

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Ralph Martire, JD

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Education in Illinois-Public School Funding* Oral History project

Interview # EF-A-L-2019-104

Ralph Martire, Executive Director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education in Illinois – Public School Funding* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Dec. 5, 2019

Location: Center for Tax and Budget Accountability Office,  
Chicago, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

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

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

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 1:31 / 1.52 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 26, 2020.

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

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## Abstract

Ralph Martire, *Education is Key – Funding*, EF-A-L-2019-104

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Ralph Martire was born in July 1959 in Bridgeport, Connecticut. He earned a BA in history from Indiana University in 1982, and a JD from the University of Michigan in 1985. Following graduation, Martire worked from 1986-2004 with three Chicago law firms. In 1999 he became the Executive Director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, a 501(c) (3) think tank whose stated mission is to ensure “state, federal, and local workforce, education, fiscal, economic, and budget policies are fair, just, and promote opportunity for all.” At the time of the interview Martire served on the Oak Park-River Forest High School Board as well as on the Professional Review Panel which looks at how the Evidence Based School Funding Model has been functioning on raising schools to a higher level of adequacy. From 2011-2013, Martire was a full voting commissioner to the congressionally established “Equity and Excellence in Education Commission.” This work led to the report “For Each and Every Child” in February 2013.

Martire discusses the prior school funding formula which increasingly relied on property taxes to fund Illinois’s public schools. The Evidence Based Funding Model (EBF) presented in 2011 gradually became the prominent alternative funding formula over a six year period. Ralph talks about the yearly steps leading to the passage of the EFB and how the complex nature of twenty-seven evidence based concepts merged with a distribution model designed to provide greater funds to the poorest schools (Tiers 1 and 2). He looks at how the EFB has done in getting more funds to the poorest schools, how it has dealt with funding for minority students, and its success in moving school districts to higher adequacy levels. He also discusses future challenges in meeting the target of having public schools reach a level of adequacy by 2028 (a 10 year period). The interview concludes with a look at how the new funding model has impacted wealthier Tier 3 school districts, especially in western Cook County.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Evidence Based Funding Model (EBF); funding shortfalls for Illinois public schools; history of funding for Tier 3 Illinois public schools; Oak Park-River Forest High School Board; western Cook County school districts;

**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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