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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 3: General Files, 1980–1993.

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Box  
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Folder  
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General Assembly meeting, November 1990.

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

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**JEWISH EDUCATION SERVICE OF NORTH AMERICA**

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New York, NY 10003-9540  
(212) 529-2000 TEL  
(212) 529-2009 FAX**

**FACSIMILE COVER SHEET**

Date: 11/5/90

**DESTINATION**

Name of Organization: Premier Industrial

For the attention of: Virginia Levi

Facsimile number: 216 391-8327

Number of pages including cover sheet: 4

Subject: GA - For Mr. Mandel

**IF ALL PAGES ARE NOT RECEIVED, OR FOR FURTHER  
INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Art Venn AT TEL: (212) 529-2000  
FAX: (212) 529-2009

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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# JESNA



EDUCATION  
SERVICES  
NORTH AMERICA, INC.

התורה לילדים  
מרכז ארצות

November 5, 1990

TO: Participants, GA Forum XIV: Renewal in Jewish Education: The Commission on Jewish Education in North America

FROM: Rabbi Art Vernon

RE: Format and Content of the Forum

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this Forum, which is co-sponsored by JESNA and JCC Association of North America. The Forum will be held on Friday, November 16, 8 - 9:45 a.m., Hilton Hotel, Building 1, Ballroom Level, Imperial Ballroom B.

Enclosed is the description of the Forum as it appears in the GA Program.

The session has been organized as follows:

8:10 a.m. (5 min.)	Neil Greenbaum will introduce the Forum with remarks about the significance of the Commission, the issuing of its report on November 8 and will introduce Mort.
8:15 a.m. (15-20 min.)	<del>Neil Greenbaum</del> will discuss the formation the Commission and its membership, the issues it addressed and present its recommendations.
8:35 a.m. (5 min.)	Ron Leibow will thank Mort and indicate that three perspectives regarding the Commission and its recommendations will be presented. He will introduce all three reactors.
8:40 a.m. (10 min.)	Dan Shapiro will share his perspective as an involved communal lay leader.
8:50 a.m. (10 min.)	Stan Urman will share the perspective of a major foundation.

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9:00 a.m. Sara Lee will share the perspective of a  
(10 min.) professional Jewish educator

9:10 a.m. Ron Leibow will thank the reactors and open  
(30 min.) the floor for questions, comments and  
discussion.

9:40 a.m. Neil Greenbaum will summarize the Forum,  
thank everyone for attending and call  
attention to the Jewish Education workshops  
to follow which elaborate the major themes  
of the Commission report.

#### NOTE TO REACTORS:

In sharing your reaction to the Commission, you may want to address the following questions:  
What are some of the challenges involved in implementing the Commission's recommendations?

What time frame is necessary to allow for building momentum, funding, projects, etc. to achieve some of the recommendation? How will the results of the Commission's efforts be evaluated?

What role do you foresee for your community or institution in relationship to the Commission's recommendations?

#### POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR OPEN DISCUSSION

One of the key observations of the Report is the need to mobilize top leadership in each community. To what extent is top leadership now involved in Jewish education in your community?

There are many entry points for a community-wide initiative in Jewish education. Assuming substantial funding could be obtained, what pressing need of Jewish education should your community address first?

Some issues in Jewish education may require funding to achieve significant change, other issues may require changing the structure of Jewish education service and delivery. To what extent is your community prepared to address structural issues as a means of improving Jewish education?

Please fax me a bio for the chair to use in introducing you. Try to arrive at the Imperial Ballroom at 7:50 a.m. so we can meet each face to face before the Forum formally begins.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at JESNA 212 529-2000. I look forward to being with you at this session in San Francisco.



COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

MEETING OF NOVEMBER 8, 1990

GRAND HYATT HOTEL

November 8

8:30 a.m. Breakfast - Majestic Room - Conference Level

Expected attendance: MLM, Gottschalk, Green, Lamm, Schorsch, Berman, Pollack, Yanowitz, Kraar, Rotman, Woocher, SHH, SF, AH, DPK, VFL, Jerry Strober, Deborah Hart-Strober, Jerry Nagel

9:30 a.m. Press Conference - Broadhurst/Belasco Room - Conference Level

Expected attendance: MLM, Gottschalk, Green, Lamm, Schorsch, Berman, Pollack, Yanowitz, Kraar, Rotman, Woocher, SHH, SF, AH, DPK, plus members of the press

10:00 a.m. Registration/10:30 a.m. Meeting - Regency Room - Mezzanine Level

Expected attendance: 90 people

12:15 p.m. Luncheon meeting - Ballroom A - Ballroom Level (2 flights up-- press B on elevator)

Expected attendance: 90 people

SLIDE  
2

TALK w/ SLIDES  
at GA, SAN FRAN  
NOV, 1990

Commission  
File

(1)

IN the Report, we TRIED TO  
COMMUNICATE The Following:

SLIDE  
3

the Commission

SLIDE  
4

THE CRISIS

HOW DO WE DEFINE THE CRISIS?

