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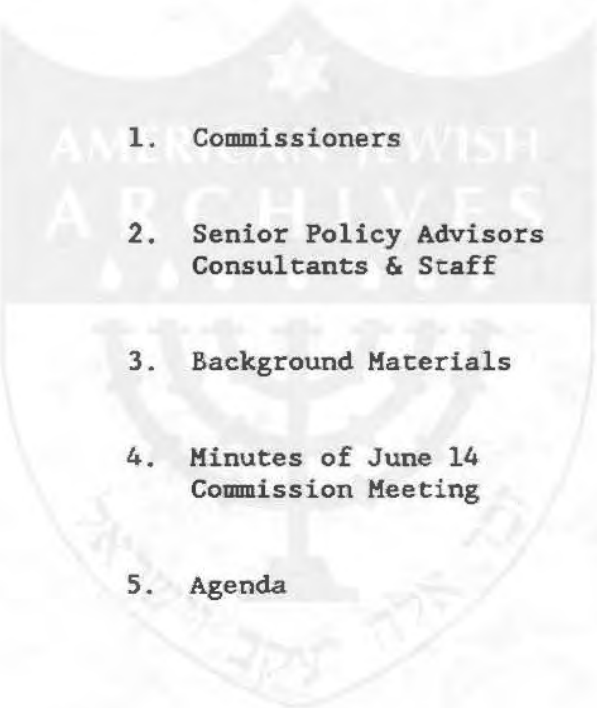
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COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

FEBRUARY 14, 1990

9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

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COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1990

9:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.

UJA/Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York
130 East 59th Street
New York, New York

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|------|----------------------------|--------------|
| I. | Registration; Refreshments | 9:00 - 9:30 |
| II. | Plenary Session | 9:30 - 12:00 |
| | A. Introduction | |
| | B. Discussion | |
| III. | Luncheon | 12:00 - 1:00 |
| IV. | Discussion Groups | 1:00 - 3:00 |

Group A - Weiler Room
Research, the Programmatic Arenas,
Implementation Mechanism, Community Action Sites
Chair: Eli Evans

Group B - Rosenwald Room
Personnel, Implementation Mechanism,
Community Action Sites
Chair: Sara Lee

Group C - Reception Room F
Community and Financing, Implementation Mechanism,
Community Action Sites
Chair: Morton Mandel

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| V. | Plenary Session | 3:00 - 4:50 |
| | A. Summary Reports | |
| | B. Discussion | |
| VI. | Concluding Comments - Rabbi Haskel Lookstein | 4:50 |

COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

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**COMMISSION
ON JEWISH EDUCATION
IN NORTH AMERICA**

**BACKGROUND MATERIALS
FOR THE MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 14, 1990**

**Convened by the Mandel Associated Foundations,
JWB and JESNA in collaboration with CJF**

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Summary and Recommendations

The Action Plan and Its Implementation

The work of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America is nearing completion. The enclosed materials include a draft of eight major recommendations.

What is emerging is a **ten-year plan for change**. This plan focuses on two major priorities: 1) mobilizing the community for positive systemic change in Jewish education, and 2) building the profession of Jewish education. It also identifies opportunities for improvement in a range of programmatic areas in Jewish education. The plan can be undertaken immediately, because there is a readiness on the part of certain family foundations to grant initial funding, because a staff is being recruited to continue the work of the Commission and implement its recommendations, and because communities have shown an interest in being selected to demonstrate the possibilities of Jewish education at its best.

The plan is designed to meet the shortage of dedicated, qualified and well-trained educators. We believe that talented educators will be able to develop programs that will engage and involve the Jews of North America so that they will be conversant with Jewish knowledge, values and behavior.

A process of communal mobilization for Jewish education will be launched: outstanding leaders, scholars, educators and rabbis will be encouraged to assume responsibility for this process and to recruit others to join them. They will develop policies for intervention and improvement; they will effect changes in funding allocations; they will develop the appropriate communal structures for Jewish education.

By the time the Commission issues its report in June 1990, the Commission will have taken the following initial steps:

A. Funding: Substantial funds will be available to launch the plan. This is now being arranged through the generosity of family foundations. Long-term funding will be developed in concert with federations of Jewish philanthropy, the religious denominations, the communities involved and other sources.

B. Implementation: The establishment of a facilitating mechanism for the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. This mechanism, guided by its board, will be charged with carrying out the plan decided upon by the Commission. It will design development strategies and be a full-time catalyst for the development efforts. It will facilitate implementation, ensure monitoring and evaluation and engage in the diffusion of innovation.

How Will We Begin Implementation?

Several communities will be selected for the first phase of the plan.* The purpose will be to develop and demonstrate excellence in Jewish education locally. The educational personnel in all settings in these communities will be upgraded. Programs that have proven effective elsewhere will be brought to these communities, will be adequately funded and implemented. Educators, rabbis, scholars and community leaders will be given the opportunity to jointly experiment with new ideas. Local and national institutions will work together on designing and testing new approaches to the problems of Jewish education.

In these communities ("Community Action Sites") all teachers, administrators and informal educators will participate in in-service training programs. National and local training institutions will join in the training effort. In order to meet longer-term personnel needs, a cadre of talented people will be recruited and trained.

At the continental and regional levels, training programs will be developed to significantly increase the number of trained educators and to participate in on-the-job training of personnel in the local communities.

All of this will lead to changes in the terms and conditions under which many educators work. Salaries and benefits will be raised, full-time jobs will be created to meet the needs of programs and a ladder of advancement will be developed. Many educators will be empowered to participate in determining educational policies.

Who Will Do the Work in These Communities?

The local communities will decide how to undertake their assignment. They will establish a coalition of the key actors in Jewish education. The currently existing twelve local commissions on Jewish education/Jewish continuity may serve as prototypes.

The communities may decide to appoint a local planning unit to prepare the plan. This unit will assess the community's needs and design the programs.

The national facilitating mechanism will offer assistance as needed, with staffing, planning assistance and some funding where appropriate.

* This, of course, is but one possible scenario for a community. Each community will build a program to fit its needs and aspirations. (See pp. 18-24.)

A Long-term Effort

Initial work in several communities, the availability of funding and the availability of staff are all important preliminary steps for ushering in an era of change for Jewish education.

However, for the significant across-the-board change to take place, a long-term effort is required. The lessons learned in Community Action Sites will be applied in many communities, gradually changing standards of Jewish education throughout North America. The available pool of qualified personnel will be increased. The profession of Jewish education will be developed as the number of qualified educators increases, as training programs are developed and as job opportunities, terms and conditions for employment are improved. Gradually, major program areas will be addressed. A research capability will be developed.

For these and other changes to occur, we need to issue a clarion call for change in Jewish education and we must offer long-term development and funding strategies.

In the draft recommendations that follow and in the attached document you will find the expression of our collective thinking on these matters.

Decisions and Recommendations of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America

A Ten-Year Plan

1. The Commission on Jewish Education in North America has decided to undertake a ten-year plan for change in Jewish education. Implementation of the first phase of the plan will begin immediately.

The Commission calls on the North American Jewish community, on its leadership and institutions, to adopt this plan and make resources available in this attempt to make a serious frontal attack on the issue of its future.

Community/Financing

2. The Commission urges a vigorous effort to involve more key community leaders in the Jewish education enterprise. It urges local communities to establish comprehensive planning committees to study their Jewish education needs and to be proactive in bringing about improvements. The Commission recommends a number of sources for additional funding to support improvements in Jewish education, including federations and private foundations.

