Interview with
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Interviewer: Phil Pogue

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Pogue: This is Philip Pogue. We're at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. We're talking with Sally Pancrazio, who will be discussing the 1985 Educational Reform Act and her involvement in that. Sally, could you begin with telling us your own background and family history, high school and college?

Pancrazio: Thank you Phil. My full name is Sally Frances Bulkley Pancrazio. I was born in Endicott, New York. My mother was from Chicago; my father was going to school in Chicago, although his home was Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. They relocated back to Binghamton and Endicott, New York, which is in the western part of the state.

Dr. Sally Pancrazio

My father died young in a car accident, and my mother was advised by the Loyal Order of Moose to send us children—there are four of us—to Mooseheart, which is a school for

dependent children, forty miles southwest of Chicago.[1] She believed that the children would be placed together in a house. That did not happen. Nevertheless, we all graduated from Mooseheart.

Because I received a scholarship from the Women of the Moose, I was able to attend and receive my bachelor's degree in three years from Illinois State Normal University, in the area of business education.[2] That was 1960. I started teaching at that time, met my husband to be, and we moved to Indiana where he was enrolled in graduate school. I received, from Indiana State University, a master's degree in business education. Later on, several years later, I attended the University of Illinois and received a doctorate in education.

My father, before his death, of course, was superintendent of a bakery. My mother was a housewife, but went back to school to become a secretary and work in the church at Mooseheart.

Pogue: How was your experience at Mooseheart?

Pancrazio: I was almost eleven when I went there. I remembered home very well, and I survived. It was very unlike my home experience, as an institution for 800 children might be. It was very difficult on my younger brother and sister, much more difficult for them than for myself. But I am very grateful that I was able to obtain a scholarship that paid my entire way for my bachelor's degree.

Pogue: How about your work history once you got your degrees?

Pancrazio: I started out as a business education teacher. When my husband went to graduate school, I began working in a research and testing office at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, and I started my master's degree at that time, beginning with courses in research and statistics. That prepared me for further research work and also started my interest in obtaining a doctorate in education.

When I finished at the University of Illinois—we had two children in grade school by then—I obtained a non-tenured line position at Illinois State. My husband was a founding faculty member at then-called Sangamon State University, now the University of Illinois at Springfield. I then began to look for positions in Springfield, since I was commuting from Springfield.

[1] The Loyal Order of Moose is a fraternal and service organization founded in 1888 and headquartered in Mooseheart, Illinois. It's mission is Caring for Young and Old, Bringing Communities Closer Together, and Celebrating Life. (https://www.mooseintl.org/)

[2] The Women of the Moose are the female auxiliary of the Loyal Order of Moose. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_of_the_Moose)

At that time, Michael Bakalis, the last elected state superintendent, had just won election.[3] They were looking for appropriate people for positions in a political office. I had registered as a Democrat and was offered several jobs with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), all of them paying more than the university work I was then doing.

The OSPI became the Illinois Office of Education and then, when the new state board emerged, as a result of the 1970 constitutional amendment, it was later called the Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE]. I spent eighteen years with that agency before returning to Illinois State University [ISU]. I retired from Illinois State in 2001 as the dean of the College of Education.

Pogue: Why did you have an interest in education? You indicated that, at one time, you wanted to be a business education teacher, then you started involving work at ISBE and then at ISU.

Pancrazio: At that time, teaching positions in business were declining significantly. At that same time, my interest in teacher education in general was developing. Also, my background in research was being strengthened. The position that I ended up taking at then OSPI, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, was one in research. I was hired as a researcher. Less than a year later I was offered the position of director of the research section. That then became the director of research and statistics and then chief of research and statistics.

I then had a chance to staff the board's Policy Committee. The board had, I think, three committees at that time. One was on emerging policies, and I staffed that. When Ted Sanders and Nelson Ashline left the State Board of Education, I was named acting executive deputy superintendent of education, when Bob Leininger was then named superintendent.[4, 5, 6] I had a chance to

[3] Michael J. Bakalis is an American academic and politician. He was the Democratic nominee for Governor of Illinois in 1978, losing to incumbent Republican governor James R. Thompson. Bakalis is the founder, President and CEO of American Quality Schools, an education management organization that operates charter schools in the Midwestern United States. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Bakalis)

[4] Dr. Ted Sanders is an education executive and corporate director with a demonstrated history of working in the education management industry. His decades of service include working as U.S. deputy secretary of education, president of the Education Commission of the States, president of Southern Illinois University, and the Chief State School Officer (State Superintendent) of Nevada, Illinois and Ohio. (https://www.niet.org/who-we-are/our-board/show/ted-sanders)

[5] Nelson Francis Ashline retired from the Illinois State Board of Education in 1990, where he served as executive deputy superintendent. He went on to work at the US Department of Education and Southern Illinois University before ending his career. (https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/springfield-il/nelson-ashline-5581352)

[6] Robert Leininger was the long-serving State Superintendent for Illinois from 1988 to 2004. One of the most contentious and ongoing challenges Leininger dealt with during his tenure was the subject of school reorganization and consolidation, which was governed by the 1985 School Reform Act. (https://www2.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/OralHistory/EducationisKey/School/Pages/LeiningerRobert.aspx)

return back to Illinois State University as a department chair, so it was just a matter of taking those opportunities that opened up.

At the time I was at Mooseheart, the opportunities for women, career-wise, were either nursing, teaching, or secretarial work, perhaps cosmetology. I combined interest in teaching with business and became a business education teacher. I just flowed with the opportunities and ended up where I am.

Pogue: What did the Department of Research and Statistics do?

Pancrazio: The [Illinois] School Code [ISC] requires the state agency to compile statistics on Illinois schools, including some statistics on non-public schools, in order to describe the condition of Illinois education. It also, at one time, maintained the retirement system, so there was significant data bases about students, teachers, finance that the agency was in charge of. All those data bases were a part of the analytical work of research and statistics.

Pogue: Now, this was before the era of computers?

Pancrazio: Yes it was. Although we had the large computers, it was prior to the PCs [personal computers]. It's kind of interesting because several of our research staff immediately wanted to have their own PCs, and the computer staff said, "Oh no, we don't want you to have them because we're afraid you will take our work." I assured them that work expands to make more work, and that's what happened. I'd say in the last couple years of my tenure, just about each and every researcher had his or her own PC to analyze data.

But we were in charge… We went from an era of collecting data and describing the condition of education, doing descriptive work, to doing evaluations and then doing what I would call policy related research. That emerged as the board became more sophisticated in the kinds of questions that they wanted answered.

Pogue: Could you give us an example of a policy tie-in with research?

