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COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

JUNE 12, 1990

10:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

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COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

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COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

BACKGROUND MATERIALS
FOR THE COMMISSION'S FINAL REPORT
JUNE 12, 1990

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 has yet to be written. It will deal with three topics:

1. A statement about the mission of Jewish education.
2. A presentation of divergent views on Jewish continuity—as they were expressed in the Commission's deliberations.
3. A discussion of the relationship between Jewish education and Jewish continuity. This will be based on the paper by Prof. I. Scheffler and Prof. S. Fox on this topic.

The Crucial Importance of Jewish Education in Contemporary Life

There is a deep and wide-spread concern in the Jewish community today that the commitment to basic Jewish values, ideals and behavior may be diminishing at an alarming rate. There is considerable evidence that a high percentage of Jews have come to feel that Judaism does not address their search for personal fulfillment and communality. This has grave implications not only for the richness of Jewish life but for the very continuity of the Jewish people. Throughout history Jews have faced dangers from without with courage and steadfastness; now a new kind of commitment is required.

The Jews in North America live in an open society which presents an unprecedented range of opportunities and choices. This extraordinary environment confronts us with what is proving to be an historic dilemma; while we cherish our freedom as individuals to explore new horizons, we recognize that this very freedom poses a dramatic challenge to the future of the Jewish way of life. There is an urgent need to find better ways to ensure that Jews maintain and strengthen the commitments that are central to Judaism.

In our uniquely pluralistic society, where there are so many philosophies and ideologies competing for attention, and where the pursuit of Judaism increasingly in-

volves a conscious choice, the burden of preparation for such a decision resides with education. Jewish education must be compelling, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually, so that young people will say to themselves: "I have decided to remain engaged, to continue to investigate and grapple with these ideas and to choose an appropriate Jewish way of life." Jewish education must be vastly improved if it is to achieve this objective. It must become an experience that inspires Jews to learn, feel and act in a way that reflects a deep understanding of Jewish values.

The difficulties facing Jewish education bear some resemblance to the problems of education in general in the U.S. Well known reports have documented the serious lack of teaching talent as well as other problems facing the educational system. A severe lack of funds, resources, status and vision is causing the system to strain and crack. Jewish education is also impoverished in regard to these basic requirements.

In North America today, Jewish education is often limited in scope: at times it is confined simply to facts about Jewish history and holidays and some study of the Hebrew language. Many additional elements that should be central to the mission of Jewish education—such as the teaching of Jewish values and ideals, the concern for the State of Israel and for Jews throughout the world, the meaning of prayer, the relationship with God and community—are often lacking. It is imperative that at this moment in history Jewish education again become a transformative rather than merely an informative experience. Without this change in the educational experience, it will be increasingly difficult to pass on to future generations a strong identity with and commitment to Judaism.

The core of Jewish education must be character education. Its goal must be no less than shaping the inner lives of people. It must find a way to transmit the essence of

what Jewish life is all about, so that future generations of Jews will be impelled to search for meaning through their own rich traditions and institutions. Judaism must present itself as a living entity and give the Jews of today the resources to find answers to the fundamental questions of life as readily as it did for their ancestors through the centuries. Otherwise it could eventually be overtaken in the minds of young people by other systems of thought that they feel are more meaningful for the modern world.

This dangerous state of affairs is in no small measure the result of the historically low priority that the Jewish community as a whole has given to Jewish education. At the beginning of the federation movement at the turn of the century, the chief emphasis was on financial support for the indigent newcomers and on their Americanization. Federations generally ignored Jewish education, which was left to those people who had Jewish education as a special interest. While many outstanding schools, community centers, and summer camps were established by committed leaders and parents, overall the field met with indifferent support by the leaders of the community.

In the '20s and the '30s, the situation began to improve, but federations tended to give community support priority to the health and social service fields, and to dealing with problems of anti-Semitism. In the immediate post-War period, the highest community priority was the lifesaving work of Jewish relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the upbuilding of Israel. At the same time, Jewish education became a higher priority and received increased support from federations and from the religious denominations. Today federation leaders attach a higher priority to Jewish education.

Currently, federations are urgently involved with the rescue and resettlement of Soviet Jewry, and this is emerging as the need which overshadows all other federation concerns.

In the face of such life-and-death issues, the needs of education seem to be less urgent, less insistent, more diffused; a problem that can be dealt with at some point in the future when more pressing problems have been solved. This is an illusion. We may continue to live with emergencies indefinitely, and we can no longer postpone addressing the needs of Jewish education lest we face an irreversible decline in the vitality of the Jewish people.

An obvious symptom of the inadequacy of Jewish education is the rise in intermarriage and the consequent turning away from Jewish traditions in the search for fulfillment and meaning in life. According to a recent Gallup (Israel) Poll of American Jews, carried out in December 1989, the number of intermarriages has sharply increased in the past couple of decades, growing from 16% of Jews between the ages of 40 and 59, to 28% of Jews under the age of 40. These figures are consistent with studies of individual communities in North America undertaken in recent years. Today, nearly one out of every three married Jews under the age of 40 is married to a non-Jew. A number of studies indicate that Jews who intermarry are significantly less likely to provide their children with a Jewish education. A study of children of intermarriages shows that only 24% of children in dual faith households identify themselves as Jews.

Another symptom of the problem is that while a large majority of Jewish children have at one time or another received some form of Jewish education, it has often been so sporadic that it has had little impact on their lives. A recent study found that

over half of Jewish school age children in the United States are not currently enrolled in any kind of Jewish schooling. Inevitably these children will grow up with a relatively weak identification with and understanding of Judaism, and have difficulty passing on to their children an appreciation of the beauty and richness of Jewish life.

This weakening commitment to Jewish life, which can already be seen in the lives of the current generation of young adult Jews, may become even more apparent among their children and grandchildren. This painful prospect, which community leaders can foresee in their own families as well as in the community at large, has brought to a head concern about the quality and mission of Jewish education.

In the past the Jewish family and the Jewish community had certain bonds that gave it remarkable inner strength. Jews grew up in Jewish families and Jewish neighborhoods with a strong Jewish ambience. They were constantly surrounded by the symbols and customs of Jewish life. They came into contact with their cultural and spiritual heritage in a variety of institutions and settings. Thus young people received a strong sense of Jewish identity through experiences in their everyday life. Today these neighborhoods and the way of life they represented have all but disappeared from the modern world, and ways must be found to respond to these new circumstances.

It was to meet these challenges that the idea of creating the Commission on Jewish Education in North America was born.

The underlying assumption that guided the Commission was that the North American Jewish community had the will and capacity to mobilize itself for education as it had in the past for the building of the State of Israel, the rescue of Jews in

distress, and the fight against discrimination. This would require that all sectors of North American Jewry join forces, pool their energies and resources, and launch an unprecedented undertaking to enlarge the scope, raise the standards and improve the quality of Jewish education. To accomplish this, the Commission would have to analyze the current shortcomings of Jewish education, develop a concrete plan of action with specific goals, and establish a mechanism to oversee the enactment of that plan.

How the Commission Was Formed

The idea of forming a Commission to tackle the problems of Jewish education was first conceived by Morton L. Mandel and his brothers Jack N. Mandel and Joseph C. Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio, in November, 1986. Morton Mandel has played a central role in the Jewish world during his long career as a community leader, and has been responsible for developing new initiatives for education in his local community, in the Jewish Community Center movement, and in the Jewish Agency for Israel. In calling for the creation of a Commission, Morton Mandel and his brothers, Jack and Joseph, decided to commit their personal energies and the financial resources of the Mandel Associated Foundations to bring about a major change in Jewish education.

In making this move, Mandel was mindful that commissions and their reports had played a significant role in the field of general education over the years. In 1910, *The Flexner Report on Medical Education in the U.S. and Canada* led to major reform in this field. More recently, national concern about the crisis in education has been aroused by such reports as *A Nation At Risk*, published by the National Commission

on Excellence in Education (1984), *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* published by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986), and *An Imperiled Generation*, published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1988).

Moreover, the Jewish world was not unfamiliar with the activities of national or international commissions. They have been used at various times to address different areas of contemporary life or fields of service and to achieve specific goals. Also, numerous local communities have begun, in recent years, to organize commissions on Jewish education or Jewish continuity as a means of studying local problems, developing appropriate responses and implementing the necessary changes. About a dozen major communities have such commissions in various stages of maturity.

However, in this generation there has not been a national commission singularly devoted to the subject of Jewish education in North America as a whole, and it was clear from the outset that in order to do its job well it would have to incorporate several unique features.

It was determined that the private and communal sectors would need to establish a working partnership to create the broadest possible base for the Commission. It would also be necessary that the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist movements work together; a prerequisite for the success of the Commission was that it benefit from the power of the various religious persuasions. Moreover, other sectors of the community involved and concerned about Jewish education and Jewish continuity needed to be included. Across-the-board changes could only happen through a process that reflected and respected the diversity of North American Jewry. Finally, it was critical that the work of the Commission result not only in

recommendations of steps needed to be taken, but in concrete action that could, over time, actually transform Jewish education.

The Composition of the Commission

At the invitation of Morton L. Mandel, who agreed to chair the Commission, the following central communal organizations joined as co-sponsors:

J.C.C. Association:

> The Jewish Community Center Association of North America (formerly, JWB) is the leadership body for the North American network of JCCs and Ys; JCCA serves the needs of individual Jewish Community Centers, and it helps to build, strengthen and sustain the collective Center movement through a broad range of direct and indirect services, institutes, consultations and Jewish experiences and by identifying and projecting movement-wide directions, issues and priorities.

JESNA:

> The Jewish Education Service of North America is the organized community's planning, service and coordinating agency for Jewish education. It works directly with local federations, the agencies and institutions created and supported by federations, and other independent education institutions to deliver educational services.

In addition, the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF), the umbrella organization for Jewish federations in North America, agreed to collaborate with the effort in order to facilitate communication and cooperation with local communities.

From the beginning, it was recognized that major Jewish family foundations should play a leading role in the Commission. With this in mind, the heads or principals of a number of foundations were approached. They agreed that a Commission in which they could work together with other segments of the organized Jewish community to revitalize Jewish education would be the key to achieving success in a significant common endeavor.

The joining together of the communal and private sectors would be fundamental to the success of the Commission. Private foundations could provide the initial funding to get new programs started, but implementation would ultimately be the responsibility of the federations, together with the religious denominations, the institutions of higher Jewish learning, the schools, the community centers, the bureaus of Jewish education, and above all, the educators on the front lines.

The next step was to draw up a list of heads of institutions of higher Jewish learning, educators, scholars and rabbis who would be invited to join the Commission.

The participation of outstanding community leaders would ensure the ultimate support of the organized Jewish community and help the Commission have a realistic understanding of how best to achieve its goals. Leaders from local communities and of national institutions (including the co-sponsoring organizations) were, therefore, invited to join the Commission. The following individuals agreed to join the Commission for Jewish Education in North America:

Commissioners*

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Ronald Appleby	—	
David Arnow	—	
Mandell L. Berman	—	
Jack Bieler		
Charles R. Bronfman		
John C. Colman		
Maurice S. Corson		
Lester Crown		
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Irwin S. Field		
Max M. Fisher		
Alfred Gottschalk		
Arthur Green		
Irving Greenberg		
Joseph S. Gruss		
Robert I. Hiller		
David Hirschhorn		
Carol K. Ingall		
Ludwig Jesselson		
Henry Koschitzky		
Mark Lainer		
Norman Lamm		
Sara S. Lee		
Seymour Martin Lipset		
Haskel Lookstein		
Robert E. Loup		
Matthew J. Maryles		
Florence Melton		
Donald R. Mintz		
Lester Pollack		
Charles Ratner		
Esther Leah Ritz		
Harriet L. Rosenthal		
Alvin I. Schiff		
Lionel H. Schipper		
Ismar Schorsch		
Harold M. Schulweis		
Daniel S. Shapiro		
Margaret W. Tishman		
Isadore Twersky		
Bennett Yanowitz		
Isaiah Zeldin		

* A one-sentence description of each commissioner will appear in the text and a fuller description of each member of the Commission will appear in an Appendix.

