

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Joseph Turek

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

Interview # E85-A-L-2014-035

Joseph Turek, who worked at the State Board of Education during the discussion and implementation of the Educational Reform Act of 1985, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key – Educational Reform Act of 1985* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

October 1, 2014 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Springfield, IL

Interview format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Leslie Struble and Janice Culp ALPL volunteers

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

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Abstract

Joe Turek, Educational Reform Act of 1985, E85-A-L-2014-035

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Joe Turek was born in Chicago, Illinois in November, 1946. He graduated from Notre Dame High School (Niles, IL) in 1964. Joe attended St. Bede Jr. College and in 1969 earned a BA from Bradley University, as well as an MA in 1971. Joe started his teaching career at Academy of Our Lady and Spaulding Institute in Peoria, Illinois. He then worked for the State of Illinois for eleven years in the area of financial oversight in the Departments of Finance and Corrections. Those assignments included prisoner claims, vehicle purchases, support services, and involvement in Cook County operations. In 1984, Joe joined the Illinois State Board of Education and spent the next twenty years working in this agency. His assignments there included civil rights enforcement (gender, disabilities, and minority), vocational education (education for employment) and oversight of the truant and optional alternative education programs statewide. This included the issues of dropouts, truancy, programmatic services, and state funding levels. This would lead Joe to visit the funded sites on a regular basis.

This interview covers the Truant/Optional Alternative Educational programs, which were created and being funded based on one of the reforms found in the 1985 Educational Reform Act. This interview covers the programs' history, their objectives, and programmatic services. Turek explains the role of the RFP (Request for Proposal) program and the evaluation system used to select the seventy statewide programs. Also discussed are the challenges in maintaining programs, the definition of chronic truant, the impact of dropouts on society, and the coordination needed for various services.

Subject Headings/Key Words: 1985 Educational Reform Act; Truant/Optional Alternative Educational programs in Illinois; economic and societal costs of truancy; definition of "Chronic Truant"; Illinois State Board of Education Truant-Alternative programs;

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