Pancrazio: At that time, equity was a major concern, racial equity and gender equity. Because we had the data bases on the ethnicity of teachers and students, we were able to examine the extent to which there were disproportionalities. For example, although the teaching profession was populated by primarily females, females in the superintendencies were drastically under-represented. So we were able to examine those kind of employment inequities.

Similarly, we had discipline records on students, the extent to which students were receiving spankings, suspensions, or other kinds of disciplines. Those data were recorded by ethnicity. We were able to determine that minority children and children in primarily minority schools were more often

punished or received sanctions. Those kind of equity questions led to policy questions about what was happening in the schools.

Pogue: You talked about being on the staff with board policy, what other divisions or people were involved with that?

Pancrazio: As a staff member—I was also managing research and statistics at that time—it was our job to prepare briefing notes for the board chairman and set the agendas and make sure that the agenda items were properly prepared to be presented to the board. Our job was to assure that our board members were well prepared and that the board meetings went as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Because the state board was new—I mentioned that Mike Bakalis was the last elected state superintendent—the first appointed state superintendent was Joseph Cronin from Massachusetts.[7] He brought with him Nelson Ashline, who was the executive deputy superintendent. It was Nelson, as the primary architect of what we called the "mandates," the design for the mandate studies, he determined that, instead of the board responding to every legislative proposal, that the board should assume leadership and initiative in studying policies.[8]

The board was new; it was an activist board; at that time, it was a totally independent board. The members were selected by the governor and approved with the consent of the Senate. Now that process has changed significantly, but they were a very independent board and professionally oriented, although they could not be directly employed by schools at that time.

In any case, the design for the study of all mandates affecting Illinois public schools became one of the largest and, from my perspective and with my knowledge, the first time a state agency had ever attempted to examine all of its mandates at the same time, with the primary question: Are these still appropriate mandates? Are they doing what they purported to do? And are there other areas that should be addressed, or can these mandates be modified, and, if so, how? That led again to the mandates being studied, beginning in 1983. That was over a two-year process. The Education Reform Act was passed in 1985.

Pogue: What conditions led to the Educational Reform Act?

[7] Dr. Joseph M. Cronin earned AB and MAT degrees from Harvard and a Doctorate in Education from Stanford University in l965. He served as the Massachusetts Secretary of Education, Illinois State Superintendent of Education, President of the Massachusetts Higher Education Assistance Corporation, and President of Bentley College from 1991 to 1997. He was Associate Professor of Educational Administration and Associate Dean at Harvard University. (https://www.unicultures.com/english_coop/67.html)

[8] Illinois Mandated Units of Study Guidance Document is to serve as a guide for districts, schools, and teachers in interpreting the current mandated units of study in Illinois. A separate document has been created that specifically addresses the civics mandate. (https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Guidance_Doc_Mandate.pdf)

Pancrazio: I think there were several conditions, clearly at the national level. There were reports from a variety of sources, once again condemning the schools, which was a popular thing to do. The public hadn't yet realized that health care and business ethics and all those kind of things needed to be addressed. So it was a very public whipping boy at that time. There was a national interest in the status and condition of the nation's schools.

At the state level, however, there was, like I said, a very activist board, and there was good leadership in the [Illinois] House and Senate, regarding education. There was also a change in the climate of what the appropriate state role was. You may recall, twenty-thirty years ago we often heard the term "local control." At this time, in the eighties, there began to be a recognition that if the State doesn't assume its major responsibility for education and schooling that it will be to the detriment of an educated citizenry.

States across the nation began to strengthen their state education agencies. Part of that was done through monies from the feds, and a lot of it was done through examination of the school funding system because they tended to be so unequitable.

There was also the focus on outcomes. Prior to that time, the educational components were looked at in terms of inputs: What courses should teachers have? What courses should students have? How many days of schooling should the school year constitute? How many minutes per day, all those inputs. How much is an adequate amount of money to be paying for all of this?

At this time, there began a recognition that the state examination should also be on outcomes: Is the public getting what it's paying for? The notion of accountability emerged about that time, essentially having to do with all the resources. Education is one of the major costs in a state, along with transportation and public safety. Is the public getting what it's paying for? How will we know? How will we measure it? And what will we do if we find that it isn't?

So, the components of schooling was such that there was still an interest in what went into the schools, what the schools were doing, but [also] how well the kids were performing. That was new. At that time, there was no state testing, no state assessments. There were the pre-college assessments, but not all students were required to take those tests or chose to take them. So those were incomplete.

Pogue: At this time, there were a lot of studies going on. You talked about some of the general feelings on the reports and the publicity related to how schools were performing. During the time period that you were with the state board, what studies seemed to have a major impact on what would be happening in Illinois?

Pancrazio: I'll end my comment with answering that as to which was the most important from my perspective. I noted that one that was identified was the college entrance board report, "What Students Need to Know." That report came out after the state board had recommended that students should be assessed on what students need to know and be able to do. First of all, we should identify the primary purposes of schooling, that there should be learner goals associated with that, and that we should know how well students are doing. "What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do" was a title that Adrian Bailey—then a board member, who left the board and took to the College Entrance Board—used, much to our surprise.[9]

John Goodlad, of course, and Ted Sizer and Mort Adler were looking at aspects of the school environment. They began to put the emphasis on the school as the venue, the site for learning. I think that was another change in the culture of education.[10, 11, 12] Instead of talking about school districts so much, it was: What's happening in the school, the school as a social system? and What's the principal, as the instructional leader, doing either to enhance that learning or to prohibit it or restrict it? Many of these reports really looked at how schools themselves could improve.

The "Nation at Risk" was an indicator of the public's interest, but frankly, we were engaged in the mandate studies before the "Nation at Risk" came out.[13] Then, of course, with President Reagan in office at the time, they really didn't implement much in there and took issue with a couple of Reagan's proposals, one to do away with the Department of Education that had just been established at the federal level. That report also called for a longer school day and a longer school year, which the Reagan administration did not support. So they were out there. I wouldn't say that Illinois was parochial, but I wouldn't say it wasn't either. I think the interest was on what was happening here in our state and what could we do about it?