To help plan and carry out the work of the Commission, a group of senior policy advisors was established, and a staff was assembled (see overleaf).

Henry L. Zucker accepted the invitation to serve as Director of the Commission, and Seymour Fox and Annette Hochstein were appointed, respectively, as Director and Associate Director of Research and Planning.

The forty-seven Jewish leaders and thinkers who agreed to join the Commission were a remarkable group, with broader representation than had ever been gathered together to address the problem of Jewish education. The readiness with which these individuals responded to the invitation was in itself clear evidence that the time had come to give education the highest priority in planning the future of the Jewish community. Never before had there been a single group in which heads of foundations could meet with community leaders, directors of communal organizations, heads of institutions of higher learning, rabbis, educators and scholars, and work together towards a common goal.

An Auspicious Beginning

The commissioners felt inspired by the prospect of so diverse and prominent a group arriving at a consensus about the kinds of intervention that should be undertaken. They agreed that the Commission provided an ideal means for Jews to join together to develop a plan of action. As one commission member noted:

Senior Policy Advisors

David S. Ariel
Seymour Fox
Annette Hochstein
Stephen H. Hoffman
Martin S. Kraar
Arthur Rotman
Herman D. Stein
Jonathan Woocher
Henry L. Zucker

Director

Henry L. Zucker

Research & Planning

Seymour Fox, Director
Annette Hochstein, Associate Director

Staff

Estelle Albeg
Mark Gurvis
Virginia F. Levi
Debbie Meline
Joseph Reimer

> The problem of Jewish education is too large for any one group. Only through a partnership can we hope to legitimize the pluralism within and between Jewish communities. The partnership has to occur between the religious and the non-religious institutions and organizations that make up the national Jewish community.

A formal methodology for the work of the Commission was established. It would meet six times over a two year period. Background materials would be circulated prior to each meeting of the Commission. Some of the deliberations of the Commission would take place in small work groups; others would be in plenary sessions. On the basis of transcripts of these discussions, the staff and the senior policy advisors would formulate recommendations on next steps that would then be circulated to commissioners for comments.

All of the commissioners shared the determination to make a concrete impact on Jewish life. They agreed that the Commission could not be merely "a lot of talk." "We will not conclude the work of this Commission," stated Mandel, "without beginning the implementation process the very day we issue our report."

The commissioners felt there were grounds for optimism about the ultimate success of the project. Several pilot projects had been developed for Jewish education in recent years that had shown promising results. These could serve as models for the kind of massive effort that would be necessary if the nature of Jewish life as a whole were to be affected. Moreover, as another commissioner pointed out:

> The concern about Jewish survival comes at a time of unprecedented success in Jewish scholarship. There are today in Israel and North America more Jewish books and other Jewish publications being issued than there were in Europe during the height of the so-called 'Golden Age of Polish Jewry.' Ironically, however, this flourishing of Jewish thought is not reaching large numbers of Jews.

During the Commission's first meeting, in August 1988, a member expressed the enthusiasm felt by the commissioners:

> Just the possibility of working together with so many fine minds and so many committed people of varied religious outlooks is extremely inspiring. Despite our philosophic differences, we all have many common goals, and it is an extraordinary opportunity to sit down and work on them together.

CHAPTER 3: JEWISH EDUCATION – WHERE IT STANDS TODAY

In order to understand the context in which the Commission would have to approach its task, it was necessary to obtain as much information as possible about the state of Jewish education in North America today.

What are the various components that make up Jewish education? What is their reach and effectiveness? What are the major problems and opportunities?

In this chapter we have included the following:

- Figures about participation in Jewish education.
- A description of major forms that make up Jewish education and an assessment of their scope.
- A brief appraisal of major issues that need to be addressed.

The Known Facts and Figures of Jewish Education

JEWISH POPULATION

	United States (1987)	*Canada (1989)*
Total	5,944,000	310,000
School age (ages 3-17)	880-950,000	57,000

The major settings for Jewish education in North America are usually considered to include*

1. *Day Schools*	(600-800 schools; approximately 110,000 participants in 1982)
2. *Supplementary Schools*	(1300-1400 schools; about 280,000 participants in 1982)
3. *Jewish Community Centers*	(220 centers and branches; close to 1,000,000 members, many more occasional participants in activities [1989])
4. *Camps*	(85,000 children in residential camps; 120,000 participants in day camps [1989])
5. *College and University Courses*	(over 600 colleges and universities offering courses and academic programs in Judaica [1989])
6. *Youth Movements*	(75,000 members and 25,000 additional occasional participants [1989])
7. *Educational Visits to Israel*	(about 25,000 participants in a large variety of programs [1986])
8. *Adult and Family Programs*	(estimated at 5-10% of the adult population)

Formal Jewish education in North America consists of two major types of schools: the day-school, which is an all-day educational institution teaching both general and Jewish subjects; the supplementary school, which meets one to three times a week after public school hours and/or on Sunday mornings for instruction on Jewish subjects.

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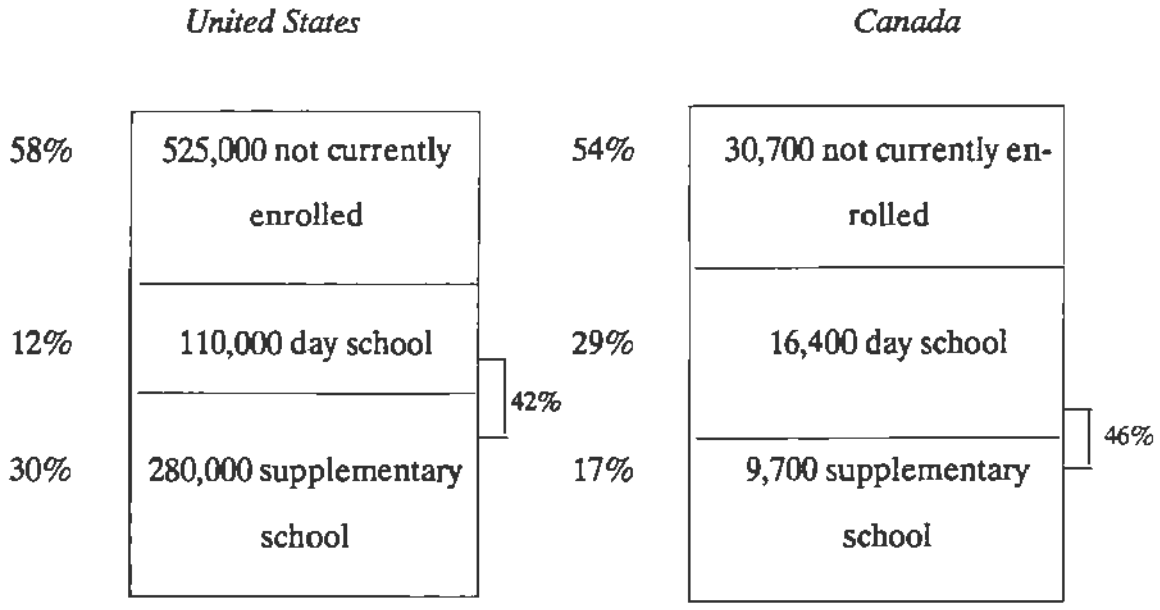
* The data represent a compilation of sources reflecting current available statistics on Jewish education in North America, as well as research undertaken for the Commission. Figures are approximate.

It is estimated that there are approximately 2,000 schools throughout North America, about 75% of them supplementary schools. Most schools are associated with one of the three major denominational movements—the Orthodox, the Conservative, and the Reform. The overwhelming majority of day schools (75%) are Orthodox, while children attending Reform and Conservative supplementary schools comprised 85% of the supplementary school population.

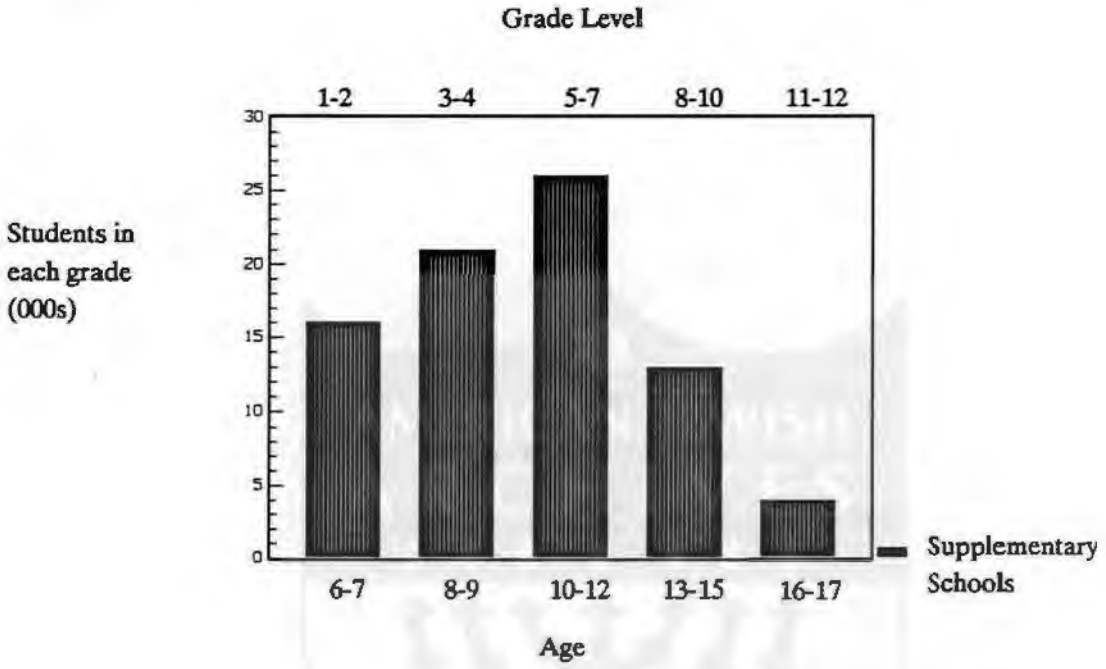
There are close to one million Jewish children of school age in North America. Most of these children, perhaps as many as 80%, have attended some form of Jewish schooling at least one time in their lives. However, for many attendance is often short-lived and sporadic. Close to 600,000 children currently do not receive any form of Jewish schooling. Only some 400,000 in the U.S. (about 40% of all Jewish children), and 32,000 in Canada (about 55%) are currently enrolled in any Jewish school. (Figure 1)

FIG. 1: ENROLLMENT IN DAY SCHOOLS AND SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS (1982)



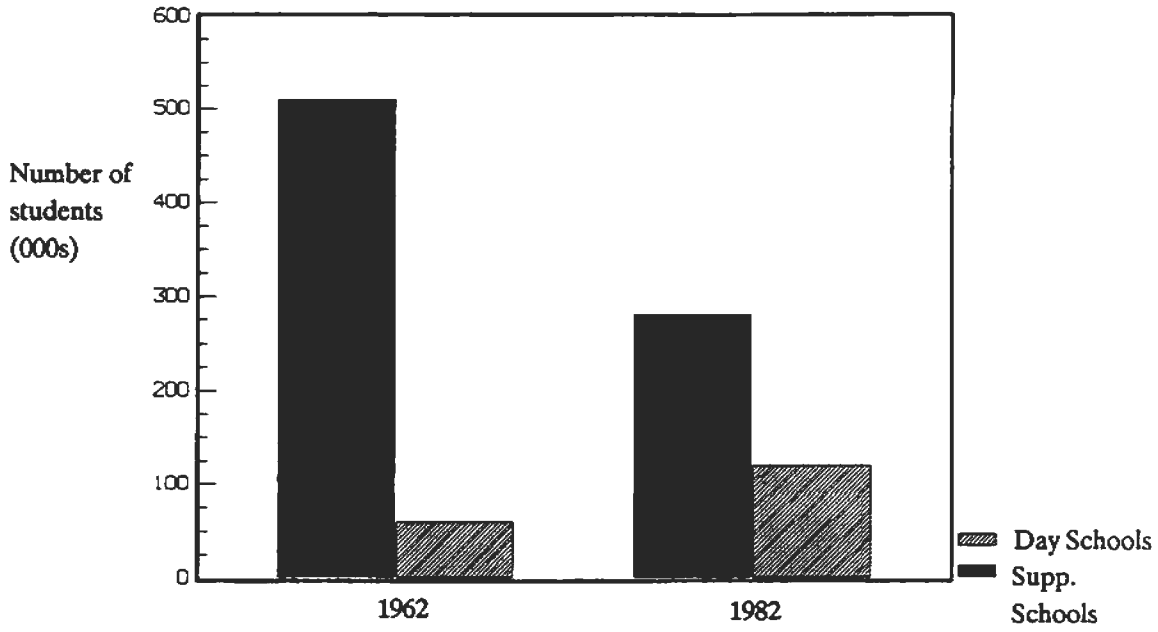
This is even more of a problem with children over Bar or Bat Mitzvah age (13 or 12) when attendance drops by more than 60%. (Figure 2)