Personnel

3. The Commission recommends that a ten-year plan to build the profession of Jewish education in North America be developed and immediately launched. The plan will include the development of training opportunities; a major effort to recruit appropriate candidates to the profession; increases in salaries and benefits; and improvements in the status of Jewish education as a profession.

Programmatic Arenas

4. The Commission process has identified the following programmatic arenas, each of which offers promising opportunities for intervention.

Target populations: early childhood, the child, the adolescent, the college-age youth, the adult, the family, the retired and elderly, the new immigrant.

Settings and frameworks: early childhood education and child care, the supplementary school (elementary and high school), the synagogue, the Jewish community center, camping, the Israel Experience, and a number of other informal educational frameworks.

Content, resources and methods: curriculum, Hebrew language education, the arts, the media and new technologies.

The Commission believes that collectively these form a challenging agenda for the next decade and urges communities, institutions, communal organizations, foundations and philanthropists to act upon them.

Community Action Sites

5. The Commission recommends the establishment of several Community Action Sites, where excellence in Jewish education will be demonstrated for others to see, learn from and, where appropriate, to replicate. Community Action Sites will be initiated by local communities which will work in partnership with the facilitating mechanism. The mechanism will help distill the lessons learned from the Community Action Sites and diffuse the results.

Research

6. The Commission recommends the establishment of a research capability in North America to develop the knowledge base for Jewish education, to gather the necessary data and to undertake monitoring and evaluation. Research and development should be supported at existing institutions and organizations, and at any specialized research facilities that need to be established.

The Facilitating Mechanism

7. The Commission recommends the establishment of a facilitating mechanism that will undertake the implementation of its decisions and recommendations. The mechanism, directed by its board and staff, will be a driving force in the attempt to bring about across-the-board, systemic change for Jewish education in North America.

1. Introduction

Communal leaders, educators, rabbis, scholars, parents and youth in North America are searching for ways to more effectively engage Jews with the present and the future of the Jewish people.

There is a deep and wide-spread concern that, for too many, the commitment to basic Jewish values, ideals and behavior is diminishing. There is a growing recognition that better ways must be found to:

1. ensure that Jews maintain and strengthen the beliefs that are central to the diverse conceptions of Judaism expressed in North American Jewish communities;
2. guarantee that the contribution American Jews have made to the establishment and maintenance of the State of Israel, to the safety and welfare of Jews in all parts of the world, and to the humanitarian causes they support be continued;
3. deal with the negative trends regarding the number of unaffiliated Jews, with the rate of assimilation and intermarriage.

These are among the important reasons for the renewed and intensified interest in Jewish education—a Jewish education that will enable Jews of all ages to experience, to learn, to understand, to feel and to act in a way that reflects their commitment to Judaism.

Responding to these challenges will require a richer and broader conception of Jewish education. It will require that North American Jewry join forces, pool the energies of its many components, and launch a decade of renewal—a major effort over the next ten years to raise the standards and quality of Jewish life in North America.

The North American Jewish community will need to mobilize itself as it has for the building of the State of Israel, for the rescue of Jews in distress, for the fight against discrimination and injustice, and for the support of its health and human services. Beginning with the religious denominations, CJF, JWB and JESNA, local federations and service agencies, and encouraged by the vision and generosity of private Jewish foundations, Jewish organizations everywhere will be recruited to join this effort. Through the work of this Commission, we have learned that there are almost no Jewish institutions that are not concerned about the Jewish future.

The Commission believes that if the appropriate people, energy and funds are marshalled, positive systemic change will be initiated. The Commission urges the North American Jewish community to act quickly and vigorously on its recommendations.

2. Community/Financing

I. Background

What is the community we are talking about in connection with formal and informal Jewish education?

By community, we mean not only the general Jewish community, but especially the organized Jewish community as it relates to the issues of Jewish continuity, commitment and learning, and to the involved organizations and persons engaged in these issues. From the Commission's perspective, its target population must include the professional and lay leaders who create the content and the climate for Jewish formal and informal education. This means teachers, principals, communal workers, academics and other scholars, rabbis, heads of institutions of higher learning, denomination and day school leaders and the leaders of the American Jewish community who are involved in planning for and financing Jewish education. The chief local institutional targets are the synagogues, Jewish community centers, camps, supplementary and day schools, agencies under communal sponsorship, Jewish community federations and bureaus of Jewish education, and major Jewish-sponsored foundations. At the national level are JWB, JESNA, CJF, the chief denominational and congregational bodies, training institutions, and associations of educators and communal workers who are engaged in formal and informal Jewish education.

The North American Jewish community has proved to have an excellent capacity to deal with major problems when they are addressed by the very top community leaders. This same highest level of community leadership is needed to establish the necessary communal planning and funding priority for Jewish education. Indeed, the involvement of top community leadership is the key to raising the quality of Jewish education in North America.

While Jewish education is generally not now seen by many key lay leaders as a top community priority, most believe that there is a decided trend toward the involvement of more and more top leaders. It is felt that the battle to create a very high communal priority for Jewish education is well on its way to being won.

Prior to World War II, a large proportion of the leadership of the organized Jewish community was indifferent to community support for Jewish education. Some were even antagonistic in the early days of federation, when emphasis was on the social services and on the Americanization of new immigrants. Just before and during World War II and in the post-War period, the highest priority for community leaders was the lifesaving work of Jewish relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction and then nation-building in Israel. More

recently, community leaders have become concerned with issues related to Jewish survival and continuity, and are putting a higher premium on Jewish education.

Generally, we have not yet developed community structures that are adequate to effect the necessary improvements in Jewish education, either at the local or continental level. Improvement in the following areas requires continuing examination:

1. The relationship among federations, bureaus of Jewish education, communal schools and congregations.
2. The place of federations in planning and budgeting for Jewish education and financing Jewish education.
3. The need for forceful national leadership in establishing standards for the Jewish education field, in promoting, encouraging and evaluating innovations, and in spreading over the continent the application of best practices as they are discovered.

At least a dozen federations are currently involved in comprehensive studies of their community's Jewish education programs and many more are in earlier stages of organization. JESNA, JWB, and CJF are currently engaged nationally in efforts to examine related issues.

Financing

Very little is known about overall financing of Jewish education. Nonetheless, a few general observations about financing can be made.

Congregational funding, tuition payments, and agency and school fundraising (especially by day schools) are the mainstays of Jewish education financing. These sources of support are crucial and need to be encouraged. There is consensus also that considerable additional funding is required from federations as the primary source of organized community funding, and that substantial funding will be needed from private foundations and concerned individuals.

Communal patterns of funding may need to be altered, and changes in organizational relationships are necessary to accommodate this. For example, greater cooperation between the congregations, schools, agencies and the federations is basic to developing and allocating the funds needed to improve Jewish education.

From its very beginning, the Commission has expressed its intention to be proactive in efforts to improve Jewish education. This includes encouraging additional funding, and initial steps have been taken in this direction.

The Commission is optimistic that greater funds can be generated for Jewish education, in spite of the current great demand for communal funding for other purposes. There have always been and there always will be great demands on limited communal funds. We should not allow ourselves to be put off by the pressing needs of the moment from facing the very urgent need for adequate support of Jewish education.

A number of communities have already begun to place a higher funding priority on Jewish education, both by raising new funds and by allocating greater general Jewish communal funds to Jewish education. There is also the fortuitous circumstance that federation endowment funds—a relatively new source of communal funds—are growing at a good pace and can be an important source of support for Jewish education in the future. Simultaneously, there is a relatively new growth of large family foundations—a post World War II phenomenon—which has accelerated in recent years and promises to be an important new funding resource for Jewish education. It appears likely, therefore, that additional funding will be available for well considered programs to improve and expand Jewish education.