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[9] Adrian Bailey, an adjunct professor for the School of Earth, Society & Environment, is chair professor of geography, Hong Kong Baptist University. (https://www.geog.illinois.edu/people/affiliates)

[10] John I. Goodlad was an educational researcher and theorist who published influential models for renewing schools and teach education. Goodlad's book, *In Praise of Education*, defined education as a fundamental right in democratic societies, essential to developing individual and collective democratic intelligence. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Goodlad)

[11] Theodore Ryland Sizer was a leader of educational reform in the United States, the founder (and eventually president emeritus) of the Essential school movement and was known for challenging longstanding practices and assumptions about the functioning of American secondary schools. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Sizer)

[12] Mortimer Jerome Adler was an American philosopher, educator, and popular author. He promoted the idea of a universal curriculum, based upon the common and essential nature of all human beings. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Educational_perennialism)

[13] *The Nation as Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* is the 1983 report of American President Ronald Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education. Its publication is considered a landmark event in modern American educational history. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Nation_at_Risk)

Now the one study, the Ypsilanti Study, which was longitudinal study of 123 children in the Perry Pre-School Project in Michigan, that was **enormously** significant. Now it's being replicated in Georgia; I think it's called the ABC Project, where they're following kids through… The significance of that study was enormous for the board because, in prior administrations for OSPI, there had been attention given to pre-school education and early childhood education, but the board early-on thought it was more babysitting than education. What the Ypsilanti Study showed was that later academic success was tied to early learning. That study flip-flopped the board's policy direction on the education of young children. It was enormously influential.

I'm familiar with the work by Barak Rosenshine and Tom Sergiovanni.[14, 15] Rosenshine's work was interesting because, instead of conducting basic research in education, he put an emphasis on analyzing research that led to practice and what could teachers do to be more effective. Sergiovanni put the emphasis on leadership and the principal. You'll see—particularly Sergiovanni—that notion of the principal as instructional leader emerged. I was at Illinois [State University]; I had my doctorate from Illinois. No one ever mentioned the role of the State Department of Education in the four years I was there, which I found absolutely amazing. The view was limited: the state controlled teacher certification. I think the state role was seen as weak; the local control of schools was viewed as extremely important, and I think the activist board changed that perspective enormously in the work that it did.

Pogue: Were you involved at all with the Illinois Commission on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education, which came out just before the Reform Act?

Pancrazio: That's very interesting because that report was staffed by Dr. Nelson Ashline's assistant, Gail Liberman.[16] A board member by the name of Bud Thompson from Prophetstown, Illinois, was on that commission.[17]

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[14] Barak Rosenshine of Chicago was a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois, where his research focused on learning instruction, teacher performance, and student achievement. (https://archives.library.illinois.edu/archon/?p=creators/creator&id=3042)

[15] Tom Sergiovanni was an educator's educator for over 25 years at San Diego's Trinity University, recruited, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the early 1980s. Sergiovanni changed how school officials think and how schools perform, according to his colleagues. (https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Sergiovanni-a-visionary-who-changed-schools-4189299.php)

[16] Gail M. Lieberman was a Springfield area, an administrator at the State Board of Education and Educational Advisor to Governor Thompson. She also was active in national and local associations and non-profit organizations, including being the chairman of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. (https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/springfield-il/gail-lieberman-4464860)

[17] Howard "Bud" Thompson was a successful hog broker during his working career. Over his 80-plus years, Bud has been mayor and member, most often chair, of the school board, chamber, Lions, county GOP,

Let me back up just a little bit. When the board concluded phase one and phase two of the mandate's study, it was clear that it needed legislative ownership. The results of the studies from the mandate studies plus the many hearings that the commission conducted throughout the state provided a means for the results of more than two dozen mandate studies to become part of the legislative agenda. You will see in their report, specific recommendations that came out of the board's work.

The advantage to that strategy was that legislators who served on that commission… It was, as I recall, co-chaired by Art Berman and, I believe, Richard Mulcahey, but it had the chief education senators and representatives.[18, 19] Barbara Flynn Currie was very young; she was Madigan's chief education person, from my perspective.[20] I don't remember if she served on the commission, but I'm sure Ted mentioned her as serving in the negotiations on behalf of Speaker Madigan.

So, in the commission's work… They took not only recommendations that were made from the many groups who were involved in examining education, but all the board's work as well, had discussions on it, took ownership in it, and those recommendations were channeled into the legislative process.

Pogue: You indicated that a lot of the legislators were interested in education at this time. Was that crucial for putting a massive educational reform package together successfully?

Pancrazio: Absolutely. The education legislators: Senator Art Berman was phenomenal; Senator Phil Rock, Representative Barbara Flynn Currie, Senator Vince Demuzio, Representative Mary Lou Cowlishow from Naperville, Representative Helen Satterthwaite, who I think was chairing the Higher Ed [Education] Committee at the time, they were knowledgeable. Democrats and Republicans took a very strong interest in what was going on.

Whiteside County Board, State School Board Association, and State Board of Education. (https://www.saukvalley.com/2016/06/15/face-to-face-with-prophetstowns-bud-thompson/arcpqrt/)

[18] Arthur L. "Art" Berman is a retired American lawyer and politician. He received his law degree in 1958 from the Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law. And practiced law in Chicago involved. A Democrat, Berman served in the Illinois House of Representatives from 1967 to 1976 and in the Illinois Senate from 1977 until 2000. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Berman)

[19] Richard Thomas "Dick" Mulcahey was an American politician and educator who served as a Democratic member of the Illinois House of Representatives from 1975 until 1993. Mulcahey served in the United States Marine Corps from 1954 to 1956. He then became a teacher and taught at schools in Galena and Durand, Illinois. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Mulcahey)

[20] Barbara Flynn Currie was a Democratic member of the Illinois House of Representatives from 1979 to 2019. She served as the majority leader from 1997 to 2019. Flynn Currie's forty years as a member of the Illinois General Assembly is the longest tenure of any woman to serve in the Illinois General Assembly. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Flynn_Currie)

They became part of the discourse with not only the many people who came to hear the board's recommendations—because they conducted hearings all over the state, multiple hearings. The commission conducted multiple hearings on their recommendations, all over the state. Then Speaker Madigan had his own report in regional meetings. So there were enormous numbers of very significant and substantial people who were made aware of the issues and were very well informed.

Pogue: Did the new 1970 state constitution play any role in all of this too?

Pancrazio: It required, first of all, that the elected state superintendent become appointed by the State Board of Education. That was a significant change. It was supposed to be an independent board, independent of the politics of the state. I think the board at that time took great pride in it, being independent. Under Governor [Rod] Blagojevich, I believe, that that changed significantly.[21]

Pogue: How was the fiscal health of the state at that time?

Pancrazio: It was very good when you compare it to, particularly, the times today. The Education Reform Act contained 169 provisions, not all of them had money associated with them, but many of them did have. Without that fiscal support, the comprehensive nature of the reforms could not have happened.

Let me give you just one example, particularly in early childhood education: One of the recommendations was for a program for at-risk children. This is one that Barbara Flynn Currie monitored through the state. It was for children, age three to five, who were at risk of academic failure. Either they came from income poor families, or their families did not speak English. They were likely to be members of groups who would not be ready for school, as the middle-class, typical children more often were. And they are more likely to have been children who did not attend pre-school or some kind of school that would have prepared them for the conditions of schooling. The funding for the first year of that at-risk program was $12 or $13 million dollars. The last year for which I found data, it was at 380 million. That was just one example of how, if they hadn't had money associated with it, they could never have provided those kinds of programs.