FIG. 2: AVERAGE ENROLLMENT IN SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL PER AGE AND GRADE LEVEL (U.S., 1982/3)



Over a twenty year period, from 1962 to 1982, total enrollment in Jewish schools in the U.S. dropped from approximately 600,000 to approximately 400,000, an overall decline of nearly 35%. It is estimated that about half of this decline reflects negative demographic trends (i.e., the end of the baby boom), the other half a lessening interest in Jewish schools. It is interesting to note that the most extensive form of Jewish education in the U.S., the supplementary school, declined by about 50%, from 540,000 to 280,000; while day school enrollment rose from 60,000 to 110,000, a rise of 80%. (Figure 3)

FIG. 3: ENROLLMENT U.S.: 1962 & 1982



Of the many important settings for Jewish education outside the schools, the most far-reaching are the **Jewish Community Centers** (JCCs) with close to one million members throughout North America. JCCs were first established in the middle of the 19th century and are the oldest form of informal Jewish educational settings in North America. In the mid-1980s, the JCC Association—formerly known as the JWB, embarked on a major campaign to upgrade the Jewish educational activities of JCCs around the country.

Camping is considered to have significant educational impact, particularly when used to complement the work of schools, youth movements or JCCs. There are two types of camps: day camps and residential camps, ranging in duration from several days to a full summer. In 1988/89 there were approximately 120,000 children in day camps and 85,000 children in residential camps. Camps are sponsored either by JCCs, by national denominational groups (e.g. Ramah, National Federation of Temple Youth, and Yeshiva University camps) or by B'nai B'rith, Zionist Youth

movements and others. There are also specialized camps serving special needs or interests, such as camps for older adults or camps for college age men and women.

Youth movements have played an important role in the preparation of the leadership of the American Jewish community. There are some 75,000 members of youth movements, with another 25,000 or so attending on different occasions. Youth groups serve adolescents and are usually sponsored by national organizations (e.g., BBYO), the religious denominations, (e.g., USY, NCSY, NFTY), and Zionist movements (e.g., Bnei Akiva, Betar, Habonim Dror, Young Judea).

It is estimated that approximately 25,000 young Americans participate annually in a variety of organized **educational visits to Israel.** There has been a steady increase in the number of young people participating in these programs over the past two decades, however it is estimated that close to 65% of the American Jewish population has never visited Israel, a percentage that is probably higher among the 15-to-25 year-olds. There is strong evidence that these educational programs have a significant positive impact on participants, but it is also agreed that their potential is still largely untapped, both in terms of number of participants and the quality of the programs.

In recent years there has been increasing awareness of the importance of **adult education.** There are today both formal and informal adult education programs. Formal adult education programs take place in synagogues, JCCs or Hebrew colleges. Demographic studies indicate a level of participation of between 5% and 10% of the Jewish population. Informal programs (e.g., *havurot*, *minyanim*, study groups) are often unstructured, and there is little reliable information about the number of people involved.

Retreat or conference centers are increasingly popular. They exist today in about 50 cities in North America and provide a setting for family camping, *shabbatonim* for Jewish schools, specialized weekends, conferences on different subjects and leadership programs for boards and staff groups.

Finally, **family education** is considered one of the developing frontiers for informal Jewish education in North America. Although data is not available at this time as to the extent of family education programs, many communities in the U.S. have undertaken these recently or plan to undertake them.

* * * * *

The conventional audience for general education in North America consists of individuals between the ages of 3 (pre-school training) and 22 (college graduation). However in accordance with traditional Jewish thinking the audience for Jewish education includes all age groups, the affiliated as well as the non-affiliated—in other words the entire Jewish population.

Thus, while there are many different forms of Jewish education, only a fraction of the Jewish population of North America currently participates in any type of program:

- less than half of Jewish children currently attend any type of Jewish school;
- only about one in three Jews has ever visited Israel;
- it is estimated that only one in ten Jewish adults are involved in any type of Jewish learning.

If Jewish education is to achieve its objectives its reach must be extended to include the majority of Jews of North America.

The Need for Reliable Data

As the Commission began its work, it realized that there was a paucity of data on the facts and scope of Jewish education. The data available was often approximate, incomplete, and frequently not dependable. In addition, there was almost no research on the impact of the various forms of Jewish education. Clearly, the gaps in knowledge could not be filled by the time the Commission would need to take decisions. The Commission therefore undertook the following steps:

a. Every attempt was made to gather available data and assess its reliability;

b. a series of research papers were commissioned (see Appendix A);

c. for the second meeting of the Commission, the staff prepared a series of papers that described 23 areas of Jewish education (e.g., the supplementary school, the JCC, the media, curriculum) in terms of their current state, their importance to the field, and their potential (see background materials for the meeting of December 13, 1988). When analyzing the papers a number of major issues emerged that cut across all forms and settings of Jewish education. In the section that follows we will summarize a selection of these materials.

A Closer Look at Six Major Forms of Jewish Education

1. The Supplementary School

The supplementary school is the most extensive form of formal Jewish education in the United States. Although at one time it served over half a million children, it is estimated today that about 300,000 are enrolled in these schools.

Based on a concept brought to America from European communities around the turn of the century, supplementary schools seemed ideally suited to an immigrant population that wanted to become part of the mainstream of American society while maintaining its own tradition. The theory was that these twin objectives could best be accomplished by sending Jewish children to public schools along with other American students, and enrolling them as well in an after school program where they would learn Jewish subjects. The early supplementary schools were under communal or neighborhood sponsorship. After World War II these schools experienced a rapid growth under the direction and supervision of the three major denominational movements – the Orthodox, the Conservative and the Reform. Some of the schools were limited to as little as one or two hours on Sundays, while others involved as much as twelve to fifteen hours per week in four afternoon classes and a full Sunday morning of study.

In a number of congregations the supplementary school was at the heart of the synagogue's activities. Rabbis played a leadership role along with principals and staffs of knowledgeable teachers who served as role models for students. Some of

the graduates of these schools became the following generations' rabbis, community leaders, communal workers and Judaic scholars.

Over the past several decades, however, there has been a significant decline in the role and quality of the supplementary school. Today there are practically no full-time jobs to attract qualified teachers, and few to attract principals. Many of the best educators have left their positions to join faculties of day schools. Congregations are having difficulty providing adequate resources for their supplementary schools. Part-time teachers are often poorly trained or not trained at all. They receive low salaries and no fringe benefits. The curricula and the educational impact are very uneven. Articles have appeared in the press about this unfortunate condition, and this in turn has contributed to poor morale and reduced communal support.

As a result, there is a perception among American Jews that supplementary school education is not succeeding. Few people can make a career, or even support themselves, teaching ten or twelve hours-a-week. Almost by definition these part-time teachers cannot make the professional commitment that is required. Moreover, the teachers are often frustrated by the difficulty of making a serious impact on the lives of students in the limited amount of teaching time that is available, and they see no possibility of improving their own skills or advancing their careers through self-improvement programs. As one Commissioner put it, "as long as Sunday school is something you have to live through rather than enjoy, it cannot be valuable. So many of Jewish Americans have had an impoverished Sunday school experience as their only Jewish education."

2. Day Schools

The day school concept is based on the premise that in order to be effective, Jewish education must take place in a comprehensive Jewish environment and be accorded a sufficient proportion of the student's time. Here, in theory, Jewish and general studies are given equal status. Since the Jewish education of the child is a prime concern of the entire school program, there is an attempt to introduce Jewish values and traditions into all aspects of the curriculum.

Proponents of the day school believe that meaningful Jewisb education cannot take place after normal school hours when the child is tired, when there may be an option to attend or not to attend, and when parents tend to believe that it is general education that really counts. Proponents also feel that a more total environment has many advantages, the most significant of which is the peer-support for a commitment to a Jewish way of life.

During the first half of this century there were few day-schools, almost all of them Orthodox. In recent years the Conservative movement has developed over 70 day schools; there are about 50 community supported non-denominational day-schools; and the Reform movement has also begun to establish day schools. The day-school movement has grown dramatically since World War II from about 45 schools in 1950 to about 800 today. There has been an especially accelerated growth in the recent past when the number of students has grown from 60,000 in 1962 to 110,000 in 1982. There are those who claim that the growth of the day school movement parallels the growth of private schools in general and is in part the result of the difficulties facing the American public school system.

However, day schools have problems of their own. Despite the large number of full-time teachers, average salaries are significantly lower than those of their colleagues in the public school system. Many of these teachers are poorly trained, and there is little on-the-job training available to them. Policy makers who question the prospect of continued growth of the day school point to the higher cost of tuition which is even prohibitive for many middle-class families.

Critics of the day school concept feel that it conflicts with their desire to be part of the mainstream of American society. They point out that while enrollment in day schools has been increasing and enrollment in supplementary schools decreasing, the latter is still serving approximately three times as many students as the former, and is likely to continue to be the primary setting for the formal education of American Jewish children.

Today only about 12% of American Jewish children attend day schools. Most of them leave after elementary school.

3. The Jewish Community Center

The Community Center movement had as its initial purpose the integration of Jewish immigrants, largely from Eastern Europe, into the American community.

To carry out this mission, the Centers offered courses and programs in subjects such as the English language and American history, and later developed special programs in the arts, athletics and adult education. They functioned very much as the YMCA did for the general community and some of the Centers are still called YMHA.

For many years the JCC movement did not consider Jewish education to be one of its central functions. Beginning in the 1970s, however, its potential for informal Jewish education was increasingly recognized. In 1985 a commission was established by the umbrella organization (then known as JWB, now known as JCCA) to develop a new educational focus for Community Centers. As a result, a variety of important educational programs has been introduced into centers during the past five years. Jewish educators have been hired as a resource for staff training and program development. Staff and board members are participating in Jewish educational programs in Israel and in North America. Educational materials especially suited to these informal settings are being prepared. Early childhood and youth programs are proving to be of special interest and are growing at a rapid rate.

While these developments are promising, almost no pre-service training program for Jewish education of JCC staff exists. Experts indicate that the new emphasis on Jewish education introduced in the Community Center movement has yet to find its appropriate place in relation to the more traditional role of JCCs as a place for Jews to meet, socialize and participate in recreational and sports activities.

4. Israel Experience Programs

An estimated 25,000 young people from North America participate in educational programs in Israel every year. These consist of study tours, programs at universities, work programs in Kibbutzim, archaeological digs, and a variety of religious, cultural and professional study programs. Recent studies indicate that many young people who have never visited the country would do so in the framework of educational programs, and even those who have visited as tourists would return if appropriate programs were made available.

Although there is limited empirical data on the educational impact of programs in Israel, experts agree that Israel speaks powerfully to its Jewish visitors. There are educators and parents who believe an effective program in Israel has a greater impact than many other educational activities and can be further enhanced if appropriately integrated into broader educational experiences.

In some communities savings programs have been undertaken by parents, local synagogues and the community in which monies have been set aside from the day a child enters school for an organized trip to Israel during his or her high school years. This practice could become a model for Jewish families throughout North America.

Research indicates that the present number of 25,000 young people in study groups in Israel could be substantially increased.

5. Early Childhood Programs

In North America today there is increasing attention being given to the importance of early childhood education. This has a significant bearing on Jewish education not only in relation to educational theory but because there are more and more households where both parents are working and they are concerned about having an appropriate educational setting for their children.