The Commission recognizes the pressures on federations' annual operating funds make it very difficult to set aside substantially larger sums for Jewish education in the near term.

Longer-term funding requires that federations, as the expression of the community's will to improve Jewish education, should produce substantially greater support for Jewish education. It is expected that private foundations and concerned individuals, federation endowment funds, and special communal fundraising efforts will play a major role in supplying the near term financing, (and some of the long term financing), while federations are gearing up to meeting the basic longer term funding needs. Federations also have a key role in encouraging and bringing together private and communal funding sources into coalitions for support of Jewish education, and in leveraging support from the different sources.

It needs to be noted that some members of the Commission are concerned that "throwing money" at Jewish education will not by itself do the job. There needs to be a careful review of current programs and administrative structures to see how these can be improved. They believe that projects aimed at improving Jewish education need to be monitored and evaluated. Careful attention to quality and honest and perceptive evaluations are needed, both to get appropriate results for what is being spent, and also to encourage funding sources to participate more significantly.

II. Recommendations

The Commission urges a vigorous effort to involve more key community leaders in the Jewish education enterprise. It urges local communities to establish comprehensive planning committees to study their Jewish education needs and to be proactive in bringing about improvements. The Commission recommends a number of sources for additional funding to support improvements in Jewish education, including federations and private foundations.

In order for this to happen:

- * The Commission encourages the establishment of additional local committees or commissions on Jewish education, the purpose of which is to bring together communal and congregational leadership in wall-to-wall coalitions to improve the communities' formal and informal Jewish education programs.
- * The Commission encourages each community to seek aggressively to include top community leadership in their local Jewish education planning committee and in the management of the schools and local Jewish education programs.
- * The Commission recommends that as federations identify priority needs and opportunities, they should provide greater sums for Jewish education, both in their annual allocations and by special grants from endowment funds and/or special fundraising efforts on behalf of Jewish education.
- * The Commission and its anticipated implementation mechanism should encourage private foundations and philanthropically-oriented families to set aside substantial sums of money for Jewish education for the next five to ten years.
- * The Commission recommends that private foundations establish a fund to finance the facilitating mechanism and subsidies for community action sites and other projects.
- * The Commission recommends that Community Action Sites be established to demonstrate models of programs and funding partnerships to show what improvements in Jewish education can be accomplished under favorable conditions.

3. Personnel

I. Background

In North America there are an estimated 30,000 people working in the field of Jewish education, formal and informal. Of these, some 5,000 hold full-time positions; the remainder work part-time. There is a serious shortage of qualified personnel in all areas of Jewish education in North America. The shortage is both quantitative—there are fewer people to be hired than positions to be filled—and qualitative—many educators lack the qualifications, the knowledge, the professional training needed to be effective. The studies that have been undertaken document this shortage (see p. 30). They reveal that many educators lack knowledge in one or several of the following areas: the Hebrew language, Jewish sources, Jewish practice, teaching and interpersonal skills, and more. The shortage is not limited to specific institutions or programs, geographic areas or types of community; it exists across-the-board.

The shortage of qualified personnel is the result of the following:

- It is difficult to recruit qualified candidates for work in the field and for training programs because of the reputation and realities of the profession. Salaries and benefits are low and educators are most often not empowered to affect the field.
- Current training opportunities for Jewish educators do not meet the needs of the field.
- The profession of Jewish education is underdeveloped.
- There is a high rate of attrition among Jewish educators.

In competition with other professions to attract talented young Jews, Jewish education fares poorly. Why should talented people choose Jewish education when it is perceived as a low-status profession in a field that is frequently failing? Educators work with little opportunity for professional growth, a feeling of isolation from their colleagues and a sense that their work often does not make a significant difference.

The key to meeting the shortage of qualified personnel for Jewish education resides in building the profession of Jewish education. The profession will be strengthened if talented, dedicated people come to believe that through Jewish education they can affect the future of the Jewish people. These people must believe that their dedication will be rewarded and that creativity will be given a chance. If educators are encouraged to grow as they work and are recognized by the community for their successes, they will be able to positively impact the lives of children and their families.

II. Recommendations

The Commission recommends that a ten-year plan to build the profession of Jewish education in North America be developed and immediately launched. The plan will include the development of training opportunities; a major effort to recruit appropriate candidates to the profession; increases in salaries and benefits; and improvements in the status of Jewish education as a profession.

This plan will require that:

- A. The North American Jewish community undertake a program to significantly increase the quantity and enhance the quality of pre-service and in-service training opportunities in North America and in Israel. The plan will raise the number of people graduating from training programs from 125 to 400 per year and will dramatically expand in-service and on-the-job training programs.

Increasing and improving training opportunities will require investing significant funds in the development of existing training programs to enable them to rise to their full potential, and developing new programs within training institutions or at general universities in North America and in Israel. These funds will be used to:

- * Develop and increase faculty for Jewish education programs, including the endowment of professorships and fellowships for training new faculty.
- * Create and expand specialized tracks in various institutions to meet the needs of the field (e.g. specialization in pre-school education, in informal education, in the teaching of the Hebrew language, in the use of media for education, “fast-track” training programs for career-changers, etc.).
- * Improve the quality of training opportunities by creating partnerships between training institutions in North America and Israel, research networks, consortia of training programs.
- * Establish training programs for geographic areas that do not have any at this time (e.g. the South-East – see maps, Appendix).
- * Develop and support training for professional leadership in Jewish education in North America.
- * Support specialized programs at general universities (e.g. George Washington University, Stanford University, York University) and consider the establishment of similar programs where they are desirable.

- * Provide a significant number of fellowships for students who want to become Jewish educators.
- * Develop a variety of in-service training programs throughout North America and in Israel that will accommodate many more educators. The programs will be designed to fulfill a variety of in-service needs:

On-the-job training programs, either at existing training institutions or at education departments and Judaic studies departments at general universities.

Specialized programs for the various content areas and for specific positions (e.g., curriculum writers, Israel Experience educators, teacher trainers).

Programs that use Israel more extensively as a resource for Jewish educators.

- B. A nationally co-ordinated recruitment plan to increase the pool of qualified applicants for jobs and for training programs be developed and implemented. The plan will seek to significantly expand the pool from which candidates for training and re-training are recruited, and develop methods and techniques for recruiting them.

This will involve:

- * Undertaking a survey to identify new pools of candidates (e.g. Judaic studies students at universities, day school students, youth group graduates, rabbis, career-changers, general educators who are Jewish; members of large Jewish organizations, etc.).
- * Identifying the conditions under which talented potential educators could be attracted to the field (e.g. financial incentives during training; adequate salaries and benefits; possibilities of advancement and growth; challenging jobs).
- * Developing a systematic marketing and recruitment program based on the findings of the survey.

- C. The profession of Jewish education, including the conditions that are likely to attract and retain a cadre of dedicated, qualified educators, be developed. In particular, the plan will recommend policies to improve the status of educators, their salaries and benefits, grant them empowerment and improve their working conditions.

This will involve:

- * Developing appropriate standards for salaries and benefits for all Jewish educators, strategies for implementing them in communities, and assuring their funding.
- * Creating a comprehensive career development program for educators which will allow for professional advancement and personal growth.
- * Mapping out the positions that need to be created and filled in order to meet the current challenges of Jewish education (e.g. specialists in early childhood, family education, adult education, special education, and the education of educators).
- * Developing both linear and non-linear ladders of advancement for education, ranging from avocational positions to senior academic and executive positions. The ladder of advancement will be accompanied by the appropriate criteria for advancement and related salaries and benefits.
- * Encouraging collegial networking through conferences, publications and professional associations, as a way of maintaining standards, exchanging ideas and facilitating innovation and experimentation.

