

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Robert (Bob) Sondgeroth

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
School Consolidation Oral History project

Interview # AI-A-L-2017-016

Robert (Bob) Sondgeroth, the regional superintendent for Regional Office of Education (ROE) #47, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Public School Reorganization* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Apr 5, 2017 Location: Regional Office of Education, Sterling, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:53 / 1.88 hrs.

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

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Transcript
being processed

Abstract

Robert (Bob) Sondgeroth, School Consolidation, AI-A-L-2017-016

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Robert (Bob) Sondgeroth was born on September 23, 1956 in Sterling, Illinois. He graduated from Newman High School in Sterling in 1974, and from Illinois State University with a BS degree in education in 1978. Upon graduation, Bob returned to Sterling and worked for the city's fire department from 1978 to 1988. Leaving the fire department, Bob then worked in the hardware business for two years, and in the insurance business from 1990 to 1995. During that time he also worked as a substitute teacher. This led to his teaching and coaching at East Coloma School from 1995 to 2003. During that time Sondgeroth earned a Masters degree in educational administration from National Louis University and a superintendent endorsement from Western Illinois University. He was then hired to be the Assistant Regional Superintendent for Whiteside County from 2003 to 2010, and become its regional superintendent from 2011 to 2015. Due to regional office restructuring, Whiteside County merged with Lee and Ogle Counties, becoming Regional Office of Education (ROE) #47. Since 2015, Bob has served as the Regional Superintendent for those three counties.

Sondgeroth talks about the public school reorganization that has taken place recently in Whiteside, Lee, and Ogle Counties from his perspective as the regional superintendent of that region. Two methods were examined. Consolidation was used in the East Coloma and Nelson reorganization, while dissolution-annexation was used for Riverdale and Rock Falls elementary schools. Bob discusses the reasons for choosing those reorganization methods, leading to slightly larger elementary districts. The opposite of school reorganization was discussed through the Shared Service Report. All school districts in the region work with their neighboring districts to increase athletic participation through cooperative teams. They also share transportation, food service, teachers, offer joint courses or utilize on line learning, and create joint purchasing co-ops. Cooperatives in vocational education and special education also exist, as do dual credit programs conducted with the area community colleges. Also, discussed were the services provided by the ROE, services such as truancy programs, homeless coordination and pre-school/parents as educators programs that no one district or school could handle. Sondgeroth lays out the step by step reorganizations of the state's regional offices, which are now down to thirty-five, and how this was accomplished in Whiteside, Lee, and Ogle counties.

Subject Headings/Key Words: school reorganization and consolidation in Illinois; Regional Office of Education # 47 (Whiteside, Lee and Ogle Counties); Illinois school reorganization methods using consolidation, annexation, and dissolution; shared services and programs in ROE districts; one-room school teacher contracts, pre-1920;

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