There are some 50,000 children in early childhood programs today. Most of these programs take place in JCCs, the next largest group is in congregations, and some are attached to day schools. This activity should be increased enormously if the needs of the population are to be adequately served.

Early childhood is an especially important period for Jewish education, particularly since the family has all hut abdicated its role as Jewish educator. It is a period of deep emotional experiences in the child's life and important attachments to Judaism can be developed. It is also the age when certain skills, such as the learning of new languages, can be easily mastered. A successful Hebrew program in early childhood can therefore provide a foundation for subsequent study in day schools and supplementary schools. Parents also may be stimulated to focus on their own educational interests as adults when their young children are involved in childhood educational programs.

A major problem in early childhood education is that the teachers are among the lowest paid of Jewish educators. Early childhood educators are often poorly trained, in terms of their Jewish background. Only three teacher training institutes provide early childhood teacher training (Spertus College of Judaica, the Boston Hebrew College and Stern College of Yeshiva University).

Moreover, early childhood programs suffer from a dearth of curricular and educational material.

6. College-Age Programs

There are an estimated 400,000 Jewish college and university students in North America. No more than 100,000 are being serviced by the Hillel Foundation and other Jewish agencies on the campus. The largest provider of services on the campus is the National Hillel Foundation. The Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements have their own representatives on a number of campuses, as does the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and The United Jewish Appeal (UJA). There are an estimated 600 colleges and universities offering courses and

academic programs in Judaica on college campuses in North America, some of which are extensive enough to grant degrees, while others are limited to individual course offerings. There are no accurate figures as to how many Jewish students participate in these courses.

This is a key area for Jewish education. The two to four years students spend in college are critical for their personal development, and an impact could be made in a variety of ways. While there are Jewish students in many colleges and universities in North America, there is a concentration of Jewish students on approximately 30 college campuses where they may represent 20-30% of the student population. Often on these same college campuses there is a very high percentage of Jewish faculty. The opportunity for meaningful Jewish education to take place in these settings could be extremely significant. Some experts view this as a second chance for Jewish education. Extra-curricular Jewish programs on college campuses are often under financed and unable to offer competitive salaries for well-trained, dedicated personnel. Little has been done to develop programs that would attract faculty to planned Jewish education activity on college campuses. This is important because faculty members in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, as well as in Judaica, who are committed to Jewish values and ideas, could serve as role models for the students and other members of the faculty.

Major Issues That Need to be Addressed

The Commission's review of the state of Jewish education brought to the fore several issues that cut across all forms, all settings, all programs;

1. The need to develop a profession for Jewish education
2. The need to improve curriculum and methods
3. The need for additional funding
4. The need for strong lay-leadership
5. The need to reconsider the structure of Jewish education

1. The Need to Develop a Profession of Jewish Education

It is estimated that there are today some 30,000 teaching and 3000 administrative positions for Jewish education in North America. Yet only one hundred students graduated in 1989 from all Jewish education training programs and only 144 individuals are currently enrolled full-time in bachelor's and master's degree programs.

A majority of those who enter the field of Jewish education do so with far less preparation than their counterparts in the public education system. Thus, while over half of public school teachers hold a Masters Degree, this is true of only a handful of teachers in Jewish day schools. It is estimated that nearly one out of every five (17%) teachers in day schools does not have a college degree, and fewer than half of the teachers in the supplementary schools have had a high school Jewish education. Informal educators are trained in various disciplines but receive almost no pre-service training in Jewish education.

Of the total number of Jewish school teachers it is estimated that only about 15% to 20% hold full-time positions. Isa Aron and Bruce Phillips have reported in *Findings of the Los Angeles BJE Teachers Census*, that only 23% of all the teachers in Los Angeles teach more than 20 hours per week, while 54% teach under 10 hours. Seventy-one percent of the teachers have other occupations—of these, some are homemakers who enjoy teaching a few hours a week in supplementary schools; others are full-time students. Some hold other part-time or even full-time employment. Only 14% of the teachers in Los Angeles earn $20,000 or more, while 41% earn under $3,000. Only 20% receive health benefits.

The *1988 Teachers Salary Update* reported that supplementary school teachers, carrying a 12-hour work load per week, earn an average annual salary of $9,000. Early childhood teachers earn $8,000 to $10,000. Full-time day school teachers, carrying a 30-hour work load per week, earn an average annual salary of $19,000. These figures are low compared with the average public school teacher's salary of $25,000 for kindergarten teachers and $30,000 for elementary school teachers (according to the latest NEA figures), which in itself is recognized as woefully inadequate.

Aryeh Davidson, in *The Preparation of Jewish Educators in North America: A Research Study* reported that there are fourteen training programs for Jewish education in North America, with a total enrollment of 358 students in degree or teacher certification programs. A total of 100 people graduated from all programs in 1989—only a fraction of what the field needs. In fact, it appears that there could be as many as 3,000 openings the day school starts. This year, all training programs together have only 18 full-time faculty who specialize in Jewish education. It is obvious that so small a faculty cannot possibly undertake the multiple assignments that the training institutions must fill. The problem of inadequately qualified teachers, is likely to

continue unless there is a major effort to develop Jewish education as a serious profession. Students today often enter training programs with insufficient knowledge of Judaica, and with little interest in achieving teacher certification.

It is clear that many of the 30,000 teachers who presently hold positions in Jewish schools do not provide positive role models for outstanding college age students who might otherwise be attracted to careers in Jewish education. Moreover, throughout the United States, supplementary Jewish education experiences a high rate of teacher turnover. According to the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland's Report on Jewish Continuity, in 1986 there was an annual teacher turnover rate in Cleveland schools of approximately 20%.

Another problem is that often the best teachers in the schools find themselves promoted to the role of school principals. The ladder of advancement in Jewish education is essentially linear – from teacher to assistant principal to principal. There is almost no opportunity for advancement that would enable talented teachers to assume leadership roles in crucial areas of education – such as specialists in the teaching of Hebrew, the Bible, Jewish history, early childhood, family education, and special education.

As one considers these problems, it becomes obvious that the salaries, training, working conditions and status of Jewish educators have an important bearing on the problems of the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel for the field of Jewish education. For Jewish education to become an attractive profession it will have to develop clearly defined standards, appropriate terms of employment, a high level of training and a network of collegial support.

2. The Need to Improve Curriculum and Methods

A great deal of energy and thought is being invested in the preparation and implementation of curriculum, educational materials and methods. This work has been undertaken at national centers such as the various denominational commissions on Jewish education, at the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary, at JESNA, through the CAJE curriculum bank, at bureaus of Jewish education, by individual schools and by commercial publishers.

Sometimes the needs of the field have been met through these efforts—as is the case for many of the subjects taught in the supplementary school. However, for the day school there is a serious shortage of available material. Early childhood, adult education, informal education and family education all suffer from the lack of a curriculum and educational materials. Even more serious is the shortage of trained personnel necessary for the introduction of these materials and methods.

The successful implementation of a curriculum requires that teachers participate in training programs to learn how to effectively use the materials. There are very few on-the-job training programs available for Jewish educators that could make this possible.

Though Jewish education employs many of the methods that are used in general education, there is one area where significant untapped potential exists—in the use of the media and educational technology.

3. The Need for Additional Funding

Funding for Jewish education currently comes from a variety of sources, including tuition payments by parents, fund-raising by the schools, by congregations, and federation support. There are no concrete figures available as to how much in total is currently being spent on Jewish education (estimates range from $500 million to $1 billion annually). There is a consensus among Jewish leaders that the combined resources provide far less than is needed to effect a major change in the whole spectrum of Jewish education in North America. Some have estimated that budgets of two or three times present levels will have to be established if real progress is to be made. It is clear that these levels will only be reached if the Jewish community as a whole makes a conscious decision to give Jewish education the highest priority in its plans for the future.

A survey of federation allocations to Jewish education in the 1980s reveals that although a few communities have made education a high priority (i.e. Toronto and Montreal) and allocate as much as 50% of their federation's budget to education, the average contribution of federations is little more than 25% of local allocations.

4. The Need for Strong Lay-Leadership

Though Jewish education is not seen by many key lay-leaders as a top community priority, most believe that there is a decisive trend toward the involvement of more and more top leaders.

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.

Top community leadership must be recruited to lead the educational effort on the local and national level as well as in individual institutions. They will make it possible to change the priorities of the Jewish community and to provide the appropriate support for Jewish education.

5. The Need to Reconsider the Structure of Jewish Education

The structure of Jewish education is complex and is in need of serious rethinking in the light of recent developments. A structure that might have been appropriate for the 1930s may well be inappropriate for the important developments that have taken place in Jewish education since then. Thus, the almost complete separation which exists today between formal and informal education, between the preparation of educators and on-the-job training, the role of the synagogues, denominational organizations, the federations, the local Bureaus of Jewish Education, makes it difficult to plan an integrated educational approach for the future.

As Walter Ackerman has indicated in *The Structure of Jewish Education,* Jewish education is without a compelling framework, and it is essentially a volunteer effort consisting of autonomous units. There is at best a loose relationship between schools and parent bodies of their affiliated denominations. This is effected through the Commission on Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations for the Reform movement, the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education for the Conservative movement, the National Commission on Torah Education at Yeshiva University, and Torah U'Mesora for the Orthodox movement. Final authority for

the conduct of congregational schools rests with the synagogue board and school committee. Day schools have their own boards and committees, which are responsible for the school's activities including funding, the hiring of staff and the curriculum.

The central agencies of Jewish education, which were originally established to function as the organized Jewish community's agency responsible for education in local communities, have by and large not assumed, or as some claim, not been permitted to assume the crucial role of supervising the system. Instead they have performed a coordinating role with some bureaus undertaking city-wide educational activities such as teacher centers and principal centers.

The Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), the successor agency to the American Association for Jewish Education, functions as the educational consultant for Jewish federations and central agencies of Jewish education. Its mandate includes advocacy on behalf of Jewish education and providing a variety of information and other services to Jewish communal and educational institutions. Today JESNA is considered the organized Jewish community's planning coordinating and service agency for Jewish education.

For informal education the structure is even less clear. Though the Jewish Community Center Association of North America is the leadership body for the North American JCCs and Ys, youth groups are often affiliated with local and national denominational organizations or are headquartered in Israel (Zionist youth movements). Many other forms of informal Jewish education are very loosely organized and often have little coordination—e.g., summer camps, trips to Israel, adult Jewish education programs, retreat centers.

The fourteen training institutions have recently created an association of institutions of higher learning for Jewish education to improve the practice of the education of educators in North America.

On-the-job training or in-service education is carried out by many different groups (the local school, the various religious denominations, the Bureau of Jewish Education, the institutions of higher learning). It also takes place in Israel at universities or in the departments of education of the World Zionist Organization.

The increasing involvement of the federation movement with education in recent years has focused attention on the problem of structure in Jewish education. Among the questions that have been raised are: what relationship should the bureaus have to the federations? What should be the relationship among the denominational groups, the bureaus and the federations? What can be done to relate the work of formal education to that of informal education? How can pre-service education be related to in-service education? Local commissions on Jewish education have tried to address these questions, but there is still much confusion as to how they should be resolved.

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As the Commission undertook its study of Jewish education it learned of many successful programs and of a number of creative new initiatives led by outstanding educators and supported and sponsored by dedicated community leaders. These initiatives were to play an important role in the thinking and planning of the Commission.

CHAPTER 4: COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE PROBLEM: THE COMMISSION DEVELOPS ITS PLAN

The Commission faced several major challenges in determining how to come to grips with the problems facing Jewish education.

First, the Commission consisted of individuals of different backgrounds: outstanding volunteer leaders who were serving the Jewish community with great distinction; important philanthropists; leaders of institutions of higher Jewish learning; world renowned scholars, creative educators and distinguished rabbis.

It was inevitable that these commissioners would bring to the table diverse and sometimes conflicting approaches to analyzing the nature of the task. This was an advantage in that it brought together the different perspectives that would be needed to develop realistic and comprehensive solutions. But it posed a challenge in the search for common ground for discussion.