4. Arenas for Programmatic Intervention

I. Background

The Commission has become convinced that there are many arenas in which programmatic initiatives can lead to significant positive improvements in Jewish education. These initiatives, often complementing each other, would address specific target populations, settings and frameworks, and educational content, resources and methods.

Among the important arenas for such initiatives are:

By target populations

1. Early childhood
2. The child
3. The adolescent
4. The college-age youth
5. The adult
6. The family
7. The retired and elderly
8. The new immigrant

By settings and frameworks

9. Early childhood education and child care
10. The supplementary school (elementary and high school)
11. The day school (elementary and high school)
12. The synagogue
13. The Jewish community center
14. Camping
15. The Israel Experience

By content, resources and methods

16. Curriculum
17. Hebrew language education
18. The arts
19. Media and new technologies

In all of these areas, new programmatic efforts have been launched in recent years. Some of these appear to be achieving positive results. Yet there is clearly much more that can and should be done. Additional initiatives must be encouraged, carefully planned, and closely monitored.

The Commission has identified opportunities for further action, and will encourage foundations, philanthropists and institutions to pursue programmatic initiatives in areas of interest to them.

The Community Action Sites will offer an opportunity to learn how to intervene in many of these programmatic areas. Examples of best practice will be assembled there and will be carefully studied. Local taskforces will probably be established for specific programmatic areas in Community Action Sites.

The Commission was reminded that though programmatic arenas are at the very heart of the educational endeavour, the history of general education and of Jewish education offers many examples of important ideas that were acted upon prematurely. It wants to avoid this pitfall for programmatic arenas.

For these reasons—the opportunities inherent in the programmatic arenas; the readiness and interest of institutions, foundations and philanthropists to undertake specific projects; the need of Community Action Sites to work through programs—the Commission has decided to design an agenda for programmatic arenas. The agenda will be presented in the Commission's report for further consideration by the facilitating mechanism.

II. Recommendation

The Commission has identified the following programmatic arenas, each of which offers promising opportunities for intervention.

Target populations: early childhood, the child, the adolescent, the college-age youth, the adult, the family, the retired and elderly, the new immigrant.

Settings and frameworks: early childhood education and child care, the supplementary school (elementary and high school), the day school (elementary and high school), informal education, camping, the Israel Experience.

Content, resources and methods: curriculum, Hebrew language education, and media and new technologies.

The Commission believes that collectively these form a challenging agenda for the next decade and urges communities, institutions, communal organizations, foundations and philanthropists to act upon them.

The facilitating mechanism will offer its services to those who want to concentrate their efforts in a programmatic arena and will help in research, planning and monitoring those efforts.

The mechanism will continue to develop the programmatic agenda towards implementation in Community Action Sites and will help diffuse the results of work in these areas throughout the North American community.

5. Community Action Sites

I. Background

A Community Action Site is a place—a whole community or a network of institutions—where excellence in Jewish education will be demonstrated for others to see, learn from and, where appropriate, to replicate. The Community Action Site will engage in the process of re-designing and improving the delivery of Jewish education according to state-of-the-art knowledge. The focus will be on personnel and the community, with the goal of effecting and inspiring change in the various programmatic arenas in the field of Jewish education.

A. Working Assumptions

The concept of the Community Action Site is based on several assumptions.

1. LOCAL INITIATIVES

The initiative for establishing a Community Action Site should come from the local community and the key stakeholders must be fully committed to the endeavour. The community must be willing to set for itself the highest possible standards and guarantee the necessary funding for the project. The community selected will have to develop a local mechanism that will play a major role in the initiation of ideas, the design of programs and their implementation.

2. LEARNING BY DOING

The notion of a Community Action Site assumes that it is possible to demonstrate effective approaches to problems in a specific community which can then be replicated elsewhere. Significant questions concerning innovation and implementation, such as what elements should be included and how they should be combined, can only be resolved in real-life situations, through the dynamics of thinking about implementation, and in the process of implementing.

3. BEST PRACTICE

Best practice will be an important resource for the work of the Community Action Site. Examples of best practice in Jewish education, suggested by the national denominational bodies, their training institutions, educational organizations, JWB, JESNA, CJF, and other relevant groups, together with the staff of the facilitating mechanism, will be brought to the site, integrated in a complementary way, and adequately funded, thus significantly increasing their impact.

4. CONTENT

The educational program in a Community Action Site will be guided by a carefully articulated philosophy which reflect deliberations concerning educational goals and the means for accomplishing them. Local institutions working with the denominations, JWB, JESNA, the facilitating mechanism and others invited to participate, will produce background papers on the philosophy that should guide the work being done. These papers should address the problem of translating the particular philosophy into curriculum, as well as describe the texts to be studied and the teaching methods to be used. They will also help guide the evaluation of the program.

5. ENVIRONMENT

The Community Action Site will be characterized by innovation and experimentation. Programs will not be limited to existing ideas, but rather creativity will be encouraged. As ideas are tested, they will be carefully monitored and will be subject to critical analysis. The combination of openness and creativity with monitoring and accountability is not easily accomplished, but is vital to the concept of the Community Action Site.

6. EVALUATION

The work of the Community Action Site will have to be monitored and evaluated in order to discover what can be achieved when there is a massive and systematic investment of thought, energy and funding in Jewish education. The results of the evaluation will serve as the basis for diffusion.

7. DIFFUSION

The results of work in a Community Action Site, and lessons learned from projects demonstrated there, will be diffused throughout the North American Jewish community and to other interested Jewish communities in the world. This will require thorough documentation of all aspects of the work.

B. The Scope of a Community Action Site

The scope of a Community Action Site has not yet been decided. Below are two possible models.

1. The Community Action Site could be an entire community where all the institutions involved in Jewish education are invited to join. One to three such comprehensive sites could be established. Each site would have to guarantee the participation of a minimum number of its institutions. It might be determined that a substantial proportion of all the Jewish educational institutions in the community (e.g. the early childhood programs, the supplementary schools, the day schools, JCCs, Judaic studies programs at the local university, adult education programs, etc.) would be needed to build this version of a Community Action Site.
2. Several Community Action Sites could be established with each of them taking different cuts into Jewish education. This could be a cut by ages (e.g. elementary school age), by institutions (e.g. all the day schools), or some combination of these approaches. If, for example, three Community Action Sites decided to concentrate on early childhood and the supplementary school and the day school, three others on the high school and college age groups, and three more on JCCs, summer camps and Israel Experience programs, a significant portion of the map of Jewish education would be covered.

C. An Example of a Community Action Site at Work

After establishing criteria for the selection of a Community Action Site, the board of the facilitating mechanism will consider several possible communities and choose from among them. A community that is selected will create a structure to work in partnership with the facilitating mechanism. If a local commission already exists, it might serve as that structure. Together they will conduct a study of the community to learn about the market for Jewish education (e.g. how many people are involved, what they want); the nature and status of the personnel; the lay leadership of Jewish education; the current level of funding for Jewish education, etc. A preliminary plan would then be developed. Below are some of the elements of a plan which could serve as examples of the work that will be undertaken in a Community Action Site.

