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MS-831: Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980–2008.
Series B: Commission on Jewish Education in North America (CJENA). 1980–1993.
Subseries 2: Commissioner and Consultant Biographical Files, 1987–1993.

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Field, Irwin S., 1989.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

J: Reimer

Interview with Irwin Field (5/1/89)
1 hour in his office

1. As I was explaining the direction of our work since December, Mr. Field stopped me to express a different point of view. He felt the focus on implementation is premature and the critical issue now is the product. If you have the right product, the implementation will follow.

2. Mr. Field disagrees with those who say there is no shortage of good ideas, only of good people. He thinks the right "good idea" is crucial to change. He cites the example of the havura - a good idea at the right time. As the right product at the right time, it spread rapidly without an implementation plan. The Jewish world looks for such ideas and tends to pick them up. (He did add that with Project Renewal, on which he worked at the UJA, it did take some pushing before anyone would try it out. But once word got out that it was right, it spread quickly - though with modification from community to community).

3. Mr. Field also cautioned against starting another organization, even if we call it an implementation mechanism. He feels our mental energy ought to go into product not "building". Let that follow as the need arises from the spread of the product.

4. Mr. Field thought that at this point the commission should still be concerned about whether it is asking the right questions. Maybe there are questions we've yet to ask that would point our work in different directions. As an example, he thought we have yet to explore the question of expectation: can we expect more of the family than is asked in general education? Can we do better than the general milieu or do we have to operate within certain other expectations? In his mind, if we could ask more and make the family take more responsibility for their children's education, we'd begin to solve the problem of leadership. Responsible parents would provide better leadership and also expect more of the personnel.

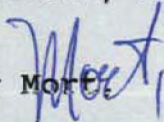
5. Mr. Field does see a role for a non-local presence in partnership with a local community. The implementation team could help to assemble an appropriate group of people to debate the issues, and generate the right questions and come up with the right ideas. Also, ideas from local places could be evaluated and enriched and then disseminated. He believes good ideas would be quickly picked up, but stresses the need for searching for the right questions which will lead to attaining the right products.

6. Mr. Field's not planning on attending the 6/14 meeting.

IRWIN S. FIELD _____

June 14, 1990

Mr. Morton Mandel
PREMIER INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION
4500 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44103

Dear Mort 

The meeting of the Commission was interesting and seemingly productive. I was pleased to be in attendance.

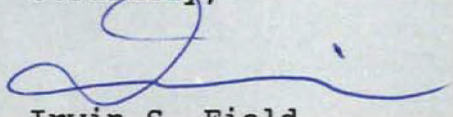
Regarding the report: It will surely be read by educators and those related to the field. No matter its length, form or detail. The real question is how it will be received by the lay community, which is the audience we should be addressing. They, after all, are the ones we want to get involved. It is towards this audience that we must direct the contents of the report. It must, therefore, be readable and understandable.

Alfred Gottschalk's idea may be the answer. Begin with our vision of what can be, our conclusions of action needed and then go on to justify our reasoning, as well as our credentials.

Perhaps all 23 or so "sub-ideas" should be appended to the report to permit educators and interested parties to get a more complete picture of the deliberations.

I look forward to reviewing the final draft.

Cordially,



Irwin S. Field

ISF:slp

cc: Seymour Fox

INFO

HLZ ✓
MG ✓
VFL ✓
SMH ✓

MORTON L. MANDEL

4500 EUCLID AVENUE • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44103

June 22, 1990

Dear Irwin:

Many thanks for your thoughtful letter of June 14 about the Commission Meeting, and I'm very pleased that you felt the meeting was worthwhile.

I passed your suggestions to our Advisory Committee, and we will "put them into the hopper" for careful review.

Warmest personal regards.

Sincerely,

MORTON L. MANDEL

Mr. Irwin S. Field
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