In view of this, the setting of the agenda for each of the Commission's sessions, and planning for discussions that would be constructive and result-oriented, required a great deal of preparation.

Secondly, the subject was so vast that it was unclear how the Commission should focus its work so that it would achieve the greatest impact. There were no clear

guidelines as to how to establish priorities among the multitude of issues that needed to be addressed.

To meet this challenge, a method of operation was decided upon that was to characterize the work of the Commission throughout. Before its **first meeting on August 1, 1988**, and before and after each of the six Commission meetings, contact was maintained between the staff and senior policy advisors and each of the commissioners through personal interviews. In this way, there was constant dialogue between senior policy advisors and the commissioners, and all the commissioners provided input into the process.

In interviewing the commissioners before the first meeting it became evident that they would suggest a large number of areas in Jewish education that were in need of improvement (e.g., the supplementary school, programs for the college age, early childhood programs). In fact, at the first meeting the following 23 options were suggested by the commissioners as areas that should be the focus of the Commission's work:

The Options

1. The early childhood age group.
2. The elementary school age group.
3. The high school age group.
4. The college age group.
5. Young adults.
6. The family.
7. Adults.
8. The retired and the elderly.
9. The supplementary school.

10. The day school.
11. Informal education.
12. Israel Experience programs.
13. Integrated programs of formal and informal education.
14. The Hebrew language, with special initial emphasis on the leadership of the Jewish community.
15. Curriculum and methods.
16. The use of the media and technology (computers, videos, etc.) for Jewish education.
17. The shortage of qualified personnel for Jewish education.
18. The Community—its leadership and its structures—as major agents for change in any area.
19. Assistance with tuition.
20. The physical plant (buildings, laboratories, gymnasia).
21. A knowledge base for Jewish education (research of various kinds: evaluations and impact studies; assessment of needs; client surveys; etc.).
22. Innovation in Jewish education.
23. Additional funding for Jewish education.

The commissioners suggested more ideas than any one Commission could undertake. Many of the subjects suggested could warrant the creation of a full commission. Together they could easily form the agenda for Jewish education in North America for several decades. **At the end of the first Commission meeting, the staff was asked to develop methods that would help the Commission narrow its focus so that it could agree upon an agenda for study and action.**

In the personal interviews that preceded the second meeting of the Commission, the staff learned that there were compelling reasons to undertake the ideas suggested: all of the population groups were important; all of the settings of education were important. A deeper analysis of the problem would have to be made if the commissioners were to be able to decide on the indispensable first steps. Indeed, at the **second meeting on December 13, 1988** it became clear that some needs had to be addressed that were pre-conditions to any across-the-board improvements in Jewish education. These are "building blocks" upon which the entire Jewish educational system rests. They are:

- Personnel for Jewish education; and
- The community—its leadership, funding and structures.

There is a shortage of talented, dedicated, trained educators for every area of Jewish education. This is true for all age groups, for all types of schools, all types of educational settings, JCCs, trips to Israel, the preparation of curricular materials, and the training of educators.

Further, if the Commission were to make a difference, the community attitude towards Jewish education would have to change. A new environment for Jewish education could be created if outstanding community leaders were to grant Jewish education a higher priority on the local and national scenes. Only then could the funds necessary for a program of major change be obtained.

Recognizing **personnel** and **community** as the building blocks upon **which all else rests the Commission, at its second meeting, agreed on its agenda. It was to devote its efforts to developing a comprehensive plan to recruit, train and retain large numbers of dedicated, talented educators for the field of Jewish education.** It was

to develop a plan to involve a large number of outstanding community leaders in Jewish education. They, in turn, in their local communities, and on the continental scene would be able to take the steps that would raise Jewish education to the top of the agenda and create a better environment, a better ambience for Jewish education.

The commissioners felt that personnel and the community were interrelated. Outstanding community leaders could only be recruited to the cause of Jewish education if they believed it would be possible to recruit talented and dedicated educational personnel. At the same time, outstanding educators would not be attracted to the cause of Jewish education unless they felt that the Jewish community would give them the necessary resources to make a difference. They must believe that **the community is embarking on a new era in Jewish education in which there will be reasonable salaries, a secure career line, and an opportunity to have an impact on the quality of the curriculum and methods of education.**

These two building blocks would be essential in order to build a true profession of Jewish education. With an infusion of dedicated and qualified personnel to the field, **parents would recognize that Jewish education can make a decisive contribution to the lives of their children and the life-styles of their families.** This would establish a basis of support that would enable community leaders to achieve the level of funding necessary for a renewed system of education.

Though the Commission agreed on this agenda at the second meeting, some commissioners were reluctant to omit the programmatic areas. One commissioner asked, "How is it possible for this Commission to ignore the revolution that the developments in the area of the media have made available for Jewish education? Is it conceivable that a plan for Jewish education could be developed at the close of the 20th

century that would not take advantage of the contributions of television, video cassettes, computers and museums?"

Another commissioner reminded us that experience and research indicate that unless we encourage the family to adopt a more vigorous role in Jewish education, the formal and informal settings for Jewish education are not likely to have a significant enough impact on children.

Though the Commission established that the first items on its agenda would be the building blocks, it agreed to address some programmatic ideas at a later date.

At the conclusion of the second Commission meeting, the staff was instructed to prepare an outline of a plan of action. Commissioners urged that the plan be comprehensive. There had been notable attempts in the past to deal with the problem of personnel by raising salaries or by concentrating on the development of a specialized area of training. But these efforts had not met with major success. It was felt that unless the problem were dealt with comprehensively, there would not be any substantial improvement.

In interviewing commissioners before the third meeting and consulting with other experts, the staff was reminded time and again that bringing about change in the area of personnel and the community would be so vast and complex that it would be difficult to address these across-the-board throughout North America. How would it be possible to achieve concrete results within a foreseeable period of time. Retraining many of the 30,000 teachers to meet the standards contemplated by the Commission would take years, perhaps even decades, to accomplish. In addition, finding the personnel for new programs in informal educational settings, for study trips to Israel

and for the effective use of the media, would require a long-range effort. The Commission was searching for a way to begin this process.

It was decided to **demonstrate in a small group of communities what could happen if sufficient numbers of outstanding personnel were recruited and trained; if their efforts were supported by the community and its leadership; and if the necessary funds were secured to maintain such an effort over a multi-year period. These sites would later be called "Lead Communities."**

Fundamental to the success of the Lead Communities would be the desire of the community itself to become a model for the rest of the country. This needed to be a "bottom-up" rather than a "top-down" effort if it were to succeed. The Lead Communities would have to provide real-life demonstration of how effective Jewish education can be implemented.

Lead Communities would provide the laboratories in which to discover the policies and practices that work best. They would become the testing places for "best practices"—exemplary or excellent programs—in all fields of Jewish education. This would happen through the combined efforts of the key continental educational institutions and organizations, and above all, the creative front-line educators who have developed innovative, successful programs in their classrooms, community centers, summer camps, adult education programs and trips to Israel.

As ideas are tested, they would be carefully monitored and subjected to critical analysis. A combination of openness and creativity with continuing monitoring and clear-cut accountability would be vital to the success of the Lead Community program. Although the primary focus of each Lead Community would be local, the

transformations that would take place would have an effect on national institutions that are playing a key role in Jewish education. Thus, the institutions of higher Jewish learning would need to expand their education faculties to train additional personnel for the Lead Communities and to offer on-the-job training for the personnel that are presently working in existing institutions.

At its third meeting on June 14, 1989 the Commission adopted the strategy of implementing its ideas through the establishment of several Lead Communities. Because this concept requires local initiative and involvement as well as the expertise of continental institutions and organizations, the staff was requested to develop the elements of a continental strategy for implementation.

Time was devoted at this third Commission meeting to **the importance of educational research**, of monitoring and evaluation, of learning about the impact of various programs. Commissioners thought it would be appropriate to carefully monitor and supervise new initiatives and the work with Lead Communities. Also, commissioners raised the crucial issue of who was going to implement this ambitious plan—who would do the work? The staff was asked to prepare materials that would deal with the following questions:

1) Who would assume responsibility for continuing the work of the Commission after it issued its report and recommendations;
2) who would implement the plans that were emerging;
3) who would initiate the establishment of Lead Communities;
4) how would the necessary research, evaluation and monitoring be introduced into the plan that the Commission was preparing?

In the interviews that followed the third meeting, the staff was referred to successful programs in the field, and found that there were many excellent ideas that could be incorporated into the work of the Lead Communities. They also learned that several prominent family foundations had already undertaken pioneering work in programmatic areas.

The tension that had arisen because we were dealing only with the "building blocks" and not programmatic areas, diminished as it became clear that personnel would inevitably be recruited and trained to deal with specific programmatic areas (e.g., educators for early childhood, the supplementary school, the day school, and the community center).

Responding to the issues of implementation, commissioners recommended that an entity be established to carry out the work. This entity would be responsible for initiating the establishment of the Lead Communities; it would begin a dialogue between the work of the family foundations and the work undertaken in Lead Communities, between the foundations and national institutions such as the training institutions. It would initiate the establishment of a crucially needed research capability and it would carry on the work of the Commission when it completed its report.

At the fourth meeting of the Commission, on October 23, 1989, the idea of creating a new entity, later named the "Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education," was agreed upon. The Council would be responsible for the implementation of the Commission's decisions.

The staff was asked to bring together the various elements that had been discussed in the first four meetings of the Commission and in the many interviews tbat had taken place between these meetings with commissioners and other experts.

At the fifth meeting of the Commission it became clear that a **concrete plan for change had emerged and that implementation could begin immediately.**

The plan deals with personnel and the community, with the programmatic areas and with research. In addition, by the time the Commission issues its report in the Fall of 1990, the following initial steps will have been taken:

1. **Implementation:** The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education will be established – to be a facilitating mechanism for the implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

2. **Lead Communities:** First steps to establish several Lead Communities will be taken. They will be places where Jewish education at its best will be developed, demonstrated and tested.

3. **Funding:** Substantial funds will be available to help launch the plan. This is now being arranged through the generosity of family foundations.

For significant across-the-board change to take place, a long-term effort is required. The lessons learned in Lead Communities will need to 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 begin to be developed as the number of qualified educators

increases, as training programs are developed and as job opportunities and conditions for employment are improved. Gradually, major program areas will be addressed and an education research capability will be developed.

The Continuing Role of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America

It was agreed that with the issuing of this report the Commission will be reconstituted as a representative body of the North American Jewish community concerned with Jewish education.

It will plan to meet once a year in order to assess the progress being made in the implementation of its plan. Its continuing role will exemplify the Jewish community's determination to achieve fundamental improvements in Jewish education.

To fulfill its mission, the Commission designed a blueprint for the future.

Its elements are:

I. Establishing The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education
II. Establishing Lead Communities
III. Developing Continental Strategies for Personnel and the Community
IV. Developing Programmatic Areas
V. Establishing a Research Capability
VI. Spreading the Word – The Diffusion of Innovation

I. Establishing The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education

The Commission recognized that a new entity would have to be created to assume responsibility for the follow-up and implementation of its plan.

There were no precise parallels that the Commission had in mind when conceiving of the idea of the Council, but there were parallels that were useful when thinking through its functions and roles. These parallels ranged from the American Assembly at Columbia University, founded by President Eisenhower as a center for the

development of new thinking in key segments of American life, to High/Scope, that helped establish demonstration programs in the area of early childhood education and disseminated their results. The difference between the Council and other similar enterprises is that the Council is designed to be a significant yet small undertaking. It will strive to have new initiatives carried out by existing organizations. It will bring together the necessary talents and resources to make sure the overall plan of action is being carried out, but it will turn to existing institutions to undertake specific assignments. There was considerable discussion about whether the role envisioned for the new Council could be undertaken by existing organizations. It was decided that the prospects for success would be strengthened considerably by the creation of a new entity which had this program as its sole responsibility.

In establishing the Council, the commissioners knew that they would work in closest collaboration and be supported and helped by those organizations that are playing a leading role in Jewish education in North America today.

CJF, the umbrella organization for Jewish federations in North America, will be asked to intensify the recruitment of and communications with community leaders, encourage the development of supporting structures (such as local commissions on Jewish education), and encourage a significant increase in the allocation for Jewish education throughout North America.