1. PERSONNEL

The study might show that there are currently 500 filled positions (formal and informal, full-time and part-time) in all areas of Jewish education in the community. The study would also identify the gaps that exist—the positions that need to be created and filled. The denominations (their organizations and training institutions) and others will be invited to join in developing a plan for recruiting, training and retaining personnel.

a. RECRUITMENT

All of the recommendations related to recruitment in the Commission's report, and the results of the national recruitment study that will be undertaken, will be reviewed and the Community Action Site would act on those recommendations. Some examples:

- Recruiting appropriate college students (good Jewish background, commitment to Judaism) from the local universities, and contracting several years of work in the supplementary schools, day schools and JCCs in the community.
- Recruiting people interested in changing their careers.
- Encouraging general educators in the community to retool themselves for positions in Jewish education.
- Bringing a number of outstanding educators from outside the community in to assume key positions (e.g. three Jerusalem Fellows, four Senior Educators, etc.).
- Recruiting personnel from among the membership of various national organizations and building a program to prepare them to work in the field.
- Canvassing the retired population in the community to recruit appropriate candidates for work in Jewish education.

b. TRAINING

In addition to preparing people who are new to the field, every person in the educational endeavour would be involved in in-service training. Some examples:

- All avocational teachers would be assessed in terms of their current knowledge and their potential and a program to advance them would be designed.
- All professional teachers, principals, and informal educators would be involved in some continuing education planned jointly by the national and local mechanisms.
- Special fast-track programs would be developed for retraining general educators or career-changers who are moving into the field of Jewish education.
- The Community Action Site might be adopted by a consortium of training institutions, with each institution undertaking a specific assignment. The training institutions, the local universities, institutions in Israel, and any other relevant players could be invited to participate.
- Lay leadership training programs might be established.

c. PROFESSION BUILDING

As a result of the community study, a new map of the Jewish educational needs in the community would be developed. This map might include, for example, three full-time positions for special education; several positions for experts in early childhood education; two teacher-trainers; specialists in the teaching of Bible, Hebrew, History; an expert on the use of Israel Experience programs; consultants on Jewish programming for the JCCs; several adult educators; several family educators, etc. To respond to these needs, it might be determined that a 10% increase in the number of positions in the community is required. This could include introducing more full-time positions for people currently working part-time. This map would be the beginning of a new conception of the profession and would develop with time.

Accompanying the map would be a description of the training, salary, benefits and status appropriate to each position. Thus, a Bible expert might earn the same salary and be granted the same status as a principal. This would expand the possibilities of advancement in Jewish education beyond the conventional linear pattern of teacher, assistant principal, principal.

d. RETENTION

The issue of retention would be addressed in light of the results of the community study. The study might point to the need for improving the relationship between lay boards and educators; the need for better compensation, the need for sabbaticals, trips to Israel as well as on-the-job training for teachers. The local mechanism will have to determine the conditions that are necessary to retain good people in the field and deal with them accordingly.

2. COMMUNITY—ITS LEADERSHIP, FUNDING, AND STRUCTURES

From the onset of the Community Action Site, the appropriate community leadership will have to be engaged. These leaders, either the board of a local commission and its staff or newly recruited leaders, will have to be involved in developing the plans of the Community Action Site, overseeing them, monitoring them and responding to feedback. The community would have to either create its own evaluation program or subscribe to a national evaluation program so that success could be measured and appropriate decisions could be made.

Only if the community leadership is well-informed and totally committed will the necessary funding and overall support be obtained for the work of the Community Action Site. A partnership between the community's lay leadership, educators and educational institutions must be created.

3. AN EXAMPLE OF AN INSTITUTION WITHIN A COMMUNITY ACTION SITE

The supplementary schools within a specific community are offered below as a hypothetical possibility of how the national and local mechanisms would work together to implement appropriate recommendations. Over time, such an approach could be introduced for all of the institutions in a Community Action Site.

A taskforce, which could be composed of the top experts of various movements involved in supplementary education, might be created to join with the local structure in examining the supplementary schools. They would search for examples of best practice and invite those who have developed them, as well as thinkers or theoreticians in the area, to join in deliberations on the supplementary school. Together, the national and local teams would begin to plan an approach to improving the supplementary school which could include the following:

- the elaboration of educational philosophies for the supplementary school;
- the supplementary school's relationship to the synagogue, to informal education, to summer camping, to trips to Israel, to family education and to adult education;
- legitimate educational outcomes of the supplementary school;
- the range of curriculum and the content that should be offered in the supplementary school;
- the methods and materials currently available that should be introduced;
- the crucial problematic areas for which materials must be prepared e.g., methods for the teaching of Hebrew. In such a case, one of the national institutions or research centers might be asked to undertake the assignment immediately.

Each of the denominations would be given the opportunity and appropriate support (e.g. funding, expert personnel) to develop a plan including all of the elements listed above. The local and national mechanisms would review, modify and adopt the plan. Funding and criteria for evaluation would be agreed upon. The appropriate training institutions would be asked to undertake responsibility for training the personnel and would accompany the experiment as a whole. For example, for the Conservative supplementary schools, the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and its Melton Research Center might work with the staff of the mechanisms, helping them decide what materials should be taught and developing a training program for the teaching of this material. JTSA and Melton faculty would be involved with the local supplementary schools on a regular basis, to monitor progress and to serve as trouble-shooters.

Although denominations would work individually with their Conservative, Orthodox, Reform and Reconstructionist schools, there are some areas where all of the denominations

could work together. On issues such as the integration of formal and informal education, the use of the Israel Experience, family education, and possibly even in certain content areas such as the teaching of Hebrew, combined effort could yield significant results.

Within a few years, we could learn what can be achieved when proper thinking, funding and training are invested in a supplementary school. We could also see how informal education, the Israel Experience, family education and other elements could be combined to increase the impact of the supplementary school. The extent of the success and the rate at which new ideas should be introduced will become readily apparent when the Community Action Site is functioning.

The facilitating mechanism, in addition to its role in planning, evaluating and overseeing the entire project, would, as quickly as possible, extrapolate principles from the experience of a Community Action Site to feed the public debate, leading to the development of policies on issues such as salaries, benefits, the elements of professional status, sabbaticals, etc. These policies, as well as specific lessons learned, would be diffused to other communities in North America.

II. Recommendation

The Commission recommends the establishment of several Community Action Sites, where excellence in Jewish education will be demonstrated for others to see, learn from and, where appropriate, to replicate. Community Action Sites will be initiated by local communities which will work in partnership with the facilitating mechanism for implementation. The mechanism will help distill the lessons learned from the Community Action Sites and diffuse the results.

6. Research

I. Background

There is very little research on Jewish education being carried out in North America. As a result, there is a paucity of data; too little is known concerning the basic issues and almost no evaluations have been undertaken to assess the quality and impact of programs.

Because of this, decisions are made without the benefit of clear evidence of need; major resources are invested with insufficient evaluation or monitoring. We seldom know what works in Jewish education, what is better and what is less good, what the impact of programs is. The market has not been explored; we do not know what people want. There are not enough standardized achievement tests in Jewish education; we do not know much about what students know. We do not have accurate information on how many teachers there are, how qualified they are, what their salaries are.

Various theories and models for the training of educators need to be considered as we decide what kinds of training are appropriate for various types of educators. The debates in general education on the education of educators need to be considered in terms of their significance for Jewish education. A careful analysis of the potential of the existing training institutions would help us determine both what is desirable and what is feasible.

More extensive investigation into the history and philosophy of Jewish education would inform our thinking for future developments.

We are also in need of important data and knowledge in areas such as the curriculum and teaching methods for Jewish schools. For example, the teaching of Hebrew needs to be grounded in research. The various goals for the teaching of Hebrew should determine the kind of Hebrew to be taught: the Hebrew of the Bible, of the prayer book, spoken Hebrew, Hebrew useful on a first visit to Israel, and so on. These decisions in turn would determine the vocabulary to be mastered, the relative importance of literature, of grammar, etc.

