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Boston meeting, October 1988.

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TO: Arthur J. Naparstek
NAME
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

FROM: Virginia F. Levi
NAME
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

DATE: 10/5/88
 REPLYING TO
 YOUR MEMO OF: _____

SUBJECT: MEETING OF EDUCATORS ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

Following is a summary of the status of the invitations to educators to attend a meeting with you, Seymour Fox and Annette Hochstein in Boston from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

1. Jack Bieler - will make every effort to attend. Has to clear it with others at his school. Will call back probably October 6.
2. Joshua Elkin - available 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., though a meeting downtown may shorten the amount of time he can give to the meeting. Am leaving it to you to confirm.
3. Sara Lee - was aware of the possibility of the meeting and is happy to attend. Confirmed.
4. Alvin Schiff - will attend. Confirmed.
5. Carol Ingall - is available in the morning, but has a noon meeting in Providence and would have to leave no later than 11. She questions whether it's worth it. She would prefer the meeting to start earlier.

Barry Shrage is honored to have the meeting at the offices of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston. He said if no room is available, he will kick another group out. He is also arranging a lunch which will be appropriate for the entire group.

Shrage's offices are at One Lincoln Plaza, Boston. He tells me this is near the corner of South and Essex, not far from South Station. He can be reached at (617) 330-9500 and I indicated that you would be in touch with him personally to confirm.

P.S. AH called + wonders if Sam Schaffler (Pres. of Hebrew College), Barry Shrage, and Danny Margolis (Bureau Head) should be invited. Suggests you + SF discuss.

P.P.S. I'm wondering if maybe I should attend. Let's discuss.

10/13

AGENDA FOR 10/14 IN BOSTON

1. UPDATE
2. THE PROCESS
3. OPTIONS PAPERS
 - A. DESCRIBE J. REIMER'S TASK
 - B. REQUEST GENERAL HELP
 - C. GIVE SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS
(SCHIFF-TUITION, PHYSICAL PLANT)

✓ SF to call JR between 6 - 7:30 p.m. Saturday at (617) 739-6419



TO: Morton L. Mandel

NAME

DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

FROM: Arthur J. Naparstek

NAME

DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

DATE: 10/28/88

REPLYING TO
YOUR MEMO OF:

SUBJECT:

Attached is a copy of the minutes of the October 14 meeting that was held in Boston with Jewish educators.

Also attached are the write-ups from the Lamm, Schorsch and Loup interviews. There is a strong consensus in the area of personnel but we will have some work to do to build support for the community variable.

By Friday, I will have talked with Annette Hochstein and Joe Reimer and should be able to give you an update on the options papers early next week.

attachments

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES



INTER-OFFICE
CORRESPONDENCE

THE COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

MINUTES OF MEETING -- OCTOBER 14, 1988

CGP OFFICES -- BOSTON

PARTICIPANTS: ART NAPARSTECK, JACK BIELER, JOSH ELKIN, SEYMOUR FOX, ANNETTE HOCHSTEIN, SARA LEE, DEBBIE MELINE, ALVIN SCHIFF, BARRY SHRAGE & JON WOOCHEER.

Prof. Fox opened the meeting by introducing Dr. Naparstek, Director of the Commission and President of M.A.F., and all other participants. He then introduced the subject of the meeting: Taking a critical look at the staff work done since the first meeting of the Commission. Prof. Fox reviewed where we stand following the recent series of meetings in Cleveland. He asked for advice as to how we move forward from suggestions and desires to action?

Schiff: At the meeting of the Commission, two different senses emerged:

- The Commission is an entity in itself; and
- The Commission is a motivator, instigator, get things going beyond the life of Commission. Which is right?

Naparstek: The Commission's purpose is two-fold:

1. Focus on systemic problems. Be proactive, not reactive.
2. Be catalytic; set the philanthropic on Jewish education for the community.

Fox: Assumptions

1. Commission was designed to represent the best collective wisdom of the Jewish community. That representation has to be constantly monitored for accuracy. Are the representatives of various populations doing their jobs? Are they representative?
2. Just because a Commissioner says something, doesn't mean it's right.