JESNA would be called upon to intensify its work with communities around the country in the on-going effort to place Jewish education higher on the agenda of the Jewish community. It would continue to gather significant data about Jewish education and to offer its expertise in consultations. As work progresses, it will need to

play a major role in diffusing the lessons learned through the initiatives of the Council.

The JCC Association would have to intensify the vital role it has played in the development of informal settings for Jewish education. Since it serves the total needs of all the Jewish Community Centers, and offers a broad range of direct and indirect services, the JCC Association would be able to integrate new educational developments into the arena of informal education.

The Commission developed its plan, fully appreciating the centrality of those who deliver the services of Jewish education: the denominations, their schools, their training institutions and commissions on Jewish education, and particularly, the front line educators and their professional organizations. One of the functions of the Council will be to learn how their contributions can aid in the implementation of the Commission's plan. With the help of these institutions, the Council could become a driving force for innovation and change, serving as a catalyst to help bring about the necessary transformation of Jewish education in North America.

It was decided that the Council would be an independent entity. Its charter will call for a Board of Trustees, to be chosen by the sponsors of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America (the Mandel Associated Foundations, JCC Association, JESNA, and CJF). Trustees will include principals of foundations that have committed major funds as well as educators, scholars, and community leaders. The initial annual operating budget of the Council will cover the cost of staff and facilities to carry out its work.

II. Establishing Lead Communities

A Lead Community will engage in the process of re-designing and improving the delivery of Jewish education. The focus will be on seeking and preparing qualified personnel and on developing communal support—with the goal of effecting and inspiring change in the various programmatic areas of Jewish education, through a wide array of intensive programs. Several Lead Communities will be chosen in North America.

A number of cities have already expressed their interest. These and other cities should be considered by the Council. The goal should be to choose those that provide the strongest prospects for success and would serve as models for other communities in the future. The Council will produce an analysis of the different communities that have offered to participate in the program, and then make suggestions as to how best to select the sites that will provide the most fruitful settings, as well as the most representative spread. After the recommendations are acted upon by the Board, a public announcement will be made so that the Jewish community as a whole will know which cities will be selected as Lead Communities. Commissioners have suggested some of the following conditions for consideration by the Board of the Council—

For each Lead Community:

- There should be credible demonstration that the leadership of the community is willing to undertake a significant program of change in Jewish education.
- A large percentage of all the educational institutions and settings in the community should agree to join the endeavor.

- The community should undertake to raise substantial funds for the program.

Among the first steps to be taken in each Lead Community could be the creation of a local planning committee consisting of the leaders of the organized Jewish community, the rabbis, the educators, and lay leaders in all the organizations involved in Jewish education. A report would be prepared on the state of Jewish education in the community. It would form the basis for the preparation of a plan of action, including recommendations for new programs. The following could serve as examples of ideas which should be considered by Lead Communities:

- Encourage educators in Lead Communities to join in an ongoing collective effort of study and self improvement.

  Develop on-the-job training programs for all educators—both formal and informal.

  Establish training programs for principals and teachers, with experts and scholars from the denominations and institutions of higher learning, both in the U.S. and in Israel.

- Each local school, community center, camp, youth program, etc. should consider adopting elements from an inventory of best practices maintained at the Council. After deciding what form of best practice they want to adopt, the community would develop the appropriate training program so that this practice could be introduced into the relevant institutions. An important function of the local planning group and the Council will be to monitor and evaluate these innovations and to study their effect.

- Cultivating new sources of personnel will be a major area of activity. Some of it will be planned and implemented at the continental level. However, each Lead Community should be a testing-ground for the recruitment of new and talented people into the system.

  The injection of new personnel into a Community will be made for several purposes: to introduce new programs; to offer new services, such as family education; to provide experts in areas such as Hebrew, the Bible and Jewish history; and to fill existing but vacant positions.

These new positions could be filled in innovative and creative ways so that new sources of personnel are developed. For example, it has been suggested that the Council establish a Fellowship program and a Jewish Education Corps to enlist the services of young talented Jews who might not otherwise consider the field of Jewish education as a career choice. These are discussed here as emerging ideas only:

- *Fellows of the Council.* There is a reservoir of young Jews who are outstanding people in general education as well as in other fields (philosophy, psychology, etc.) who would welcome the opportunity to make contributions to Jewish life in a Lead Community. The Council and the local planning committee will seek to recruit such individuals as Fellows, for a period of two-three years. These fellows could bring the best of general education into Jewish education, serving as educator of educators, and working on monitoring and evaluation.
- *A Jewish Education Corps.* Another source of talent for the system could be outstanding college students who have good Jewish backgrounds (such as graduates of day schools, of Hebrew speaking camps, and students specializing in Judaica at colleges and universities). These students might not be planning a career in Jewish education, but many are deeply committed to Judaism and have the potential to

be good educators. These people could be attracted through a program modelled after the concept of the Peace Corps. Multi-year agreements might be made in which young people will commit themselves to devote a fixed number of hours a week for a number of years to Jewish education in a Lead Community and to be trained for the assignment. During this time they could continue with their general studies at the university. In exchange for their teaching services, the Lead Community might offer appropriate remuneration.

- *Fast-Track Programs.* Efforts might be made to build fast-track programs for young men and women majoring in Judaica at colleges and universities. It is estimated that there are hundreds of potential candidates. These people might well be excited about working in Lead Communities.
- *Career Changers.* Another source of new personnel could be people who are looking to make a career change. Many such individuals are currently in the general education system. Often they are in their thirties or forties and are looking for new challenges.

If each Lead Community succeeds in recruiting people from these and other sources, it could have a tremendous impact on the quality of Jewish education. Such newly recruited educators would choose to participate in this endeavor because they believe that they will be making a difference. They would be highly motivated, and their enthusiasm will be transmitted to their students.

- All the Lead Communities might work together in an Association of Lead Communities. It will be the responsibility of the Council to make sure that the local committees and professional staffs meet together and network appropriately.

- Lead Communities will also serve as pilot programs for continental efforts in the areas of recruitment, the improvement of salaries and benefits, the development of ladders of advancement, and generally of building the profession.

For example, a program might be developed to allow senior educators in Lead Communities to be given a prominent role in determining policy and in deciding which best practices to adopt, thereby playing a more important role in the education process. The issue of empowerment may be one of the most significant keys for attracting a high caliber of educator. While the Council will develop ways to give teachers nationally a greater voice and creative input, this will be applied early on and experimentally in Lead Communities. One commissioner suggested: "A society of master teachers should be created, not only to recognize excellence, but to allow these individuals to make recommendations, develop innovations, and serve as models. Regular meetings of such a group would provide encouragement to the members themselves."

In this process, a new ladder of advancement for teachers could be established. Lead Communities will be creating new positions and alternative career paths. Advancement will not only be linear from teacher to assistant principal to principal. A talented teacher will be able to specialize and play a leading role in his or her field of expertise throughout the community. For example, a teacher who became a Bible specialist might become a leading figure in this field for an entire community.

III. Developing Continental Strategies for Personnel and the Community

In addition to the work with Lead Communities, the recommendations call for the Council to develop a continental strategy consisting of a number of major initiatives. A detailed plan will include **personnel** and the **community, programmatic components** and **the establishment of a research capability.** The following ideas have been suggested by commissioners and could be considered by the Council.

A. Personnel

A broad scale effort should be undertaken to introduce changes in the personnel structure of Jewish education in North America. These efforts will be related to profession building and will focus specifically on the areas of recruitment, training, determination of salaries and benefits, career track development, and teacher empowerment.

1. Recruitment

A major marketing study should be conducted to identify those segments of the population that are potential candidates for Jewish education careers, and what motivations or incentives would most likely attract them to the field. Thus, for instance, while salary levels are important, there is some evidence that empowerment (the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students and parents) may be the primary factor.

Among the issues the marketing study will explore is what the key target groups for recruitment are – i.e., graduates of day schools, students participating in Hebrew

speaking camps, college students on campuses with serious Judaica departments, students participating in Israel Experience programs, and professionals at mid-career who are looking to make career changes. Following the market study, a comprehensive communications effort should be developed to create a sense of excitement and anticipation among those who might consider a career in Jewish education. This may involve, for instance, visits to the major colleges and universities that have large Jewish populations by educational consultants and talented recruiters. A key resource for these visits would be individuals in Lead Communities who are actually working on innovative programs. They could visit nearby colleges and universities to convey to students the exciting changes that are taking place in their communities.

In addition, public relations efforts should be undertaken to focus attention on the Council's work and the progress in Lead Communities. This special emphasis on the media will reach those key target groups who should be encouraged to enter the field of Jewish education. Also, a series of promotional materials (a newsletter, brochures, videos, etc.) may be produced to maintain a constant flow of information.

While it is clear that there could be career opportunities in Lead Communities for a number of candidates, the recruitment efforts will extend across North America, to fill vacant positions and to attract students to the training programs.

2. Training—the Education of Educators

The number of students graduating from training programs must be substantially increased. The immediate target will be to increase the number of graduates from the current level of 100 annually to a number approaching 400. To accomplish this, the Council will first work with the institutions of higher Jewish learning to expand the full time Jewish education faculty. This would involve the endowment of professor-

ships as well as fellowships for the training of new faculty. Likely candidates for these faculty positions are outstanding practitioners in the field, scholars from Yeshivot, academics from universities in the areas of general education, Judaica, the social sciences, and the humanities.

Hand-in-hand with efforts to increase faculty, plans should be designed to both recruit students and provide an extensive program of support through grants and fellowships. Encouraging first steps in this regard have already been taken by others to attract outstanding candidates to training programs.

New programs to prepare students for different educational roles (e.g., early childhood education, special education, informal education, family education) will be established at institutions of higher Jewish learning and universities.

The Council should encourage the development of innovative leadership programs where candidates for key roles in Jewish education can be provided with special educational experiences.

3. Salaries and Benefits

It is clear that salaries and benefits for educational personnel must be substantially increased. Lead Communities should provide models for how desired salary levels can be obtained. To achieve appropriate levels, a determination will be made as to what proper remuneration should be and funds must be raised to cover the additional costs.

On a continental level, a parallel effort should be encouraged by the Council, working through local federations. The role of federations for this purpose is key and they

will be the primary basis for support. The Lead Communities will help develop standards as to what salaries and benefits should be, and local federations will be encouraged to move towards these standards.

The Council might issue reports periodically on the progress being made in regard to salary and benefits, not only in Lead Communities, but throughout North America.

4. Empowerment

The empowerment of teaching personnel has to do with encouraging greater input on curriculum, teaching methods, administration, and the educational philosophy of the schools in which they work. This too represents a reorientation of educational thinking, and in order to prepare the foundation for this approach, the Council will encourage schools to develop incentives for teachers who show special promise in this respect. This may involve awards or bonuses or increases in title and stature for teachers who show initiative in regard to the educational direction of their schools. Efforts are now underway by others to establish awards for educators who have developed outstanding projects and programs.

Educational administrators should be encouraged to welcome these new initiatives. The Council could seek to work with various organizations to project messages to administrators about this concept, urging them to encourage their faculties to exercise greater influence and power over the character and nature of their schools.

B. The Community

The work of the Commission is itself evidence of the growing concern on the part of the Jewish community for the quality and effectiveness of Jewish education. The Council will work to maintain this momentum in order to secure a leading place for Jewish education on the agenda of the organized Jewish community.

The goal is clear, as one commissioner observed: a majority of community leaders must rally to the cause of Jewish education. "The chances are," he said, "that in 1980, only a few of these leaders thought Jewish education was the burning issue, many thought it was important, and the rest didn't spend much time thinking about it. In 1990, it may well be that there are significantly more community leaders who think that education is a burning issue; more who think it is important, and fewer don't give it too much attention. The challenge is that by the year 2000, the vast majority of these community leaders should see Jewish education as the burning issue and the rest should think it is important. When this is achieved," the commissioner concluded, "money will be available to finance the massive program envisioned by the Commission."