The potential of informal education has not been researched. Summer camping appears to make a difference. Is this really so? If it is, how can its impact be increased by relating it to the education that takes place in the JCCs and in schools?

Adult education is also an area that needs to be researched. How could we best reach out to the many Jewish adults who might be interested in Jewish study but are not involved in existing adult education courses? What are the varied needs of different audiences of adults and what kinds of programs would meet diverse needs and learning styles?

The role of Israel as an educational resource has not been studied adequately. It plays too small a role in the curriculum of Jewish schools. There is a shortage of educational materials and literature about teaching methods for this topic.

We need research in order to allow decision-makers to make informed decisions. We need it, too, to enrich our knowledge about Jewish education and to promote the creative processes that will design the Jewish education of tomorrow.

II. Recommendations

The Commission recommends the establishment of a research capability in North America to develop the knowledge base for Jewish education, to gather the necessary data and to undertake monitoring and evaluation. Research and development should be supported at existing institutions and organizations, and at specialized research facilities that may need to be established.

7. The Facilitating Mechanism

I. Background

The challenge facing the Commission at this time is to create the conditions for implementing its plan and to launch the process that will bring across-the-board change. The Commission needs to decide **who will undertake the continuation of its work and how this will be done**. The plan for action, the implementation of the Commission's recommendations, will require that some mechanism be created to continue the work of the Commission after its report is issued.

Such a mechanism will

- facilitate the establishment of Community Action Sites;
- encourage foundations and philanthropists to support excellence, innovation and experimentation;
- facilitate the implementation of strategies on the continental level and in Israel;
- assist in the planning and development of programmatic agendas;
- help to develop the research capability in North America and prepare comprehensive annual progress reports for discussion by the North American Jewish community.

A number of principles will guide the relationship between this facilitating mechanism and the communities, organizations and individuals implementing the recommendations: Ready-made plans will not be offered or imposed. Rather, the mechanism will act as facilitator and resource for local initiatives and planning, bringing together the appropriate local and continental resources. The work will be guided by agreed-upon criteria such as pluralism, accountability and the highest professional standards. Participating communities and institutions will establish their own local planning and implementation mechanism that will be responsible for the work.

II. Recommendations

The Commission recommends the establishment of a facilitating mechanism that will undertake the implementation of its decisions and recommendations. It will be a driving force in the attempt to bring about across-the-board, systemic change for Jewish education in North America.

The facilitating mechanism will create a cooperative effort of individuals and organizations concerned with Jewish education, as well as the funders who will help support the entire activity. Central communal organizations—CJF, JWB and JESNA—will be full partners in the work. Federations will be invited to play a central role and the religious denominations will be fully involved.

The facilitating mechanism will be charged with gaining acceptance for the action plan decided upon by the Commission and bringing about implementation of the Commission's recommendations. It will be devoted to initiating and promoting innovation in Jewish education. As such, it should be a center guided by vision, together with rigorous work and creative thinking and characterized by an atmosphere of ferment, search and creativity. It will be a driving force for systemic change.

It will help to design and revise development strategies in concert with other persons, communities and institutions. It will be a full-time catalyst for development efforts in Jewish education. It will work with and through existing institutions and organizations and help them rise to their full potential.

III. Governance and Relationship to the Commission

The issue of continuation of the Commission's work and of the governance of the facilitating mechanism was addressed by commissioners and a number of suggestions were offered for consideration.

A. GOVERNANCE

1. The mechanism will be comprised of an active board and staff. The board will determine policy and follow the work of the small, highly qualified professional staff.
2. The work of the mechanism will be guided by the vision and philosophy contained in the final report of the Commission. In addition, the work of the mechanism will be enriched through consultations with institutions, scholars, rabbis, educators and community leaders. A professional advisory team shall be established to stimulate this activity.

3. The authority of the mechanism will derive from the ideas that guide it, and the prestige, status and effectiveness of its board and staff.

B. CONTINUATION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

Many commissioners have expressed an interest in retaining an active involvement in the work of the Commission after the final report is issued. The mechanism could be viewed as heir to the Commission—as its successor in charge of implementation. In this case, the board of the mechanism would be composed of some of the commissioners interested in being actively involved in implementation, be it as funders or representatives of relevant institutions in addition to other members.

An additional possibility would be that the full Commission convene once a year—possibly in an enlarged format, becoming a major communal forum on Jewish education. This forum, convened by the board of the mechanism, would review progress on implementation and the state of the field of Jewish education in North America.

IV. Tasks & Functions

A. The mechanism will undertake the following tasks:

1. **To initiate and facilitate the establishment of several Community Action Sites.** This involves developing criteria for their selection; assisting communities to plan and develop their site; ensuring monitoring, evaluation and feedback. Each site will have its local mechanism—whether this be a commission, a planning unit or some other suitable structure—that will undertake responsibility for planning and implementing the Community Action Site.
2. **To facilitate implementation of strategies on the continental level and in Israel.** This may mean encouraging institutions that will plan and carry out the development efforts. For example: the mechanism may commission the preparation of a national recruitment plan; it may lend planning assistance to existing training institutions as they undertake expansion and development of their training programs; it may help secure funding for these.
3. **To offer assistance as requested for the planning and development of the programmatic arenas.** The mechanism may serve as consultant to foundations, institutions and organizations that want to undertake work in a programmatic arena, helping to design a development process, recruit staff, gather experts who might bring knowledge and data to the planning process.
4. **To help develop the research capability needed in North America that will allow for more informed policies concerning Jewish education.**

5. To **prepare progress reports** for public discussion of the central issues of Jewish education.
6. To facilitate the development and enhance the effectiveness of a **network of existing commissions on Jewish education/Jewish continuity, local mechanisms of the various Community Action Sites** and other relevant organizations, for the promotion of change and the diffusion of innovation.

B. In order to meet these complex tasks, the mechanism will insure that the following **functions are performed**.

1. Research, data collection, planning and policy analysis

Research and planning work may be commissioned, performed in-house or other institutions may be encouraged to do various parts. The necessary data bases will be created; major issues will be studied and key questions will be researched (e.g. inventories of Jewish educational resources may be developed; analyses of needs and wants in the community will be undertaken; the work on setting norms and standards for training will be initiated; the quality of existing training will be assessed and alternative models considered; etc.).

The research function will:

- Provide the analysis needed for informed decisions. (E.g. What are relevant criteria for the selection of Community Action Sites? What is the nature of the problem/s in that site? What are the political and institutional givens relevant to change in Community Action Sites? Who are the stakeholders and how can they be involved? What are the financial and funding possibilities?)
- Provide the knowledge and planning support needed by the Community Action Sites; work with the local mechanism in Community Action Sites, providing expertise that may be needed and ensuring the level and quality of the work intended.
- Be the arm of the mechanism for planning and strategic thinking. Strategies will be defined and revised on an ongoing basis. This work will extensively involve other persons and institutions. It is a different activity from that of facilitating the setting up of a North American research capability but it may provide some of the initial impetus.

2. Community interface (for Community Action Sites)

The mechanism will work closely with the communities where Community Action Sites are located. This complex function will include negotiation over criteria, modes of operation, the establishment of local structures for planning and implementation, funding and more. It will be undertaken in cooperation with the local mechanisms that will be established in Community Action Sites.

The community interface function may deal with:

- Initiation of negotiations with relevant stakeholders and community leaders who want to establish a Community Action Site.
- Helping the local community establish a mechanism for its Community Action Site and recruit staff for such mechanism.
- Ongoing facilitation of implementation as needed (e.g. assistance in negotiations with national training institutions, universities, organizations, etc.). The mechanism staff will be pro-active in its support of the local management of the Community Action Sites and will maintain ongoing contact with the local team.