It was interesting from my perspective just from a Democratic/Republican point of view. The Republicans were very impressed, and the Ypsilanti Study again helped inform the discourse about the viability of the state program. In the Ypsilanti Study, they found that for every $1.00 spent in quality pre-school programs for these at at-risk kids, it saved $7.00 in social programs when the kids reached adulthood. That is, they were less likely to go to prison; they were more likely to become productive citizens;

[21] Rod Blagojevich is an American former politician who served as the 40th governor of Illinois from 2003 until his impeachment, conviction, and removal from office in 2009. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rod_Blagojevich)

they were more likely to graduate from high school and then get jobs. There were those kinds of specific state payoffs.

I think today the amount is less than one for seven. I don't know if it's one to three or one to five now, but nevertheless, prison costs more than schools do. This was something that Republicans ideologically found acceptance for, and the Democrats, particularly in Chicago, saw it as a way to provide additional educational experience to kids who hadn't gotten it.

Pogue: As you entered 1985, working at the state board, did you feel that this was the year something big is going to happen?

Pancrazio: There was excitement in the air. We had done all this work; we had participated; the board and staff had participated in statewide meetings. Every professional group was engaged in conversations on these same issues. So there was an electricity in the air. The fiscal part played into it very well, but there was a sense that we were ready; the state was ready to do something significant in this area.

Pogue: As this was moving down the track, what was your role? What were you involved in?

Pancrazio: As the manager of research, I was in charge of conducting the first mandate study in special education. I also did the one on early childhood education. This one I found extremely exciting because the board, they knew special education requires a mandate for all children. It was a matter of how it was to be delivered. Early childhood, they did not have a policy on. So it was a matter of the research indicating this is very effective, and it has a distinct benefit to children and to their later academic schooling and performance in life. That was to me just absolutely thrilling to be involved in that.

One of my staff members was engaged in the bilingual education mandate study. I also conducted the one on home schooling, whether or not kids should be permitted to be home schooled. That, the board pulled from the agenda because the home schoolers came out in force. They said, "It's not worth it to us. They're so few home schooled kids, and they're so loud" that it wasn't worth pursuing.

I also was part of the staff, under Dr. Nelson Ashline's supervision, that went over, examined, argued pros and cons about drafts of all the other mandate studies. Nelson had a conference room, which we called "The War Room." We argued and argued about whether the data said what the writer thought that it should say, or there's a better way of doing it. It was a fascinating experience because none of us had ever engaged in policy discussions of this order.

There were those of us who were to the left of everybody, who wanted the State to assume every responsibility, and mandate everything we thought

were important. And there were those in the group who thought the State's role should be as less as possible and to allow the local school districts to do what they thought was the appropriate role. The amalgamation of those arguments, pro and con, produced studies that… We would start out with recommendations like this, in a very broad sense, and then, through arguments internally, then discussions with practitioners in the field and the professional leadership, they would be narrowed down and be, arguably, concise and pretty convincing. It was a phenomenal experience, personally and professionally, for all of us. It's hard not to remember those times as not being the "glory years"—you talk about warriors and their glory years—because it was so new and exciting to do that.

Then, after the reforms were passed, the report card, which was the requirement that the data by school be reported, which included performance data as well as input data [was needed]. I would say that that particular piece was the most controversial. I remember being in a meeting when they said, "All right, who is the best person to take over this data collection?" I said "Well, I'm the director of research and statistics. I think it's ours," not ever realizing that school superintendents would object so ferociously against reporting data by school.

Their arguments were that the public will never understand it, that they would be engaging in competing schools…not all of the superintendents, but most of them. I'm trying to remember… that parents will never understand; this is way beyond their capability to understand these statistics. There was also the underlying belief that…and even superintendents would say this, "The kids in that school are dumb. They're dumber than these other kids." Or "The kids can't learn in this school. They have poor parents. Nobody teaches these kids anything." It became very, very controversial.

Mary Lou Cowlishow, in the [Illinois] House, had been a reporter before she became a legislator. She was a proponent of reporting data by school. She told an opponent that parents and the legislature have the right to know how each school is doing. When one legislator tried to get that changed, right before that first year, the General Assembly was pretty sold on the fact that we need data by school; school is a unit for change; school is where learning takes place; that's the venue we need to focus on. The data had to be reported by October 1, and they had to be made public.

We conducted workshops for journalists, very well attended. So the reporters were very well prepared to ask superintendents, "How come the kids over here… You have a lower percent of low-income kids, but these kids aren't doing as well on their reading tests as these kids over here?" It required principals and superintendents, first of all, to begin to appreciate that kind of data and also to get ownership in it. I would say the good superintendents then used that data to examine the conditions that caused or created or were related to those differences.

Pogue: Going back to Nelson Ashline, you've never done this kind of debating before?

Pancrazio: No.

Pogue: And you had extremes?

Pancrazio: Yes.

Pogue: What did he do to develop the camaraderie that would make you feel comfortable sharing your beliefs with one another without—

Pancrazio: He set up the conditions, where the door was closed. He also said, "We aren't done with this until the last one of you shuts up." Now, he said it much more eloquently—he had a Harvard doctorate—but it was, "Just because we think we have a finished product here, if anybody says, 'I don't think that's right,' or 'I don't think it should say that'..." We had to give our arguments, and he asked penetrating questions. People were not nice to each other in those sessions, but you developed a very tough skin, and you came prepared to either ask the questions or to argue for why you thought it should be the way it was.

As I said, I had never experienced anything like that. The sessions went long. There was, on one study where we were almost done with it, and then it had to be re-written entirely. It was a twenty-four-hour kind of experience. When we left, it was over, but everybody had said their piece. He would listen to the arguments; he would provoke; he would ask penetrating questions, but he allowed everybody else to do it too. He didn't allow superficial comments. Sometimes he would re-phrase them to help people think through their arguments better.

At the end of this whole process, what it showed me was, first, how you could engage in this kind of experience, but also how you could leave the room and still be friends afterwards, after you'd just been arguing your head off about the legitimacy of this particular proposal over this one. He was brilliant in that regard. He continued being the executive deputy superintendent under Ted Sanders. The superintendent at the time the mandate studies were being conducted was Dr. Donald Gill, who had been a district superintendent, and he was a good man. But the role of the district superintendent and the role of the state superintendent were two very different roles.

