



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

MS-831: Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980–2008.
Series B: Commission on Jewish Education in North America (CJENA). 1980–1993.
Subseries 3: General Files, 1980–1993.

Box
10

Folder
4

Executive Summary, 1988.

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

November 25, 1988

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Commission on Jewish Education was established with the assumption that its members could **suggest the ideas that would make it possible for Jewish education to play a significant role in ensuring a meaningful Jewish continuity.**
2. The Commissioners suggested ideas, plans and programs that may make it possible for Jewish education to fulfill this function. These ideas were presented in **individual interviews, at the first meeting of the Commission and in written and oral communications.**
3. The Commissioners suggested more ideas than any one commission could undertake. They could easily form the agenda for Jewish education in North America for several decades.
4. To deal with this wealth of ideas, the staff was instructed to **develop methods** to help the Commission **narrow its focus and agree upon an agenda for study and action.** This work was done between August and November 1988 in consultation with the Commissioners and other experts.
5. The method developed involves the following:
 - a. The Commissioners' suggestions were formulated into a list of **26 options** for study and action (page 3).
 - b. The implications of each option — **what is involved** in dealing with any one of them — were studied (page 4).
 - c. Criteria were generated to **assess the options.** These allow us to view each option in terms of the following questions (page 5):
 - How important is the option to the field?
 - How feasible is the option?
 - How significant an impact will it have?
 - How much will it cost?
 - How much time will it take to implement?
6. A preliminary assessment disclosed that many options offer great opportunities for improvement in the field of Jewish education. The question then arose **how to choose among the many outstanding suggestions.**

7. Following the analysis of each of the options, they were organized into broad categories: **programmatic options** and **enabling options** (page 8-9).

8. Programmatic options approach Jewish education through a particular cut into the field, either through **age groups, institutions or programs** (e.g. college age group; supplementary schools; Israel Experience programs).

9. Enabling options approach Jewish education through interventions that are tools or facilitators - they serve **many of the other options** and could be viewed as means (e.g. curriculum, personnel).

10. These two categories were further analyzed and these findings emerge from the analysis:

A. Most of the programmatic options offer significant opportunities for improvement in Jewish education. There are compelling reasons to undertake many of them: all population groups are important; all settings are important. On the other hand, there is no one option that is clearly an indispensable first step — a programmatic option from which we must begin. In fact, at this stage of the analysis, there are no tools that allow us to rank them or to choose among them.

B. What characterizes the enabling options is that almost all the other options need them or can benefit from them. Upon analysis, we find that three enabling options emerge as pre-conditions to any across-the-board improvements in Jewish education. We find that almost all the options require a heavy investment in personnel; that they all require additional community support; and that most need substantial additional funding. These options — dealing with the shortage of qualified personnel, dealing with the community as a major agent for change, and generating additional funding - are also inter-dependent. Dedicated and qualified personnel is likely to affect the attitude of community leaders. On the other hand, if the community ranks education high on its list of priorities, more outstanding personnel is likely to be attracted to the field.

11. The interrelationship of these options and the dependence of other options on them suggest that they may be the way to affect the field of Jewish education in a significant, across-the-board manner.

12. These are the issues that are on the agenda for the next meeting. The Commission will decide how to proceed.