Long-term support for Jewish education must continue to be provided by current sources: tuition income, congregational and organizational budgets, and fundraising, and gradually increasing federation allocations. Relatively new and critically important sources are the family foundations and federation endowments. These sources can allow a quick start on initiatives, while traditional sources gradually increase. A number of foundations, some represented on the Commission, have indicated a willingness to invest substantial sums in Jewish education and indeed are already doing so. The Council will sustain this effort by recruiting additional family foundations to

support specific elements of the Commission's action plan. Also, the Council will work with CJF to encourage federations in developing new fundraising initiatives for specific aspects of this educational plan.

The possibility of developing new structures that will enable the various elements concerned with Jewish education to work more effectively together will be explored. This process will include the federations, bureaus of Jewish education, the denominations, JCCs, communal schools, and congregations along with the continental organizations (the JCC Association, JESNA, and CJF).

IV. Developing Programmatic Areas

The major thrust of the work of the Council initially will be related to the building blocks of Jewish education – establishing a profession of Jewish educators and building local community support. However, there is a strong interrelationship between these building blocks and programmatic areas. Teachers are trained for particular age groups – early childhood, elementary school, high-school. Educators work in particular settings – summer camps, trips to Israel, JCCs, a classroom where Bible or Hebrew is taught. Educational personnel is always involved in programmatic areas.

The creation of innovative and effective programs in the various areas of education will be crucial for the success of the Commission's educational plan. Therefore, the Council, as part of its long range strategy, will develop an inventory of successful programs in the various programmatic areas. This inventory will be offered to the planning committees of the Lead Communities, who will choose among them, adapting and modifying the programs for their local settings. The Council will also advise

regional and national organizations and local communities on how they might benefit from these programs.

The Council will build upon the work already beginning in programmatic areas by several family foundations. One foundation will specialize in programs relating to the Israel experience; another wants to encourage outstanding educators to develop best practices; a third is concerned chiefly with the recruitment and training of educators; another is doing work in the area of the media and other means of communication; others work in the areas of adult education and early childhood education. The Council should function as a bridge between these and other foundations and Lead Communities, between the foundations and creative educators, and between institutions which want to develop programs and potential funders.

V. Establishing a Research Capability

The Council should facilitate the establishment of a research capability for Jewish education in North America. This would enable the development of the theoretical and practical knowledge base that is indispensable for change and improvement. It would require the creation of settings where scholars and practitioners can think together systematically about the goals, the content, and the methods of Jewish education. It would also include procedures for the evaluation of each component of the Commission's plan as well as gathering new information concerning the state of Jewish education generally.

This research will be carried out by professional research organizations by departments at universities and by individuals. The results will be disseminated throughout

the Jewish community, for use in short-term and long-term planning. Data on Lead Communities will be gathered and analyzed to ensure that their individual programs are educationally sound and are meeting with success.

This endeavour would also encourage innovative research projects that will test out new approaches to Jewish education. These will involve frameworks in which data can be collected and analyzed on key educational issues, ranging from the effectiveness of the supplementary school to the impact of camping, to alternative methods for the teaching of Hebrew as well as other subjects in the curriculum, to the assessment of educational methods in various settings.

VI. Spreading the Word – The Diffusion of Innovation

Although the main thrust of the Council will be to work with Lead Communities and to develop national strategies over the next several years, another focus of attention will be to set up a process whereby other communities around the country will be able to learn, adapt and replicate the ideas, findings, and results of the Lead Communities. In this phase of the Council's work, continental organizations – especially JESNA, JCC Association, CJF, and the denominations – will play a critical role since they will be the means by which this process can be effected.

The Council will encourage these organizations to develop procedures that will accomplish this objective through such means as published reports, seminars, publicity in the Jewish and general media, and eventually through training programs for communities around the country. The national organizations will also arrange for on-site

visits by community leaders and educators to observe what is taking place in the Lead Communities.

As Lead Community programs begin to bear fruit, a plan will be developed by the Council to initiate new Lead Community programs. At the end of the first five years, it is expected that the initial Lead Communities will have matured to the point where they will have developed a momentum of their own towards a continually improving educational system. By that time, another three or four Lead Communities may be added to the plan. These communities will be able to move forward at a more rapid pace because of the lessons learned in the first communities.

The process of adding new communities should be a continuing one, so that in time there will be a growing network of communities in North America that will be active participants in the program. It also may be possible to establish a new category of Lead Communities that will function as associates or satellites of the original communities. These will not require the same kind of intensive effort that will be necessary in the founding communities, and they will help the Council provide the level of support necessary for building the entire effort into a nationwide program. The program will thus have a ripple effect, and as time goes on, be extended to an increasing number of communities throughout North America.

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

The Commission calls on the North American Jewish community, on its leadership and institutions, to adopt this plan and provide the necessary resources to assure its success.

1. The Commission recommends the establishment of *The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education* to implement the Commission's decisions and recommendations. It should be a driving force in the attempt to bring about across-the-board, systemic change for Jewish education in North America.

- The Council should initiate a cooperative effort among individuals and organizations concerned with Jewish education, as well as the funders who will help support the entire activity. Central communal organizations—CJF, JCC Association and JESNA—should be full partners in the work.

- The Council should be devoted to initiating and promoting innovation in Jewish education. As such, it should be a center guided by vision and creative thinking. It will be a driving force for systemic change.

- It should help to design and revise development strategies in concert with other persons, communities and institutions. It should work with and through existing institutions and organizations and help them rise to their full potential.

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.

In order for this to happen:

- The Commission encourages the establishment of additional local committees or commissions on Jewish education, the purpose of which would be to bring together communal and congregational leadership in wall-to-wall coalitions to improve the communities' formal and informal Jewish education programs.

- The Commission also encourages each community to include top community leadership in their local Jewish education planning committee and in the management of the schools, the Jewish Community Centers and local Jewish education programs.

- The Commission recommends that federations 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.

- Private foundations and philanthropically-oriented families are urged to set aside substantial sums of money for Jewish education for the next five to ten years. In this connection the Commission urges that private foundations establish a fund to finance the Council, and subsidies for Lead Communities and other projects.

3. The Commission recommends that a plan be launched to build the profession of Jewish education in North America. 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.

To accomplish this, the North American Jewish community will be encouraged to 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. Increasing and improving training opportunities will require investing significant funds to expand existing training programs and develop new programs in training institutions and general universities in North America and in Israel.

4. The Commission recommends the establishment of several Lead Communities, where excellence in Jewish education can be demonstrated for others to see, learn from and, where appropriate replicate. Lead Communities will be initiated by local communities that will work in partnership with the Council. The Council will help

distill the lessons learned from the Lead Communities and diffuse the results to the rest of North America.

5. The Commission identified several programmatic areas, each of which offer promising opportunities for new initiatives. The Council will encourage the development of these areas in Lead Communities and will act as a broker between Foundations and institutions that wish to specialize in a programmatic area. The Council will assist in the provision of research, planning and monitoring for those efforts.

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 specialized research facilities that may need to be established.

To Be Done

Commissioned Papers

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

This paper was commissioned to respond to the questions raised by commissioners about the nature of the evidence that links Jewish education to Jewish continuity.

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

A historical perspective on the structure of Jewish education with particular reference to the role of Bureaus of Jewish education, the religious denominations and the federation movement.

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

An analysis of the status of Jewish teachers and of the issues involved in the creation of a profession for Jewish teachers.

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

A survey of the available data on Jewish educational personnel, their educational background, salary and benefits.

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

An analysis of the role that the organized Jewish community has played in Jewish education as well as a projection of future trends and opportunities.

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

A report on the status and significance of the recently established local commissions on Jewish education/Jewish continuity.

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

A study of how synagogues differ in the ways they support their educational programs and the relationship of a congregational school's receiving favored status and its being a good school.

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

A comprehensive study of the fourteen teacher-training institutions in North America, their student body, faculty, curriculum and plans for the future.

Findings of the Los Angeles BJE Teacher Census (I. Aron and B. Phillips, Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles)

An analysis of the data gathered by the Bureau of Jewish Education of Los Angeles on the teachers in the city's Jewish schools.

Informal Education in North America (B. Reisman, Brandeis University)

A study of the issues involved in informal education in North America with particular reference to the Jewish community centers, the youth movements, camping, family and adult education.

A Pilot Poll of the Jewish Population of the U.S.A. (Gallup, Israel), December 1989

The Commission participated in a Gallup Poll of the Jewish population in North America, introducing questions that are of importance for the issues and policies of Jewish education.

In addition to these commissioned papers, the staff consulted with several professional organizations and individual experts. A complete list of consultations will be appended to the report. It is important to note that CAJE organized several volunteer activities aimed at sharing views with the Commission. Among the products is:

> Roberta Goodman and Ron Reynolds: "Field Notes": On December 4-5, 1989 a group of 17 Jewish educators, members of CAJE, assembled in Cleveland to deliberate on programmatic agendas.

COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

Mission Statement

by

Professor Isadore Twersky

Our goal should be to make it possible for every Jewish child to be exposed to the mystery and romance of Jewish history, to the enthralling insights and special sensitivities of Jewish thought, to the sanctity and symbolism of Jewish existence, to the power and profundity of Jewish faith. As a motto we might adopt the dictum that says "they searched from Dan to Beer Sheva and did not find an 'am ha'aretz!'" 'Am ha'aretz,' usually understood as an ignoramus, an illiterate, may for our purposes be redefined as one indifferent to Jewish visions and values, untouched by the drama and majesty of Jewish history, unappreciative of the resourcefulness and resilience of the Jewish community, unconcerned with Jewish destiny. Education, in its broadest sense, will enable young people to confront the secret of Jewish tenacity and existence, the quality of Torah teaching which fascinates and attracts irresistibly. They will then be able, even eager, to find their place in a creative and constructive Jewish community.

6/8/90

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA
FEBRUARY 14, 1990
AT UJA/FEDERATION OF JEWISH PHILANTHROPIES
NEW YORK CITY
9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Attendance

Commissioners:	Morton L. Mandel, Chair, David Arnow, Jack Bieler, John Colman, Maurice Corson, Joshua Elkin, Eli Evans, Alfred Gottschalk, Arthur Green, Irving Greenberg, Robert Hiller, David Hirschhorn, Carol Ingall, Mark Lainer, Norman Lamm, Sara Lee, Haskel Lookstein, Matthew Maryles, Lester Pollack, Charles Ratner, Esther Leah Ritz, Harriet Rosenthal, Alvin Schiff, Ismar Schorsch, Daniel Shapiro, Isadore Twersky, Bennett Yanowitz
Policy Advisors and Staff:	David Ariel, Seymour Fox, Mark Gurvis, Annette Hochstein, Stephen Hoffman, Martin Kraar, Virginia Levi, Joseph Reimer, Arthur Rotman, Herman Stein, Jonathan Woocher, Henry Zucker
Guests:	Robert Abramson, Susan Crown, David Finn, Kathleen Hat, Robert Hirt

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I. Introductory Remarks

Mr. Mandel called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. He welcomed participants and introduced first-time attendees and guests: Rabbi Robert Abramson, Director of United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education; David Finn, Partner in Ruder & Finn, the firm assisting in editing the Commission's final report; Dr. Robert Hirt, Vice President for Administration and Professional Education at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University.

The Chair noted that this Commission had been convened on the assumption that the time was right to address the concerns of the North American Jewish community for Jewish continuity and Jewish education. Could we convene a high-powered, pluralistic group, which could agree on a common basic agenda for Jewish education in North America?

We have learned that the answer is yes! Commissioners have agreed on two major priorities: addressing critical personnel needs and enhancing the role of community and financial leadership in support of Jewish education. It is now felt that this Commission may be able to make a difference by identifying these central issues, and causing steps to be taken to bring about important change in these areas.

The purpose of today's meeting was to elicit commissioners' thoughts on the recommendations for action set forth in the background materials. These responses would then be factored into the Commission's recommendations and final report.

A systematic approach is being followed to reach out to interested "publics." Meetings have been held or are scheduled with federation leadership, the national Jewish press, leaders of denominational education groups, and with a number of communities seeking assistance as they focus on their own local education planning process. In addition, meetings have occurred with a variety of associations related to Jewish education and finally, with the leadership of JWB and JESNA.