Ted Sanders had come from being a state superintendent in Nevada. He had been, I believe, a high ranking, maybe an assistant superintendent, in New Mexico. I don't know if you've ever met Ted, but he is six [foot] seven [inches]; he has a persona. He was bright; he was used to working across the aisle with Democrats and Republicans; he was a registered Republican at the time that the state's leadership was republican; he was very well informed,

and his expertise and Nelson's complemented beautifully, in that Ted's outgoing ability to meet with the legislators, in a way that brought people together, resulted in the culmination of the Education Reform Act.

Pogue: Were you present when the big bill got passed?

Pancrazio: Only afterwards. We had a celebration all over, and I remember Ted Sanders saying how he'd jumped in his swimming pool afterwards. It was exciting to me that several that I had personally worked on had gone through, the early childhood one in particular, bilingual education, which was also quite controversial. I didn't know I was getting the report card one. Like I said, for many it was a highlight experience that was never, ever repeated.

Pogue: You mentioned some of the stakeholders and issues that you were dealing with during the debates: the local school district leaders; the changing role of regional superintendents due to educational service centers; the impact of evaluation changes and academies on relationships between teacher unions and principals; the role of parents, the business community, and the students themselves. Besides what you've already covered, did you have major issues with anything you were doing?

Pancrazio: They were all active. When we talk about, what do you need to have to get something like this done again? It was igniting the kind of collective spirit. People didn't agree, but there was a sense of respect. I think that's one thing that Ted Sanders brought. He respected the roles these various groups played.

But there was one group in bilingual ed [education] that was very different from others and very interesting. The preliminary recommendation called for the provision of transitional experiences for younger children who did not speak English. The people getting the bilingual money opposed that and descended in buses on the state board in Chicago—literally probably three or four busloads—and took over with bullhorns and shouting—speaking in Spanish—during a state board meeting and objecting to any changes being made in bilingual education, to the point where… I can't remember who the board chairman was at that time, but the chairman said, "It's obvious that we can't convene business, that we are now recessed." And then the buses came and got all of these hundreds of folks and took them away. There were some changes made. That was probably the most visible, the most obvious one.

It was after the Education Act passed, the district superintendents came out vehemently against issuing report cards. At every opportunity, I would say—There were over 900 of them—I would say there were at least 800 who were very angry and thought this was a terrible mistake.

Pogue: Before we cover the ending of the bill, were there some things you had been involved with that were once included in the Education Reform Act, but were dropped?

Pancrazio: Not that I remember. There probably was, but I don't remember.

Pogue: Well, the bill got passed into law. You've talked about the legislative leaders. What was the attitude of the governor?

Pancrazio: It wasn't negative; it was positive. The governor was Jim Thompson at the time. As you recall, he served, I think, from 1977 through 1991, a very significant tenure as governor. I think he always read the winds accurately. This was a time for change in education. But the governor himself did not come out with any special report. I think Ross Hodel [Executive Assistant for Education, 1983-1986] might have been one of his assistants at the time. In that length of period, he had several that were… I can't remember what they were called, assistants for education or something like that, but I know Ross was at least in that latter part.

Pogue: The Bill is passed; it has 169 components, everything from learning standards, the definition and purpose of schooling, principal and teacher evaluations, gifted education issues, reading improvement, pre-kindergarten changes, kindergarten entrance ages, some things that you might wonder why they're in there: Casimir Pulaski Day was one.[22] You've had the service centers, funding for staff development, summer school, just a massive amount of issues. What happened the day after, when you've now got to implement all these things?

Pancrazio: Ted set up a series of workshops throughout the state, and there was a bus that went to key sites in all areas of the state. They were very well attended. The book, which we call *The Gift Book* was disseminated at that time, and questions were posed about these.

As you mentioned there were some reforms that were, I would have called them miscellaneous. They were ones that people had been thinking about, and this was an opportunity to dovetail them into the whole package. There had been internal discussions about who should be responsible for what, for which ones. That's where you'll see on this gift package, the contact persons were named.

Going out into the field and talking with the superintendents, again from my perspective, there were a lot of questions on early childhood, full day kindergarten and the report card, some on PE [Physical Education], some on driver's ed and those instructional ones. There were also a lot of reporters, so there was a lot of press on the changes. I would say the [Illinois] Principals Association, the School Superintendents Association and the school boards' association [Illinois Association of School Boards]—what we called the

[22] Casimir Pulaski Day is a local holiday, officially observed in Chicago, Illinois on the first Monday of March, in memory of Casimir Pulaski, a Revolutionary War cavalry officer born in Poland. He is praised for his contributions to the U.S. military in the American Revolution and known as "the father of the American cavalry." The day is celebrated mainly in areas that have large Polish populations, such as Chicago. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casimir_Pulaski_Day)

"alphabet soup conference" in Chicago, that's held every year—all those were focused on providing information about the reforms, as well as providing information about how to get access to funding, where there was funding associated with these programs. The whole state… There was a sense that everybody was talking about this.

Now, everybody was not supportive. I remember particularly being up in the Quad Cities where a couple of superintendents said, "I'm glad I'm retiring this year because I don't want to have to do all this stuff." I said, "Then please invite me to your retirement party because I'm glad you're not going to be involved in it." There was a sense that this was a lot of work for a lot of people. For those of us who believed in the State's role and believed that we did need to make positive change, it was a good thing to get the leadership changed in some places.

Pogue: Your name is listed in several parts in that book. When you were listed, how did you then organize staff, or how did you carry out implementation, and what timetables did you have to accomplish them?

Pancrazio: I'll use the report card as the primary example, although there were a couple of other data collections that were incorporated into other data collections, one on collecting data by gender for athletics and sports. The report card was not one that I had known about prior, but it had been a proposal that was beginning to emerge in the states, and it related to the accountability aspect that we talked about earlier, that there had to be a way to inform parents and the public on what the performance of the school was and how much it cost. We were given the components that had to be incorporated into a report card, so we started with that.

I have to say, we had a crackerjack group of researchers, smart, mathematicians; they were good with computers. One, Dr. William Humm, H-u-m-m [Research Specialist for the Illinois State Board of Education] was very familiar with the National Center for Ed Statistics catalogue on definitions.[23] So, the first thing, the first step was to see if there were national definitions for some of these components. In most cases, there were. There were some components for which we had no definitions.

I believe mobility was one. Mobility was defined as the extent to which kids come in and out of the school over the year. That was an important measure in understanding the context for learning, because if the kids were highly mobile, they wouldn't have been tested on the things that they had learned or vice versa. They wouldn't have learned the things that they were tested on, because they're moving all the time. So that was an important one. I

[23] The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is a federal agency responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating statistical information related to the U.S. educational system. (https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/national-center-education-statistics)

think that was one that was created probably by Dr. Humm, and there were others.

