

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Ross Hodel

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
1985 Educational Reform Act Oral History project

Interview # E85-A-L-2014-026

Ross Hodel, a career educator who discusses his involvement with the 1985 Educational Reform Act, 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: August 12, 2014 Location: Illinois State University, Normal, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: Pat Freeman, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Elizabeth Huck & Janice Culp, ALPLM volunteers

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

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Abstract

Ross Hodel, *1985 Educational Reform Act*, E85-A-L-2014-026

Biographical information: Ross Hodel was born in Peoria, Illinois in August, 1943. He was raised on a farm and graduated from Metamora High School in 1961. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Illinois State University in 1965, and a master's degree in education supervision in 1969. His Ph. D, from Ohio State University, was earned in 1987. Hodel taught for the Pekin Public Schools from 1965 to 1968 and worked as an administrator for West Aurora School District #129 from 1968-73. He later worked at Ohio State University (1973-75), at the Illinois State Board of Education (1975-83), for the Office of the Governor (1983-85), at the Illinois Board of Higher Education (1981-2003), and at Illinois State University (2001-2012). Much of his work involved finance and policy issues, while at the Illinois State Board of Education, the Board of Higher Education, and at Illinois State University.

In this interview Hodel details the processes and the legislative activity that led to the 169 educational reforms included in the 1985 Educational Reform Act. This includes the prior work laid out in *A Nation at Risk*, Governor Thompson's Better Schools Program, the Illinois Commission on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the various studies and reports provided by the many educational stakeholders. He also discusses various reform topics, including purpose of schooling, learning goals, assessments, social promotion restrictions, principal/teacher evaluation, new revenue taxes, unit district levy equalization, kindergarten full day/entrance age, educational service centers, the Illinois Math Science Academy, Casimir Pulaski Day, staff development, school safety, and Build Illinois. He also reviewed the difficulty presented by school reorganizations and consolidations.

Subject Headings/Key Words: 1985 Educational Reform Act (SB 730); Governor Jim Thompson's Better Schools Program; Illinois Math Science Academy; principal/teacher evaluation; Casimir Pulaski Day; educational staff development; *A Nation at Risk*; learning goals for schools; revenue sources for education

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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