(Discussion of Options Paper -- Draft 2)

Fox: Initially, all comments of Commissioners were categorized under 5 topics (Personnel, Clients, Forms, Methods, Community)

Hochstein: (Explanation of inventory -- personnel)

Bieler: How do you deal with areas of overlap? For example, job definitions are not "clean." Can't "pigeon-hole" a teacher into one role because he fills many roles.

Schiff: Why kind of profile of needs will emerge from this inventory?

Lee: What are the assumptions behind the preparation of the inventory? Examining the whole universe in detail, or formulating specific problems? Shouldn't we be dealing with specific problems?

Fox: (Presentation of list of options)

We purposely avoided definition of the goals of Jewish education, because we believe that such a discussion would blow the Commission apart. E.g., people with different ideologies will define different goals. E.g., no discussion on the goals of the USA for the same reason. We also didn't want to find a lowest common denominator or make trade-offs in order to choose which option to act on.

Schiff: The lay people need assurance that they are going somewhere. We can have an ultimate communal goal: Jewish continuity. Everyone can agree on that as a goal. Don't need to set intermediate goals such as create (define) "good Jews."

Lee: There is an assumption here that there are people of good faith involved in Jewish education and that the Commission can facilitate their work. Everyone can agree on that as a goal.

Fox: - (Presentation of Criteria and Presentation Supplementary School Example)

We want to produce a separate paper on each option before December 13th.

Two categories of options are emerging: 1) Necessary/enabling; 2) programmatic.

Schiff: Supplementary school option is based on assumption that goal is to improve the individual student's experience in the supplementary school. But there's another aspect: group solidarity. Socialization of peers. Group experience. Supplementary school student is a link to his peers and his family.

Fox: (Formulation of Schiff's comment)

"We must decide whether we take the current state of the institution as the basis for our definition, or some vision of the institution (what is desired/needed) as the basis. How do we present the problem?

Lee: If you want to reformulate the questions, you have to reveal the underlying questions that have led you to the questions. E.g., the congregation's relationship to the supplementary school.

Shrage: Sometimes you need to take conservative viewpoint. (E.g., can't destroy the congregations and recreate the whole institutional structure.) We need to take an integrative approach.

Woocher: Maybe the Commissioners will see more than 26 options. E.g., option 27. Restructure the congregation as a total educational institution. Encourage the fertile minds of the Commissioners.

Beiler: The options prevent an organic approach to the whole issue of Jewish education. Have to break down certain assumptions, be innovative, creative. But at same time, we have to deal with what's there. Also, have to be careful about imposing our own personal values, because we could be setting ourselves up for failure. E.g., maybe kids today don't care about the "group experience." "Socialization Discussion Needed."

Schiff: If we don't consider the area of socialization and just go with the trend of individualizations, then we're sunk.

When we did our research we considered elements of successful schools and we profiled the best schools. We looked at what made the schools tick.

Auspices, turf issues have to be considered as part of the community issue.

Elkin: Maybe need a quick and dirty study of congregational schools. Find out what the key issues are. Case studies give great insight. Have to look at the settings that are considered to be high quality.

Shrage: Not only models of excellence; look at models of what we have -- reality.

Woocher: The problem is that we could take an integrative, comprehensive approach to all of the options. I don't think that multiplying the options to choose among is going to be useful to the Commission.

Lee: Natural tension between those who want to get started immediately and those who want to talk more. Some lay leaders are eager to intervene, act, do. Others are more cautious -- want to formulate the questions; rigorous thinking about the problems. I think the Commission's greatest contribution would be to help the North American Jewish community to focus on the right questions. I don't want to add any more options because then the real issues are going to get lost.

The real issues are not the shortages of teachers. The real issues are the conditions of Jewish education which make it impossible to give educators professional satisfaction and fulfillment.

Fox: If we don't get to an agenda, we're going to lose the Commission. But if we focus on one thing, we'll lose the richness of the variety of opportunities.

We're thinking of suggesting 3 areas of focus for the Commission. (Task-forces?)

1. Personnel
2. Community
3. Some kind of formulation for the programmatic options that perhaps others (foundations) could get involved in.

Visions and practice papers as response to some of the need to look at what exists and what works in areas of endeavors of the Commission; getting going.

