington Heights from 1972-1979. That Center covered six states, responsible for implementing the provisions of the 1968 Bilingual Education Act. The Center provided training for teachers, curriculum material for school use, support for working with students in different languages, and workshops on many language topics. In 1980, Maria went to work directly with the Illinois State Board of Education. Her assignments included working on the state-wide applications for bilingual grants, helping the Chicago Public School system, working with the best bilingual service delivery model, finding certified bilingual teachers, and assessing bilingual programs. She left in 1994 to work with the Texas Department of Education.

This interview details the development of the Illinois Bilingual Program starting in 1972, which included the bilingual mandate found in the 1985 Educational Reform Act. The 1985 change required that any school having a limited English student must provide programming that would help the student be ready for the curriculum being taught at that school. In addition, students being considered for special education services would need to be tested in their native language. This interview covers how bilingual services in Illinois were impacted by court cases, state law, and changing demographics. She discussed modifications or additions dealing with the Bilingual Census, the growing number of languages students spoke, performance of non-English speaking students, different types of bilingual delivery services, how students were able to exit bilingual programs, and the required yearly school/state evaluations of bilingual grants.

Subject Headings/Key Words: 1985 Educational Reform Act; evolution of bilingual education in Illinois; Illinois State Board of Education; bilingual division of the IL State Board of Education; bilingual reform stemming from the 1985 Education Act; Supreme Court case *Lau versus Nichols*; *Gomez v. Illinois State Board of Education*; bilingual delivery systems (ESL Bilingual, Integrated)

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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