We also created a report card advisory group. Just about every one of the major mandates had advisory groups. Again, they were made up of representatives again of all the affected groups, including the respective teacher groups, superintendents, principals, board members, specific people who had expertise in that area. They then would criticize our draft, give critiques of our drafts. Oh, when you get that worked out, we've come to some agreement, or there's no… Either they say, "On the report card, it was Superintendent Bill Attea who was invited to participate."[24] Bill Attea's still active in Illinois. He was violently opposed to the report card being issued. But once it was issued, he said it was a non-event.

There were those superintendents who used the report card to beef up, to strengthen, or to analyze other education programs. Not all superintendents did that. In any case, we got critical comments and at least then agreement on the definitions. Then we collected the data; then we edited the data; then we edited and edited. We were given resources to do that because there's no point in releasing all this to the public if it was not correct. Schools, for the most part they're busy, but the last thing they want to do is fill out a state form. So, there were a lot of attempts to obtain, provide and correct data that was obviously incorrect.

We then contracted with a group to come up with a format of reporting. It was a four-page paper. At that time, the law required every parent to get a copy of the "report card" and the report card to be sent home with a child. Then reporters also—the newspapers, local newspapers—were required to get them. Realtors wanted them for their own purposes of selling homes in certain neighborhood schools.

We held workshops, as I mentioned, for school superintendents, also for journalists. Once we felt we had a clean database, we then released the report cards by district through UPS [United Parcel Service]. We were given all this information, this requirement, in June. They had to be released by the following… Let's see, it was eighty-five, so it was October eighty-six, the first report cards, a little over a year.

In just preparing for it, we had staff meetings every day about what questions were raised for which we did not have an answer. There were about six or so staff members working on this. We had to get back to people on some things, so at least we had worked through the unusual aspects or things we never thought we would have to answer: How do you tell a superintendent

[24] William Attea is a founding partner of Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates (executive search and education consulting firm). With 50 plus years in education, he has served as a superintendent and facilitated strategic plan development for school districts. Attea contributed as a resident, associate, adjunct professor, and lecturer at a number of institutions in Illinois. (https://hyasearch.com/)

what's a numerator and what's a denominator? And how do you say it in a way that's not demeaning? We had those kinds of conversations among ourselves. Again, that was very exciting. People really worked together.

Then the report cards were released, and they received lots of attention for the next several years. That changed with the new superintendent, Robert Leininger, coming in. The requirement on the report card did not have to be in a printed format. Later on, it could become released in an annual report or later on in a computer database of something like that. I'd argue about whether the accessibility of that was the same, but nevertheless, those data are still available.

Pogue: Of the projects you were responsible for, what one was the most difficult? Was it the report card or was it one of the others?

Pancrazio: I think special education, for me, was the most difficult because there were so many federal requirements. In this case, the feds were calling the shots, or maybe because it was the first one. Early childhood, for me, was the most interesting. There were aspects of the bilingual ed that I thought… We did not achieve it, but it was a recognition that a second language is a treasure for the state to have, that second language in children, whether their second language was English or whether it was Spanish or Polish or whatever, that the more language proficiencies our state had, the more competitive our state could be as productive citizens. That was an exciting idea.

I know I'm skipping back, but one of the key aspects that remains in law today was the defining…the primary purposes of schooling. That had never been done before. Anybody who thought the schools should be doing A, B, or C, if they got enough pressure on the school board, the school superintendent, could get that in the school.

Death education was something that was being talked about that, gee, kids are in school, so therefore schools ought to teach death education, whatever that means, or service education. Whatever the new thing was, it immediately got pressed into school. Having the primary purposes of schooling defined and the academic areas under which the school has the **primary** responsibility for teaching those kids of compulsory attendance age, I thought, philosophically, that that was one of the major contributions. Everybody said, "Oh, of course." It remains today, and it's a good template against which to measure those other odd things that come out, that schools ought to get this thing handed to them.

We did not change the school year. We did not change the school day or the hours of schooling. Yet all these things have been laid on the schools to do. Establishing the primary purpose of schooling was the one thing that the schools have the responsibility for and no other social institution, like

churches or hospitals or something. I wanted to be sure that that got mentioned in this discussion.

Pogue: Did your research department have to hire more people to do all these things?

Pancrazio: We were given funds to hire temporary people, primarily for the cleaning of data. They were people that we trained. We had done that every year, on enrollment data. This was an extension of that practice, with the understanding that we have to have the cleanest data that anybody has. We have to know how many schools we have out there. We have to know how many teachers are in there, and we did. We had their names, because the state had been the repository of the retirement system at one time, so it was a matter of keeping that data and being able to track teacher mobility or the supply and demand of teachers and that kind of thing. So yes, we got to hire more people. In our area, it was primarily to help proof the data, clean the data.

Pogue: As you continued with the state board, how did your responsibilities on programs tied to the 1985 Education Reform Act change?

Pancrazio: We moved on to other policy studies. There was one in adult ed. Then there was a change in administration, and I had an opportunity to return to Illinois State University. I took that opportunity to return as the department chair in educational administration at Illinois State. Then I was named dean three years later.

Then there was a real change. The state's finances began to be more threatened. The change in leadership in the state superintendent was very different from the kind of leadership that Ted Sanders provided. Then there were a series of state superintendents. Then there began to be this division between the agency and the Governor's Office that culminated primarily under Governor Blagojevich, from my perspective, in which he ridiculed all of the regulations that had been written, many of them associated with the educational reform.

And then the law changed about who the state board reported to. So he [Blagojevich] named one of the state superintendents, Randy Dunn, who is now the president of SIU [Southern Illinois University] system. Randy did not stay long as state superintendent because of the control from the Governors' Office, I'm told.

Pogue: When you left the state board, what was the status of these 169 educational reforms?

Pancrazio: They were still going strong, particularly early childhood. The education service centers were amazingly effective, but they were in some places dually, I think, "competing" with the regional offices.

It was after I left where there was a proposal from the then superintendent—I don't remember which one—to eliminate the regional superintendent's office and let the educational service centers assume those responsibilities but also extend the technical assistance capabilities that the regional superintendents did not have. That battle was lost.

The regional superintendents were the last elected education officials in this state. Because they were elected, they had public support, and that battle, like I said, was lost. We lost wonderful sources of technical assistance to the schools in the loss of the education service centers.

Pogue: When you moved to Illinois State, did the 1985 Educational Reform Act influence programs that you were involved in, (Pancrazio laughs) since you were involved in creating teacher education and grad student education?

Pancrazio: Funny you should ask, yes. First of all, Illinois State is ranked between one and five in the nation, in terms of the number of teacher education graduates, and it started as a teacher preparation college in 1857. We have, at Illinois State, just about every kind of teacher ed program for which a person can be certified. We did not have bilingual ed.

