

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Cynthia (Cindy) Dykas

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key--Public School Funding Oral History project

Interview #EF-A-L-2020-015

Cynthia Dykas, an accountant who works for the New Lenox school district, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key—Public School Funding* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Feb. 6, 2020 Location: Worth #127 District Office, Worth, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:17 / 1.28 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 3, 2020.

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

Transcript being
processed

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Abstract

Cindy Dykas, Public School Funding, EF-A-L-2020-015

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Cindy Dykas was born in West Allis, Wisconsin in 1974. She attended parochial elementary schools and then three parochial high schools (St. Mary's, Thomas More, and Pius XI). Upon graduating high school in 1993, Cindy attended St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana, where she graduated with a degree in accounting in 1997. From 1997 to 2003, she worked in the private sector as an accountant. For ten years, Cindy worked in Orland Park District #135 serving first as an Accountant and then the Comptroller. In 2013, she joined the Worth School District as its Business Manager/Chief School Business Official. During her time at Orland Park, Cindy earned an MBA in Finance from Lewis University, where she graduated in 2004. At the time of the interview, Cindy served as the Chair for the South Suburban Benefits Cooperative, a member of SCOPE (an area legislative group), and a school board member for New Lenox School District #122 Board of Education since 2018. She also had been elected to the Parent Advisory Council for Advocate Children's Hospital, where she served from 2012-2014.

In this interview, Dykas discussed school funding for Tier 1 Elementary School Districts located in southern Cook County. She also covered how the district dealt with the financial challenges prior to the Evidence Based Funding model. These challenges included staff cutbacks, deferred maintenance, bond sales to pay off long term debt, and rate referendums. The new funding model allowed the school district to add interventionists (such as Special Education, nurses, English Learner Specialists, and Social Workers) and to make building renovations. Also discussed was the \$900,000 Property Tax Reduction Grant that the School District recently received. Dykas also discussed future challenges, including the new minimum wage law, pension cost shifting, enrollment changes, the lack of existing building space, building maintenance, more higher need children, and future teacher/interventionist shortage. Finally, she covered payroll changes needed for Site Based reporting under ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act).

Subject Headings/Key Words: Property Tax Swap Grant; Evidence Based Funding Model; south suburban elementary districts; school funding; school board membership

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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