

Source Notes

I published a July 25th article about this interview. In my internal documents, it's marked as July 19th. Interview published online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVK7fUMix-Q>

Jill Reedy interview Notes

This is an interview conducted on Thursday June 15th between Decatur Vote journalist Reed Sutman and Regional Office of Education #39 Macon/Piatt Superintendent Jill Reedy. Interview conducted at the ROE#39 office in Decatur, at 1690 Huston Drive. Interview was conducted around 3:00 or 3:30pm (pretty sure, anyway! It was definitely the afternoon)

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These notes contain highlights from the interview and many details are left out. "quotes" are direct quotes. If quotes are not present, it is a paraphrase.

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Reed: 23 IL Administrative Code 180 requires superintendents to do annual inspections

Jill: We do Health-Life-Safety inspection. I can show you a list of things "we check things in all 55 buildings in Macon & Piatt County". I have a certified HLS inspector. "The things we though, are not engineering/architectural things. We're not qualified for that."

Jill: We check that exit lights are lit, elevators & fire extinguishers have updated inspections, fire exists not blocked. "We do do Health Life Safety, but it's very limited because we aren't architects or engineers."

Jill: "We do monitor that they do a 10-year survey, so the 10-year survey, all districts have to do, and that's done by a certified building architect/engineer"

Jill: "The only thing I do is check that they've done them."

Jill: "To date, all of our Districts are up to date." Some are hitting the 10-year but none are expired. Usually the architects are pretty good about notifying that inspection are coming up.

Jill: Decatur is at the end of the 10-year, "they're ready to have all of these inspections start, so they haven't done anything wrong against school code"

Reed: DPS released the 2013 survey. When is the 2023 Survey is due by?

Jill: "By the end of December" The new ones, the architectural firms should be starting.

Jill: "I think almost every building" they do at the same time, so "They're all due again."

Jill then got the list of what's inspected for annual inspections.

Jill: We're more of a monitoring agency. Here's the list. This is what we do annually. This is a "cheat sheet for us of everything we look at".

Jill details some of what gets checked.

Reed: Stairwells lists "properly maintained," what would that be?

Jill: "We have much more detail that goes into that, so I would have to look at 'properly maintained'", and she mentions the glossary, which she is flipping through. (page 272)

Jill: "So it says stairs, walking surfaces and rail shall be maintained in sound condition and good repair. So non-slip treads are required on all stairs for one" (speaking halts) "my health life safety inspector guy is the one trained in all of this."

Reed: Regarding the 2013 survey, there were multiple cases of water damage, 9 at Dennis building, a couple masonry problems, do you track if those have been...?

Jill: That's their architectural firm, and they do use some HLS money to fix those things, but that's really on the School District. We just monitor that they had an engineer do the survey.

Reed: Do you know what their reporting requirements are for addressing things on the survey?

Jill: For this, we send them a list of violations they found, then they respond back to us that it's being corrected or already fixed, or on the summer schedule. "On these, we do follow up. Did you get those fixed?" And we have an online system between the District and us - it's not public, but it's our communication back and forth about what's been fixed.

Reed: Do you have any role in validating the follow-up of the 10-year survey?

Jill: "Not really. I mean, that really goes, it's on the districts."

Reed: Do they have to report to the state?

Jill: "You know, I probably need to learn more. I started in October 1st." She says "I don't want to tell you wrong."

Jill: "So their 10-year surveys are submitted to the state board of education." We're kind of in-between the school board & state, so we check they've done it. The 10-year survey is submitted to the state board in a system we call IWAS" and the state board, then, can look at that and monitor. "And I don't know at their level, what [sic] how much they follow through on?"

Reed: Who would be a point of contact with state board?

Jill: Bob Sondergoth. He used to be a regional superintendent & he did all our HLS training, so he's very knowledgeable of regional offices and school districts and now he works at ISBE so he would be a great contact.

Jill gets her phone to get his email & provide to me.

Jill says "Oh that's funny, we were talking about a 10-year survey"

Jill: "He is probably one of the most knowledgeable on Health, Life, Safety, so he could give you far more detail on that 10-year survey of what happens behind the scenes."

Jill: "They've put him in charge of some of the health safety stuff cuz he is so knowledgeable in that."

Reed: As far as annual reports, what's your experience been like with the District? Do they address most of the issues?

Jill: "Oh yeah, absolutely they have been great." "I hired a new guy specific to focus on this so he could make that his priority cuz I am way too busy for that." but "I'll go along and I monitor and read them." We have to turn in a report by June 30th saying that all inspections have been done for the past year, then we grade them like an A for no violations, B for minor. Of course, they don't want to get any violations recorded, so they're pretty good about getting things ... Some of the things are pricier where they need a contractor, but a lot of things are quick fixes like "improper door closures" or "no extension cords in the classroom"

Reed: Could I get the info of your HLS guy?

Jill: Chad Ramey

Reed: Do you know if there are state or federal funds available to repair historical buildings like those?

Jill: Bob would be the one to ask. I could speculate, because there have been construction grants, .. there's been a lot of money that schools have used for construction. "And then there is health, life, safety, money for repairs of these things."

Jill: Or I know on their 10-year survey, I see a lot of like amendments that have been done where things have been worked on and fixed. Again, she refers me to Bob.

I told her it was much easier talking with her & the district has been very cagey. Jill said the District is under a lot of stress (or pressure?) right now.