Senator… I'm blocking on his name… A Hispanic state senator from Chicago called for a meeting of teacher education people in Chicago. Some of the people from the Chicago schools did not attend, but Illinois State did. He called for establishment of bilingual education programs. We established one, and it's going strong today. The students coming out of that…You have to be fluent… It's in Spanish. So, that was number one.

The outcomes in standards that were related to the development of the learning goals, that was something that many of our faculty were involved in. Also at Illinois State was John Dossey, who had been involved in development of the national math standards, was involved in the state standards for math. Of course, what they learned in that process and what they recommend in that process got incorporated in the math ed program. Norm Bettis at Illinois State was a national expert in geographic education. His work then, of course, got incorporated into our teacher ed programs.

The instructional leadership aspect of the principalship is still a key component of our principalship program, but also the analysis of school data. We've gotten grants for that continuously. There's a principal group on campus that conducts workshops for principals, in just that area, analyzing data and helping in creating processes for decision making related to that data.

Pogue: Did you feel that the state universities were fired up because of the reform acts that were taking place at the elementary and secondary level?

Pancrazio: Some were, and some weren't. After State Superintendent Ted Sanders left, then we had a series of other state superintendents. The emphasis in policy

turned from student performance to teacher quality. I think, at that point, I think Max McGee was the state superintendent at that time. He was not a teacher educator; he had been a district superintendent.

There were national reports. Particularly the "National Commission on the Excellence of Teaching" by Linda Darling Hammond was very significant to the university teacher ed programs. The issue of national accreditation of teacher education became a policy issue at that time, among many others: The Independent Standards Board as opposed to the State Certification Board, which is buried under the Illinois State Board of Education.[25] So, in Illinois we have a board reporting to a board.

At that point, I think, universities became involved, and many of the faculty were involved in helping establishing learner outcomes. They were involved, perhaps as consultants, in the assessment aspect. Then, when the wave of reform changed to teacher quality, just about every teacher ed program—at that time there were about sixty-four here in Illinois—were actively involved on one side of the issue related to national accreditation.

Today of the public schools, only at the University of Illinois, three university programs are not nationally accredited. The argument for accreditation was that we accredit veterinarian programs and dental programs and medical programs. Surely programs that prepare teachers that teach our children should be nationally accredited and have to meet, not only the state minimum requirements, but national professional standards. Many of the privates could not afford to do that and did not want to have national accreditation. That's an answer to the question about the extent to which universities were involved.

Pogue: After nearly thirty years from the time of the 1985 Educational Reform Act, you've talked about a few that didn't survive, like the service centers. You've talked about the growth of the early childhood programs, and you've talked about bilingual education and school report cards. Which ones do you think are most significant from that particular piece of legislation?

Pancrazio: Early childhood education. I had to give a presentation to a group of secondary education teachers. The question that was asked of me—and I was a secondary education teacher; I was a Business Education teacher—was "What's the most significant thing you would urge us to do as high school teachers?" I said, "Support early learning," because that was the basis for later academic success, whether we're talking about elementary schools or moving through high schools and then community colleges and colleges, that we have to recognize that those early learning experiences can be beneficial or

[25] The independent standards board has direct authority over teacher certification and/or preparation programs. (https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/12/17/15teach.h32.html)

detrimental, whatever happens to the kids. I think that one is the most significant.

I was pleased to death that Illinois received $50 million from the feds as part of, I think it was "Race to the Top"—it was in early childhood ed—at a time when they were cutting back here in Illinois.[26] I think that's the place with the biggest investment, the one with the biggest bang for the buck, particularly because Illinois is so diverse in terms of the income levels of its population and young children, particularly because of the birth rate of Hispanics, which is greater because of the tendency of minority families to be lower income, that the great equalizer for a productive Illinois citizenry is with early childhood education, quality early childhood education.

Pogue: You were involved in research and statistics. Then you were at Illinois State University as a leader. What criteria should be used to evaluate the 1985 Educational Reform Act?

Pancrazio: I think the obvious one is, Is it still active today? Are those reforms still active? Some are. Some good ones did not survive. The biggest criticism, the grief that I would have, is that the reform did not include changing the school year and the school day from 160 days and 5 hours of instruction a day. The world does not operate on that kind of schedule, and we as a nation, as a state, do not compare or compete as well as international students who have longer school years and longer school days.

Pogue: Right now, they have a group, I guess, that's called the P-20, that's supposed to be looking at all of that.[27] Did you hear of anything tied to it from the folks at ISU that were involved in that?

Pancrazio: I don't remember.

Pogue: Using the criteria you talked about, what would be the value of these reforms for schools in Illinois?

Pancrazio: I think recognizing that, first of all, things can't always stay the same and that there always is going to be change. It was the culture for change, the willingness of the legislature, both Democrats and Republicans, and having the right…having a committed and respected and respectful leadership in the General Assembly and at the State Board of Education. Having those components and having respect for the other professional educator groups, including parents and school board members and the two teacher unions,

[26] "Race to the Top" is a federal competitive grants program that aims to accelerate key education reforms in states and districts and create the conditions for greater educational innovation and close persistent achievement gaps while increasing student achievement. (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Race-to-the-Top.aspx)

[27] The Illinois P-20 Council is working to improve birth to adulthood education in Illinois, to maximize students' educational attainment, opportunities for success in the workforce, and contributions to their local communities. (https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/P20/Pages/default.aspx)

having a climate where people can talk about the important issues and then having the wherewithal in the General Assembly to create the revenue to support the needed change. That takes willpower; that takes desire.

The only way the legislature will act is if the people require it. Getting that kind of momentum was something that happened in that decade of the mid-eighties, which is not now happening. It's not happening in the country either, I mean… But it needs for significant leaders to pick up now and ask, Where are we? Where do we need to go from here? What do we need to beef up? What can we get rid of here that we thought was so important? We need to have that will and that leadership and respect.

Pogue: The 1985 act was, of course, a major educational reform. There have been headlines of reforms since then. You've got the Chicago Public School Reform Act.[28] You had some things that tied to teacher evaluation and seniority. You had, at the federal level, No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, now Common Core.[29, 30] How did the 1985 reform act compare to all these recent ones?

Pancrazio: Well, many of the ones that you've just described, Phil, were top-down. They are federally funded and federally pushed. As Joe Cronin would have said it, "The junior partner is running the firm." He said that in a P.D. Kappen article years ago. Reform has to be at all levels. It can be top-down, but it also has to be bottom-up. There has to be the middle that is moving both ways for there to be the kind of consensus that produces the will for change and the knowledge for the direction in which that change should go.

Pogue: You talked about 1985 being such things as funding was available; the state was in better shape; in the General Assembly, the leaders of both political parties were interested in the topic; and the nation had an interest in reforming and making changes.

