

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Darrell Fesser

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Alternatives in Illinois Education* Oral History project

Interview # EA-A-L-2018-016

Darrell Fesser, director of the Okaw Area Vocational Center (OAVC), was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key-Alternatives in Education* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Mar 21, 2018    Location: Litchfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview being  
processed

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_    Total Time: 1:40 / 1.67 hrs

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

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## Abstract

**Darrell Fesser, Alternatives in Education, EA-A-L-2018-016**

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Darrell Fesser was born in Hillsboro, Illinois in July 1952. Darrell attended Hillsboro High School and participated in basketball and FFA (Future Farmers of America) before graduating in 1970. He then went to Southern Illinois University-Carbondale where he majored in agriculture, graduating in 1974. He was then hired to teach agriculture and power mechanics for Vandalia High School under the Okaw Area Vocational Center. Darrell taught there for eleven years before becoming its director from 1986-2011. He received his Masters' Degree in 1985. In addition to being the OAVC Director, Darrell also served as the Regional Delivery System Director for Bond, Fayette, and Effingham counties. This responsibility included working with all vocational teachers and counselors working in the local school districts.

This interview reviews the history of the Okaw Area Vocational Center (OAVC) beginning with its creation in 1967. The Center has served school districts in Bond, Fayette, Effingham, Christian, Montgomery, and Marion Counties. The OAVC serves grades 11-12, with students being involved with thirteen different programs. Fesser covers the Center's philosophy, its relations with local industry and the local community colleges, the growth of dual credits, the OAVC building expansion and its joint use by the community college. Also discussed are the importance of equipment upgrades, the OAVC agreement with the school districts, district tuition costs, teacher certification, internship and apprenticeship programs, and post-graduation opportunities. In addition, he covers the Justice Correction program, which involved the community colleges and provided many job opportunities for those graduating from the program. Finally, Fesser talks about the advantages of career centers offer that traditional public schools do not, as well as the challenges they face.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Okaw Area Vocational Center (OAVC); dual credit educational programs, high schools and community colleges; OAVC Justice Correction program; vocational training programs; vocational training internship programs; Kaskaskia College

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