3. Funding facilitation

This function may include the following:

- Undertaking, as appropriate, brokering between various possible sources of funding (foundations, national organizations, local sources of funds, federations, individuals) and the Community Action Sites.
- Being a central address both for funding sources and for relevant institutions who will seek guidance in accomplishing their objectives.
- Assisting funders in moving ahead with programmatic arenas in which they have an interest, acting as a consultant, and providing professional assistance as appropriate.
- Developing long-term funding strategies with all relevant stakeholders.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and feedback

The purpose of this function is threefold:

- To monitor the activity of each Community Action Site and all other elements of the action plan.
- To evaluate progress—in whatever form or forms deemed most useful.
- To create and activate feedback loops to connect practical results with a process of re-thinking, re-planning and implementation.

5. Diffusion of innovation

The mechanism will deal with the complex issue of the diffusion of innovation from one or more Community Action Sites, from programmatic undertakings and from continental developments, to many or all communities. Strategies will be devised to maximize change throughout the community working through existing organizations and institutions.

Note: The data upon which these background materials and recommendations are based are to be found in the studies that have been undertaken for the Commission; all the studies will be completed before the Commission issues its report.

The Relationship Between Jewish Education and Jewish Continuity (I. Scheffler, Harvard University; S. Fox, The Hebrew University).

The Organizational Structure of Jewish Education in North America (W. Ackerman, Ben Gurion University).

Community Organization for Jewish Education in North America; Leadership, Finance and Structure (H.L. Zucker, Director, Commission on Jewish Education in North America).

Federation-Led Community Planning for Jewish Education, Identity and Continuity (J. Fox, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland).

The Synagogue as a Context for Jewish Education (J. Reimer, Brandeis University).

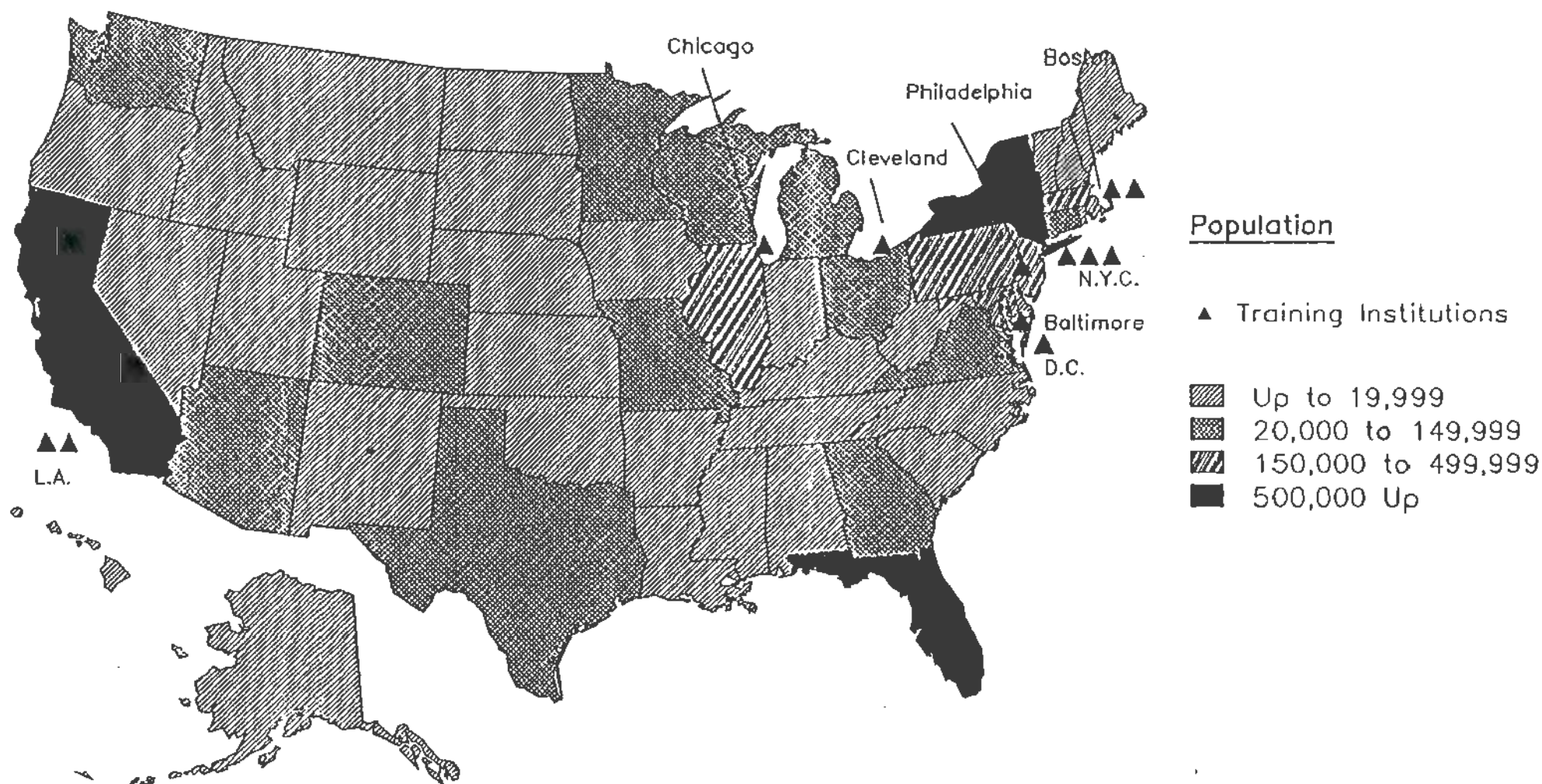
The Preparation of Jewish Educators in North America: A Research Study (A. Davidson, Jewish Theological Seminary of America).

Towards the Professionalization of Jewish Teaching (I. Aron, Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles).

Studies of Personnel in Jewish Education: A Summary Report (I. Aron and D. Markovic, Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles).

Informal Jewish Education (B. Reisman, Brandeis University).

Training Institutions in the United States & Estimated Jewish Population 1987



Source for Population: *American Jewish Yearbook, 1988*

Training Institutions in Canada

Total Population 1986 = 310,000



Source: Population: American Jewish Yearbook, 1988

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA
OCTOBER 23, 1989
AT UJA/FEDERATION OF JEWISH PHILANTHROPIES
NEW YORK CITY
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Attendance

Commissioners: Morton L. Mandel, Chair, David Arnow, Jack Bieler, Charles Bronfman, John Colman, Maurice Corson, Lester Crown, David Dubin, Joshua Elkin, Eli Evans, Arthur Green, Robert Hiller, David Hirschhorn, Carol Ingall, Norman Lamm, Sara Lee, Matthew Maryles, Florence Melton, Lester Pollack, Esther Leah Ritz, Harriet Rosenthal, Alvin Schiff, Ismar Schorsch, Bennett Yanowitz

Policy Advisors and Staff: Seymour Fox, Mark Gurvis, Annette Hochstein, Stephen Hoffman, Martin Kraar, Virginia Levi, Ken Myers, Joseph Reimer, Arthur Rotman, Herman Stein, Jonathan Woocher, Henry Zucker

Guests: Susan Crown, Kathleen Hat

I. Introductory Remarks

Mr. Mandel called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. He welcomed participants and introduced first-time attendees and guests: Susan Crown, President, The Arie and Ida Crown Memorial; Mark Gurvis, Assistant Planning Director of Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland; Kathleen Hat, Administrator of Charitable Contributions of the Riklis Family Foundation; Martin Kraar, CJF Executive Director-elect; Ken Myers, public relations consultant.