Lee: Possible structure for task-force.

Appears to me that breaking things down to discrete units is detrimental. I think the third task-force should deal with forms of Jewish education. We are prisoners to the terms and forms that exist. Forms need to be looked at in a new way.

Community should include all of the institutional structures where Jewish education takes place. The context of Jewish education needs to be examined. What should or could the forms of Jewish education be?

Elkin: I like the term "context." It makes the community category fuzzier, complicated, but crucial. The other 2 (personnel, programmatic) will be easiest to tackle.

LUNCH BREAK

Schiff: The 3 task-force idea will allow to be both comprehensive and to go into some depth.

Elkin: Concurs

Woocher: Concurs

Lee: The problem with atomization.

Fox: Atomization does not preclude a holistic view. We need help for definition of task-forces.

Naparsteck: Does everybody agree with the concept of task-forces? (Yes.)

Fox: Best practice: must avoid "political" choices. Help us raise level of discourse on this topic.

Schiff: Re: best practice.
(Hochstein -- the Case Studies Proposal)

Schiff: Experience with complex and expensive best practice type study. We must be cautious. How do we guarantee that political fall-out won't be negative.

Lee: I think the task-forces should collect data on the institutions relevant to their work. Depoliticize the case study process.

Fox: Potential form of institutions
Links to other institutions

Schiff: Send out a memo to whole community asking them to nominate themselves as candidates for case studies. Self-select: We process.

Woocher: Models exist. Shroeder Award process could be followed.

Shrage: We don't want to hear about successful programs. We want to know about comprehensive systems of effective education.

Hochstein: If task-forces do the case study work, they'll select the appropriate cases.

Lee: Presenting all the Commissioners with 26 papers (on each option) might be counterproductive in getting them to agree on 3 major categories.

Hochstein: We'll present back-up documents to show the Commissioners that we took all of their suggestions

seriously. But a 4-page executive summary will explain the whole process and how we arrived at these 3 categories. We'll present the 3 task-forces and say that (suggested presentation: The task at hand: to narrow the focus. How this was done: How we compiled the list of options, looked at their implications, checked against criteria. What emerged -- the 2 categories [programmatic and means]. Why start with means? Personnel -- the community, etc.)

Schiff: Very positive! Shows people that they were really paid attention to! MLM should stress this in his remarks. MLM should say we have some definite ideas -- not written in stone -- we're open, but not totally open (maintain direction).

Lee: Concur

Woocher: Need a brief description on the nature of the option -- what it will look like. Some of the lay people need definition of the ideas themselves.

Elkin: The 3 task-forces correspond with the 5 categories originally outlined (personnel, clients, etc.). The other 2 categories may come later, or may fall into the 3. Very neat process.

Fox: Thanked all participants in the name of A. Naparstek and A. Hochstein for coming and adjourned the meeting.

Lamm10.88/2MN-W

October 18, 1988

THE COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

TOWARDS THE SECOND MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

INTERVIEW OF COMMISSIONERS

1. COMMISSIONER: NORMAN LAMM
2. INTERVIEWER: ANNETTE HOCHSTEIN
3. DATE: OCTOBER 17, 1988
4. SPIRIT: FACTUAL, FORTHCOMING, FRIENDLY
5. SETTING: PHONE CALL FROM JERUSALEM
6. DURATION: 35 MINUTES
7. COMMISSIONER'S CURRENT STAND:
 - A. PERSONNEL: STRONG SUPPORT
 - B. THE COMMUNITY: RATHER START BY GENERATING ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM KEY DONORS (OPTION 23). THIS WILL MOTIVATE THE COMMUNITY MORE THAN ANY OTHER ATTEMPT AT CHANGING THE ATMOSPHERE.
 - C. PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS: THESE SHOULD COME AFTER THE ABOVE PRE-CONDITIONS OR MEANS OPTIONS.
8. SUMMARY:
 - A. I BEGAN CONVERSATION BY REFERRING TO MY PHONE CONVERSATION WITH HIM ON AUGUST 3RD, WHERE HE SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD NARROW THE FOCUS TO A FEW TOPICS AND DO OUR HOMEWORK, THEN CONSULT WITH THE COMMISSIONERS AS IDEAS DEVELOP. TOLD HIM THIS CALL WAS PART OF CONSULTING. .
 - B. I TOLD RABBI LAMM THAT WE TOOK OUR DIRECTIONS FROM THE CONTENT OF THE FIRST COMMISSION MEETING, OF THE INTERVIEWS, OF THE CONVERSATIONS AND FROM THE LETTERS WRITTEN BY COMMISSIONERS.
 - C. REFERRED TO N.L.'S SPECIFIC INPUT: HIS STANDS, PARTICULARLY IN FAVOR OF DEALING WITH TEACHERS.
 - D. EXPLAINED THE METHOD: THE LIST OF OPTIONS, THEIR IMPLICATIONS (THE INVENTORY), THE CHECK-LIST (CRITERIA). TOLD N.L. OF THE EMERGING TWO CATEGORIES OF OPTIONS:
 1. PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS;
 2. MEANS OPTIONS OR PRECONDITIONS.