Today, as we look at Illinois: basically the leadership at the state level is in the hands of one political party, although differences exist between the geographic areas of the state; the finances are nowhere near available; probably the state is responsible for more duties; and new areas have come up, such as health services, which has been a growing area.

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[28] In 1988, the Illinois legislature passed the Chicago School Reform Act, which created the local school council system that is in place today and initiated a period of aggressive reform. (https://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/November-2012/Reform-Before-the-Storm-Chicago-Public-Schools-Timeline/)

[29] The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was a U.S. Act of Congress that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; it included Title I provisions applying to disadvantaged students. The Act required states to develop assessments in basic skills. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Child_Left_Behind_Act)

[30] Common Core is a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. These learning goals outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. (http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/)

Along with all of that, state funding for schools has been dropping, and property taxes have had to pick up much of the load. Even the corporate personal property tax, which used to go schools, is now being diverted into other sources of state revenue or to pay county officials, rather than going into the schools. How is that going to impact educational reform or education in Illinois?

Pancrazio: It will stifle it until there is the will to look for, to search for, to obtain, the kind of revenue that will support change. We are back to where we started, or we will be back to where we started, where the State gives up, abrogates its responsibility, for the funding of the public schools and puts it back on the backs of local government, out of which will come unequal education throughout the state.

The whole equity measures will show that the rich schools will get richer because parents insist, and the poor schools will get poorer, and the performance in both those extremes will show those differences. We have to seek, I believe, alternative streams of revenue in this state. We've cut and cut and cut. When I started with the State Board of Education, adult ed was part of the state board. It was transferred; we had 1,600 staff members. We're down to one-fourth of that, and they still have many of the same requirements that we had. That's only at the state level.

What must it be like at the local district level? How do you get the legislature to do that? I have my own ideas, it probably shouldn't go on record. In any case, if we don't pay for education now, we will pay for it later. It's back to the Ypsilanti Study. Schools are cheaper than prisons. Having kids attend and perform well, in quality schools, will pay off greater for a productive citizenry in this state and this country, more than poor schools will.

Pogue: When you think about your involvement with this movement in the 1980s, how do you feel about your participation?

Pancrazio: I'm very proud of it because it was an incredible learning experience. I didn't get everything I wanted. I didn't get everything I proposed. I learned so much about Illinois education, at all levels, that it was the most incredible learning experience I could have ever had. I think it made me a better dean and gave me a perspective that I would not have had if I hadn't gone through that.

It gave me a perspective on which to focus. I think I've always had an interest in gender equity. It also gave me a focus on better schooling for kids who have not had the opportunities that my own children have had and second chances that my own children have had because we could afford it. It gave me a greater sensitivity to families who really do want their kids to have a good experience but don't have the resources to provide that home experience and don't have a school system that can afford to extend the school day or provide

those early programs or even after school programs or even alternative school programs that would benefit those kids.

Pogue: One area we haven't touched on much is the idea of the Student Reading Skills Improvement Grant that was part of the process. Reading and language arts and writing were all part of the assessment program and the definition of learning goals. In your research role, were you involved at all with that?

Pancrazio: No. I thought the diminution of the emphasis on writing essays, however, was a real loss because it did require students to be able to think thematically about preparing arguments for essays and that kind of thing. But no, I did not have any direct experience.

Pogue: As you think about the 1985 Education Reform Act and all the people that were involved in it—and you touched on many—what is the message for reformers?

Pancrazio: The message for reformers… I would say that the leadership has to be a key variable. The leadership, if we're talking about the state's role, has to be a state superintendent, like Ted Sanders, who had the experience, had the respect, and could deal and could listen, and a person like Nelson Ashline, who could design strategies, and also leadership in the General Assembly, who had that kind of respect.

Second, to be well-informed on the possibilities. As a researcher, we had direct access to who was saying what about what and getting that information to boards, getting that information to leaders in a way that's usable, whether it's policy workshops [or] through the Education Commission of the States, the one that Ted ran after he left.[31] The National Governors Association has workshops.[32] Getting the information to people, the ideas, and creating environments for discourse about those ideas can help generate those kinds of willingness to take on the issues.

Pogue: Because Illinois was considered a pioneer with the 1985 Reform Act, did you have many people from other states contacting you as to what is happening in Illinois, particularly like the Report Card?

Pancrazio: Yes. That's a good point, I think, Phil. The feds, through the National Center for Education Statistics, provided grants for people from other state agencies to visit those state agencies who were doing some of these newer kinds of

[31] The Education Commission of the States (ECS) tracks policy, translates research, provides advice and "creates opportunities for state policymakers to learn from one another. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_Commission_of_the_States)

[32] Founded in 1908, the National Governors Association (NGA) is the voice of the nation's governors and one of the most respected public policy organizations in the country. The association's members are the governors of the 55 states, territories and commonwealths. Members come to the association from across the political spectrum, but NGA itself is boldly nonpartisan. (https://www.nga.org/)

things. So, we hosted… I know we had the Alabama SEAs. I attended a workshop in Washington state on something that they were doing. There was an exchange across states. We all think we're different; we all may look at something slightly different, but we have common interests. There were some that were way ahead of the curve. That money dried up, of course, and there isn't that… Looking over the state boundaries for ideas sometimes isn't always respected, but again, having that kind of opportunity was very helpful.

Of course, when a colleague of yours from another state asks the question, "What do you do that for?" Then they give you ideas. So there's this constant intellectual exchange where, even though I went back to a university and there was that intellectual enquiry, this, because it was so intense in such a short period of time, has made a lasting impact on me that I will always remember as very significant in my career.

Pogue: As we close, is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the period of the 1985 Educational Reform Act?

Pancrazio: I think the last comment I would make was that, prior to the Education Reform Act, there had release of the first James Coleman Report, the sociologist from the University of Chicago. Dr. Coleman's major conclusion at that time—it was in the sixties—was that the greatest impact on learning does not come out of the schools. That got translated as schools do not matter. I think what the Education Reform Act in Illinois had as one of the prevailing philosophies, and I think that stands today, is schools do matter.

We may not get the kids for as long a year or as long a day, and we may not have all the resources that would be beneficial to providing a high-quality experience, but schools do make a difference. Leaders do make a difference. It will either be for positive or for negative, but they will have an impact.

Pogue: Sally, I want to thank you very much for sharing your experiences at the State Board of Education and then later at Illinois State University regarding educational reform, particularly the 1985 experience that brought 169 changes to operating schools and districts throughout the state of Illinois.

Pancrazio: Thank you, Phil, and thank you for your interest and thank those that hired you for this, for their interest. It was a great experience to participate in this project.

(end of transcript)