A number of research papers have been commissioned as background to the Commission's work. These will be circulated to Commission members as they are completed. Raw data (not yet analyzed) from a recent Gallup poll suggests that the relationship of intermarriage to a declining commitment to Judaism may be even greater than previously thought.

Mr. Mandel concluded his remarks by noting that he is encouraged about the future of Jewish education in North America.

II. Vision for the Future--The Commission's Recommendations

Annette Hochstein, consultant to the Commission, briefly summarized the proposed action plan.

A. The plan contains four elements:

1. Mobilizing the community for Jewish education.

2. Building the profession of Jewish education in North America.

3. Intervening in promising programmatic arenas.

4. Establishing a research capability.

B. The plan contains the following concrete recommendations:

1. Involve top lay leadership in support for local Jewish education and identify both private and community sources of funding to support these efforts.

2. Facilitate various strategies for improving personnel, including development of training opportunities, recruitment of appropriate candidates, increasing salaries and benefits, and improving the status of the profession of Jewish education in North America.

3. Establish a facilitating mechanism to implement the Commission's recommendations. This body, to be in place before the completion of the Commission's work, is seen as the catalyst to implementing the Commission's recommendations.

4. Develop a research capability for Jewish education in North America. There is a need to develop a broader knowledge base for Jewish education, including gathering data, and monitoring and evaluating programs which have been undertaken.

5. Develop criteria for, and identify and establish community action sites. The facilitating mechanism will work with local communities to identify needs and opportunities with respect to personnel and community leadership, and will help those communities begin to address those needs. The facilitating mechanism will help structure ways for other communities to implement the lessons learned in community action sites.

6. The Commission has identified a number of programmatic areas within the field of Jewish education which require further study and intervention. Initial studies have been undertaken of several of these areas. It is anticipated that the facilitating mechanism will continue to develop this agenda and to facilitate further work by local communities and a variety of Jewish education institutions. It will also serve as an "honest broker" between projects and potential funders.

III. General Discussion

Discussion of the proposed recommendations followed.

It was suggested that we must create an atmosphere in which Jewish education is a high priority. Our task is to increase the numbers and leadership quality of people committed to Jewish continuity. The enabling options--personnel and community--depend on each other. Jewish education is a value in itself and should be enhanced for itself rather than only for Jewish continuity.

A. Community

The following points were made regarding community leadership:

1. Community support is the over-arching enabling option, essential to allowing us to focus on personnel, and other objectives.

2. We must educate potential leadership to the importance of Jewish education for developing future generations of leaders.

3. The support of local lay leadership is necessary to improve standards and compensation for education personnel.

4. The report should clearly define community leadership to include scholars, educators, and rabbis, in addition to lay leadership. Educators, in particular, need to be involved at all levels.

5. In response to comments on the importance of forming coalitions of community organizations, the Cleveland approach to Jewish education was described as follows:

   a. The Cleveland commission began by building coalitions among the bureau of Jewish education, the J.C.C., the local College of Jewish Studies, synagogues, and the Federation.

   b. It determined that personnel and profession building were the keys to change. (Money alone could not accomplish the goals.)

   c. The Commission decided to work toward elevation of salaries in day schools to match those in public schools, while working to build the profession with special incentives for teachers to participate in training opportunities.

   d. It also established the Cleveland Fellows Program to prepare a small number of highly trained professionals to work within the community, raising the status of Jewish education.

B. Personnel

The following points were made with respect to personnel:

1. Initial funding should be directed specifically toward personnel.

2. We should consider establishing national standards for salaries. Fringe benefit issues such as health insurance and retirement benefits might be handled nationally; a funding source might be identified to establish a benefit plan similar to the Teachers Insurance Annuity Association/College Retirement Equity Fund.

3. The average Jewish communal worker or religious school educator completes his schooling with a debt of $50,000 to $60,000 and a starting salary of $18,000 to $22,000. We must develop fellowship and scholarship support, plus partial or full debt forgiveness, to attract more capable people to the field.

4. The creation of more full-time positions depends in part on the professionalization of the field.

5. Problems of retention should be addressed in a variety of ways, including continuing education.

C. Mechanism for Implementation

In discussing the implementation mechanism, the following points were made:

1. There was wide agreement that an implementation mechanism is appropriate.

2. Concern was expressed that we not establish "another bureaucracy." While some commissioners spoke in favor of incorporating the mechanism into an existing national organization, most argued for keeping it independent.

3. Helping to educate local leadership to the urgency of a national recruitment effort is also a responsibility of the implementation mechanism. It was suggested that funding might be available to support a national recruiting effort.

D. Report

The following suggestions were made regarding the Commission's final report:

1. Begin with a description of the genesis of the Commission, including how commissioners were selected and why they accepted. Go on to list the Commission's accomplishments: (a) establishment of funding to enable us to begin to implement goals with respect to personnel and community, (b) establishment of an implementation mechanism, and (c) other projects which have already been accomplished. Conclude with a call to the North American Jewish community to join in these urgent efforts.

2. Clarify what is meant by Jewish education--that it includes the informal as well as the formal.

3. Capture the importance of involving the total community.

4. Focus on the need for excellence in Jewish education for its own sake, not just for Jewish survival.

5. Focus on a need for improvement or enhancement of Jewish education, rather than just change.

6. Take a positive approach to personnel, in addition to making the need for improvement clear. It is possible to include the many positive things happening in Jewish education today and the opportunities for qualified personnel now existing within the field.

7. Maintain a balance among the importance of teacher training, service delivery at the local level, and research and the training of professors of Jewish education.

8. Refer to literature on general education, which indicates that salaries alone are not the answer.

9. Address new technology.

10. Include projected costs for achieving various recommendations.

11. Serve as an advocacy document.

12. The issue of timing should be considered. The Commission's report will be released in the midst of efforts to fund the absorption of Soviet Jews. On the other hand, there will always be crises in the Jewish world, so the time to issue a report is when it is ready.

13. The use of a ten-year time frame was questioned. Do we need to do this? It would require the establishment of measurable goals and, therefore, might not be a good idea unless we are prepared to set such goals at this point in time.

IV. Reports of Discussion Groups

Discussion then continued in three separate groups. Each group was asked to discuss recommendations relating to the implementation mechanism and community action sites, and also to discuss one or more of the recommendations of the proposed report, as indicated below. Reports of these group discussions were later presented to the full Commission.

A. Group A--Research and the Programmatic Arenas--Eli Evans, Chair

Mr. Evans reported that the group recommended that this section of the final report should be rich, varied, and detailed. A study of best practices might provide a basis for treating the programmatic arenas. Group members encouraged a focus on preschoolers and early teens, with an important focus on involving the family. Others suggested a look at the later teenage years as an area not now receiving adequate attention. The role of research will be especially important as we learn how to assess and evaluate our impact on these programmatic areas.

B. Group B--Personnel--Sara Lee, Chair

Mrs. Lee reported that the group looked at the four assumptions presented in the background materials and suggested that these be placed in the context of the urgency to act now and of the goals to be achieved. The group found in-service education and training to be a high priority, noting that Jewish educators already on hand need an opportunity to grow and improve. It was suggested that the needs of Jewish educators be looked at comprehensively as we consider the kind of professional education current teachers need to meet the demands of the future. It was also suggested that salary and benefits be treated as incentives to encourage continuing commitment and quality.

There is a critical need for training Jewish education personnel. The group suggested that a cooperative effort be developed among colleges of Jewish studies, seminaries, and secular colleges and universities for this purpose.

Recruitment must be addressed immediately and comprehensively, and profession building, essential for effective recruitment, must be addressed simultaneously.

The group also discussed community action sites and the challenge of working with the many institutions and organizations which exist in any community. It suggested the importance of clarifying the goals of the community as an important first step.

Finally, the group questioned the use of a ten-year time frame as noted in the Commission's background report.

In addition, one member of the group suggested that people who devote their lives to Jewish education should be provided a free Jewish education for their children.

C. Group C--Community and Financing--Morton L. Mandel, Chair

Mr. Mandel reported that this group believes that detailed planning is now called for to enable the recommendations to be implemented, and that the completion of the Commission's work is just the beginning of making an impact on Jewish education.

It is important that all segments of a community be included in the planning process. The report should urge federations to give leadership to seeing that the proper elements in a community are all convened to focus on Jewish education.

Community action sites should be distributed geographically and demographically. The group felt that a community action site could also be a "cut" into a community, e.g., a focus on the supplementary school. Top lay leadership of the community will play a critical role in the community process and must, therefore, be involved and committed, if a community action site is to be a successful project.

The facilitating mechanism is envisioned as an organization with a small, highly qualified staff, which would accomplish its goals largely by working through other organizations such as JWB, JESNA, CJF, the denominations, etc. It would play a facilitating and advocacy role rather than be a major service provider, and would also seek to ensure that an evaluation system is in place. Its primary purpose would be to help "energize the system."

D. Funding Possibilities

Mr. Mandel noted that over the long term, federations and community endowment funds are the most likely source of increased support. However, during the period in which federations step up to this challenge, it is anticipated that initial funding and some ongoing funding for implementation will come from private family foundations and endowment funds.

Mr. Mandel reported that he has been in touch with a few large family foundations about setting aside sums of money to support implementation of the Commission's recommendations. Three have already or will set aside $5 million each over a period of 5 years for this purpose, subject to the individual foundation's control. Mr. Mandel noted that he is seeking a total of $25 to $30 million for early funding and believes that this will be attainable.

In addition, a few family foundations have agreed to assist in underwriting the facilitating mechanism. Some have expressed an interest in working through the mechanism to fund appropriate projects. Other potential funders will be convened in the months ahead for the purpose of discussing this funding further.

E. General Discussion

It was suggested that the facilitating mechanism should work closely with existing organizations. It should take the lead in involving local communities as extensively as possible, with an eye toward continuing implementation of the Commission's goals most effectively at the local level. The mechanism, as an independent body, should be able to work with a range of constituents. It should work closely with continental bodies, and the communities. It should serve as a catalyst.

Most commissioners saw the mechanism as a free-standing organization with its own board and its own source of funding.

It was suggested that the term "mechanism" may be too neutral. One commissioner suggested that it be described as a "force" to disseminate the message of the Commission. Another suggested that it be viewed as a vehicle to facilitate change by enhancing existing institutions. Its functions could include advocacy, standard setting, conducting research and evaluation, and perhaps establishing a national benefits program.

It was suggested that the final report should be written for supporters of the Commission's recommendations as well as for potential implementers. For both purposes, it should set high but realistic goals, should clearly state the steps we recommend to achieve those goals, and should indicate the Commission's readiness to promote financial backing to accomplish these goals. The report

should be very specific in describing the mechanism and should try to set a timetable for accomplishing its goals. The report should list its recommendations, and the actions to be taken, such as the establishment of the facilitating mechanism, of community action sites, and of an early availability of funds.

In summarizing, the Chair noted that many issues have been illuminated at this meeting which will require careful consideration in the weeks ahead. He noted that Stephen Hoffman, currently Executive Vice President of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, has agreed to serve as interim director of the facilitating mechanism on a part-time basis, to help define that body, to help develop a governance process and board, and to begin to answer questions about its role relative to national and local bodies. He noted further that David Finn will assist in the process of writing a final report, translating the many views expressed into the final document. He noted, finally, that at the next meeting of the Commission, scheduled for Tuesday, June 12, 1990, commissioners will have an opportunity to discuss a draft of the final report, which will be mailed to the commissioners prior to the meeting.

V. D'var Torah

The meeting concluded with an inspirational D'var Torah delivered by Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, Principal of the Ramaz School and Rabbi of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun.

COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

AGENDA

TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 1990

10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York

I.	Registration; Refreshments	9:30 - 10:00
II.	Plenary Session	10:00 - 12:15
	A. Opening Statement and Chairman's Report	
	B. Presentation of Background Materials	
	C. Discussion	
III.	Luncheon	12:15 - 1:15
IV.	Plenary Session	1:15 - 3:20
	A. Continue morning discussion	
	B. Status of implementation entity	
	C. Good and Welfare	
V.	Concluding Comments - Rabbi Isadore Twersky	3:20