1

E. AT THIS POINT RABBI LAMM EXPRESSED HIS FEELINGS THAT WE WERE RIGHT ON TARGET AND THAT WE SHOULD DEFINITELY DEAL WITH THE MEANS OPTIONS FIRST, BEFORE DEALING WITH THE PROGRAMMATIC ONES.

F. PRESENTED THE MEANS OPTIONS (READ THE LIST UPON REQUEST). I THEN SAID THAT PERSONNEL AND THE COMMUNITY WERE EMERGING AS MORE IMPORTANT OR MORE NECESSARY THAN THE OTHERS AND ASKED FOR HIS RESPONSE.

G. N.L. RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS:

A) PERSONNEL IS CLEARLY THE MOST IMPORTANT TOPIC TO DEAL WITH. IT IS ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE IN IMPORTANCE AND MUST BE DEALT WITH FIRST.

B) AS FAR AS THE COMMUNITY IS CONCERNED, THE RECASTING OF COMMUNAL STRUCTURES IS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK. (COULD NOT EXPLAIN THE OPTION FULLY ON THE PHONE.) THE SECOND PRE-CONDITION SHOULD BE TO GENERATE ADDITIONAL FUNDING. A BRIEF CONVERSATION FOLLOWED ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE FUNDING OPTIONS. RABBI LAMM SAID THAT INDEED THERE IS A DIALECTIC BETWEEN FUND-RAISING AND THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR JEWISH EDUCATION. HOWEVER, HE SUGGESTED THAT IF PEOPLE WOULD SEE REAL COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF A FEW KEY LAY LEADERS (LARGE DONATIONS), THEN THEY WOULD GET THE MESSAGE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF JEWISH EDUCATION, WOULD BE MOTIVATED, AND WOULD FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE.

THE PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS SHOULD BE DEALT WITH LATER, AT A SECOND STAGE. DEALING WITH THEM FIRST WOULD SIMPLY LEAD TO WASTING EFFORTS WITHOUT HAVING THE MEANS TO DEAL WITH THE OPTIONS EFFECTIVELY.

H. THE WORK--THE PROCESS: ASKED ABOUT TASK-FORCES: RABBI LAMM REITERATED HIS VIEW THAT 1) A MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK TO THE TASK-FORCES WOULD BE IF THEY REQUIRED MEETINGS IN ADDITION TO THOSE OF THE COMMISSION. 2) THE HOMEWORK, THE WORK, SHOULD BE DONE BY THE STAFF WHO SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND PRESENT AN OUTLINE FOR DISCUSSION FOR THE TASK-FORCES. 3) N.L. ALSO WARNED AGAINST TASK-FORCES THAT WOULD BE TOO LARGE AND THEREFORE NOT EFFECTIVE, "BECAUSE PEOPLE IN LARGE GROUPS WANT TO BE HEARD."

RABBI LAMM ACCEPTED TO MEET WITH ME ON DECEMBER 9TH AT 8:15 A.M. TO DISCUSS THE CONTINUATION OF OUR WORK AND THE UPCOMING MEETING.

I. RABBI LAMM WILL ATTEND THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 13TH.