Mr. Mandel reported that the purpose of this fourth Commission meeting was to review a proposed action plan and to elicit reactions and commissioner recommendations regarding implementation. An action plan and a final report reflecting Commission findings and recommendations are the two anticipated major outcomes of the Commission. Hopefully, this will help set the agenda for Jewish education in the next decade.

Mr. Mandel reported that a plan for outreach to the significant constituencies is under way. Commission representatives have met with planners and executives of key community federations and are scheduled to meet with federation presidents and executives at the November meetings of the CJF's General Assembly. Mr. Mandel addressed hundreds of Jewish educators at the National CAJE Conference in Seattle in August. Meetings have been held with the presidents of three seminaries as a first step in establishing a fuller dialogue with the denominations.

Mr. Mandel stated that implementation of the recommendations of the Commission will require considerable additional funding. It is anticipated that federations will be a significant long-term source of funding. A major potential source of early support can be private foundations. Meetings will be held with representatives of several foundations to ascertain their willingness to participate and their areas of interest.

II. Review of Proposed Action Plan

Annette Hochstein, consultant to the Commission, briefly summarized the proposed action plan. The proposed plan for action includes seven elements.

- A. Mobilize the community for implementation and change by recruiting more top leadership to work for Jewish education, improving community structures, and generating significant additional funding.
- B. Develop strategies for building the profession of Jewish education, including increasing the capacity of training programs and finding improved methods of recruitment and retention.
- C. Establish Community Action Sites in which to implement new ideas, test practices which have been identified as effective, and explore innovations in personnel and community support.
- D. Initiate continental strategies to deal with issues such as training, salaries, research and recruitment to complement local efforts.
- E. Develop an agenda for dealing with the programmatic options by offering a general overview of the needs, problems, scope, and key opportunities for intervention.
- F. Build a research capability to support informed decisions for Jewish education in North America.
- G. Design a mechanism for implementation to accomplish the following:
 1. Facilitate the establishment of Community Action Sites,
 2. Serve as a broker between continental and local expertise,
 3. Encourage foundations to support innovation and experimentation,
 4. Facilitate the implementation of continental strategies,
 5. Assist in developing approaches to the programmatic options,
 6. Develop a research capability,
 7. Report annually on the progress of the mechanism.

III. General Discussion

The group was asked to comment on the proposed action plan and whether the elements identified should be the major components of the plan.

Initial discussion centered on the issue of best practices and how they could be introduced into the action plan. Several suggestions were considered.

There was an extensive discussion on research and its importance to the action plan and the implementation mechanism. In a special presentation to the group in which he shared his ideas about research, David Hirschhorn emphasized the need for research and evaluation and their importance in helping the North American community decide how to invest its energy and resources more effectively. It was noted that Community Action Sites provide us with an opportunity to experiment with current practices and, through evaluation and assessment, to improve upon them.

Representatives of JWB, CJF, and JESNA, three organizations with which we are cooperating and collaborating, were asked to comment on the extent of their involvement in the work of the Commission.

- A. CJF is finding that Jewish education is rising on the agenda of many communities. Already, 13 local communities are engaged in serious efforts to study and upgrade Jewish education. Jewish community center leaders and other local community leaders are working together in varying degrees in conducting these studies. For CJF the Commission has come along at the right time and is a source of major encouragement to local federations.
- B. JWB has been working closely with local JCC's to develop programs and to train staff and lay leadership for new intensive approaches to Jewish education and Jewish continuity. JWB expects to be very involved in Commission implementation activities.
- C. JESNA, as the continental educational arm of the organized Jewish community, helps to implement local Jewish education agendas. It works directly with federations and often serves as a bridge between federations and local educational organizations within a community. Its goal is to provide continental leadership. JESNA also expects to be very involved in implementing Commission recommendations.

Implementation Mechanism

The Commission itself is envisioned as a major step in an ongoing process. What has emerged is the need for a mechanism to carry out the recommendations of the Commission.

It was suggested that this mechanism would play an important role in facilitating and encouraging communities to participate in the implementation of the Commission's findings. It was reported that the Commission has already been approached by several communities which have expressed an interest in participating in our work as possible Community Action Sites.

It was suggested that activities undertaken in Community Action Sites should be carefully monitored and evaluated in order to permit adaptation and replication in other communities.

It was suggested that at the next meeting of the Commission we review several potential models for the mechanism for implementation and Community Action Sites.

Discussion Groups

Discussion continued in three smaller groups. Reports of these group discussions were presented to the full Commission.

A. Group A - Charles R. Bronfman, Chair; Bennett Yanowitz, Co-Chair

Mr. Bronfman reported the following points in summarizing the discussion of Group A.

1. In order to attract more talented educators to the field, they need to be assured of a career path and a sense of empowerment and impact.
2. Ideas often will be generated and action initiated at the local level. Implementation and dissemination should be the responsibility of continental bodies.
3. One role of the implementation mechanism might be to develop and promote an annotated bibliography on curriculum and methods for Jewish education.
4. The Commission should consider projects initiated by denominations, some of which might be used by other denominations.
5. We need a clear definition of Community Action Sites. A process for evaluating Community Action Sites will be important and should be in place from the beginning.
6. Implementation might be handled by more than one organization. Whether the Commission or some other organization should be responsible for raising additional funds remains an open question.

B. Group B - Lester Crown, Chair; Lester Pollack, Co-Chair

Henry L. Zucker was asked to report for this group and reported that there was agreement on the need for an implementation mechanism--a small new organization with a high degree of autonomy. This organization would work with Community Action Sites on problems of personnel and community/financing, and would also work with other continental bodies. It would help communities and funding organizations to decide what to do with appropriate programmatic options and help create conditions within each community where leadership believes that Jewish education is a major issue.

Financing could be developed through the support of family foundations during the first five to ten years and could be sought from federations for the long-term. The group expressed optimism about attracting substantial sums for creative new work.

C. Group C - Ester Leah Ritz, Chair; John Colman, Co-Chair

Mrs. Ritz reported that the seven elements of the action plan need not be ranked, but together represent a systematic approach. The Community Action Site concept offers the opportunity to mobilize leadership to develop programs for other communities, and to undertake evaluative research. Interaction with continental bodies is essential.

Reference was made to a concern voiced about creating a new mechanism and about the validity of the Community Action Site as the appropriate approach. However, the group favored both of these concepts. It was suggested that the Community Action Site might take on a different character in each community, appropriate to that community's needs.

The implementation mechanism should work on the continental level for the recruitment of senior personnel, to carry resources from one community to another, to take advantage of training opportunities in Israel, and to provide resources and evaluation.

Jewish education does not now attract enough top leadership. An outcome of this Commission will be to convey a sense of importance which will encourage more top leaders to become active in the field.

Jewish educators are not presently dealing effectively enough with lay leadership. This should be addressed as we work to build the profession.

D. General Discussion

It was suggested that the time has come to move from the theoretical to the specific. It was suggested that the implementation mechanism must balance continental and local interests. A continental body can

help to support local programs and organizations by providing supplemental funding and guidance. Local communities should be consulted on what a continental body should provide for them.

In an effort to involve top lay leadership, it was suggested that an ongoing forum be established for continuous education and upgrading of lay leaders.

In summarizing, the chair noted that research is an important element of the implementation mechanism, reflecting our concern for measurement, evaluation, and accountability. He noted further that careful planning must be balanced with learning through experience and suggested that it is time to prepare final recommendations for action.

IV. D'var Torah

The meeting concluded with an inspirational D'var Torah delivered by Rabbi Arthur Green, President of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.