- SINCE THE FAMILY AND NEIGHBORHOOD  
NO LONGER PLAY THE MAJOR ROLE they  
USED TO PLAY IN THE TRANSMISSION  
OF JEWISH VALUES, THE RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR
  - DEVELOPING JEWISH IDENTITY
  - INSTALLING A COMMITMENT TO JUDAISM

RESTS IN LARGE MEASURE ON JEWISH EDUC,

the Committee STUDIED the FIELD OF JEWISH EDUCATION

→ THOUSANDS OF INSTITUTIONS

— AS MANY AS 2,600 SCHOOLS

— TENS OF THOUSANDS OF EDUCATORS

— HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS

— IT ALSO LEARNED THERE IS A CORE OF DEEPLY COMMITTED JEWS WHO HAVE ESTABLISHED:

— DAY SCHOOLS

— YESHIVOT

— TEACHER SEMINARIES

~~WAGS~~

WHOSE VERY WAY OF LIFE ENSURES A MEANINGFUL JEWISH CONTINUITY.

— WE LEARNED ABOUT OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS  
— AND, GREAT PROGRAMS,

— HOWEVER, BY AND LARGE, THE SYSTEM OF JEWISH EDUCATION FAILS TO ENGAGE A MAJOR SEGMENT OF THE JEWISH POPULATION,

## HERE ARE THE PROBLEMS

• SPORADIC PARTICIPATION:

FOR MOST AMERICAN JEWS SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS SHORT-LIVED, AND SPORADIC

HOW DO WE TRANSMIT THE GREAT IDEAS OF THE JEWISH TRADITION IF, -- AT ANY GIVEN TIME -- LESS THAN 50% OF JEWISH CHILDREN ATTEND JEWISH SCHOOLS?

• DEFICIENCIES IN EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

MUCH OF THE CURRICULUM FAILS TO INSPIRE STUDENTS.

ELEMENTS CENTRAL TO THE MISSION OF JEW. EDUC.

- JEWISH VALUES AND IDEALS
- ATTACHMENT TO THE STATE OF ISRAEL
- CONCERN ABOUT JEWS THRU-OUT WORLD

ARE OFTEN LACKING

(4)

## → INADEQUATE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

TOP COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP HAS NOT YET RALLIED SUFFICIENTLY TO THE CAUSE OF JEWISH EDUCATION

RESULT: COMMUNITIES NOT YET SUFFICIENTLY SUPPORTIVE OF LARGE INVESTMENT REQUIRED FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

## → UNDERDEVELOPED PROFESSION

- SEVERE SHORTAGE OF TALENTED, WELL-TRAINED AND COMMITTED PERSONNEL FOR THE FIELD OF JEWISH EDUCATION
- TRAINING PROGRAMS GRADUATE TOO FEW TO BE SIGNIFICANT
- EDUCATORS ARE UNDERPAID
- THE VAST MAJORITY WORK PART-TIME

## LACK OF RELIABLE DATA

WE KNOW TOO LITTLE ABOUT JEW EDUC

- DECISIONS ARE MADE WITHOUT CLEAR EVIDENCE OF NEED
- MAJOR RESOURCES ARE INVESTED WITHOUT SUFFICIENT MONITORING & EVALUATION.
- WE DON'T KNOW WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO LEARN
- WE KNOW TOO LITTLE ABOUT WHAT WORKS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

ALL OF THIS BECAUSE THERE IS VERY LITTLE RESEARCH GOING ON,

--- SO --- WHERE TO BEGIN?

WE FOUND 23 AREAS FOR INTERVENTION

- EARLY CHILDHOOD
- SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL
- THE FAMILY
- SUMMER CAMPS

CHALLENGE WAS HOW COULD WE IMPACT THE WHOLE SYSTEM

AFTER CONSIDERABLE ANALYSIS, WE  
FOUND TWO AREAS THAT CUT ACROSS  
ALL AGE GROUPS AND SETTINGS --

- we called them the BUILDING BLOCKS  
OF JEWISH EDUCATION

## SLIDE 7

- INFUSE JEWISH EDUCATION WITH TALENTED  
AND DEDICATED EDUCATORS. They will
  - INSPIRE & EDUCATE STUDENTS
  - DEVELOP CURRICULUM
  - CARRY OUT INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS
- this will happen WITHIN LEADERSHIP
  - PROVIDES FUNDING AND SUPPORT
  - CREATES PROPER AMBIANCE FOR EDUCATION

## SLIDE 8 BLUEPRINT

⑦

The Commission Prepared A Blue Print  
WITH 5 COMPONENTS

SLIDE 9  
SLIDE 10

BUILD & PROFESSION

SLIDE 11

MOBILIZE COMMUNITY

INCREASE FUNDING:

- CONVENTIONAL SOURCES  
TUITION, CONGREGATIONS
- FEDERATION ALLOCATIONS
- NEW: FAMILY FOUNDATIONS

SLIDE 12

LEAD COMMUNITIES

SLIDE 13

RESEARCH

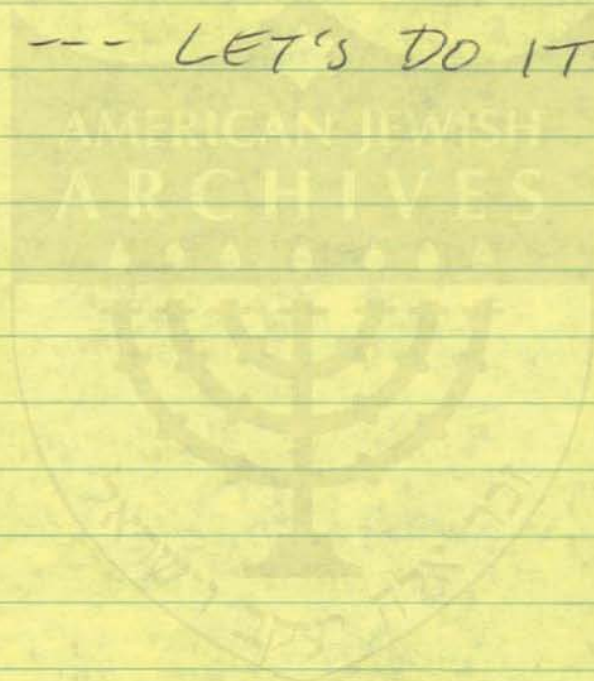
SLIDE 14

COUNCIL

(8)

MOST OF ALL, Commission is  
CONVINCED THAT The will is there  
AND The TIME TO ACT IS NOW.

Join ME --- LET'S DO IT TOGETHER,





נתיב-יועצים למדיניות ותכנון • Nativ Policy and Planning Consultants

אנט הוכשטיין  
ANNETTE HOCHSTEIN

13/11/90

Dear Mat,

I reprinted the presentation notes  
on a Premier printer - They read  
better that way.

Best Regards,

Annette

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- o The Commission on Jewish education issues its report today (slide 1)

"a time to act -- et laasot".

- o In the report we have tried to communicate the following:

(slide 2)

1. The Commission was convened to confront the crisis facing Jewish community in North America Today

2. It recognized the crucial importance of Jewish education in contemporary Jewish life -- and the link between Jewish education and meaningful Jewish continuity.

3. The commission studied the field of Jewish education and found it be a vast field -- beset by several problems

4. It developed a program to revitalize Jewish education, thereby enabling it to perform a pivotal role in the meaningful continuity of the Jewish people in North America.

[SLIDE 3]

- o THE COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

met from 1988 -- 1990

1. During these two years it held 6 plenary meetings and innumerable consultations (phone, mail, personal)
2. It prepared a blueprint for the future
3. It undertook steps to implementation

- o How do we define the crisis? What is it?

large numbers of Jews have lost interest in Jewish values, ideals and behaviour, and there are many who no longer believe that Judaism has a role to play in their search for personal fulfilment and communality.

Given a social setting where neither family nor neighbourhood or community plays the major role they used to play in the transmission of a system of values, the responsibility for developing Jewish identity and instilling a commitment to Judaism now rests primarily with education.

- o The Commission studied the field of Jewish education.

It found it to be an extensive and diverse field

with thousands of institutions (as many as 2,600 schools)  
many formal and informal settings [slide 5 settings]  
tens of thousands of educators and  
hundreds of thousands of students.

- o It also learned that there is a core of deeply committed Jews who have established day schools, yeshivot, teacher seminaries and whose very way of life ensures meaningful Jewish continuity from generation to generation.

- o It learned of some outstanding educators and of some great programs.

- o However, the Commission found that by and large the system of Jewish education fails to engage a major segment of the Jewish population.

- o Why is this?

Several problems beset the field of Jewish education

-- the Commission studied them under five headings:

- \* Sporadic Participation
- \* Deficiencies in Educational Content
- \* Inadequate Community Support
- \* An Underdeveloped Profession
- \* The Lack of Reliable Data

Let's look at them one by one

**\*\* Sporadic Participation:**

Though most American Jews have attended some form of Jewish schooling at one time in their life, for many attendance is short-lived and sporadic. Jewish education cannot permit this. How can we ensure the transmission of the great ideas of the Jewish traditions if at any given time less than 50% of Jewish children attend Jewish schools?

**\*\* Deficiencies in Educational Content:**

The Commission learned that much of the curriculum of Jewish education fails to inspire students. At times it is confined simply to teaching facts about Jewish history and holidays and some study of the Hebrew language. Elements that are central to the mission of Jewish education--Jewish values and ideals, the attachment to the State of Israel, concern about Jews throughout the world--are often lacking.

**\*\* Inadequate Community Support:**

The top community leadership has not yet rallied to the cause of Jewish education. They have failed to make the connection between the educational process and the knowledge that leads to commitment. They have yet to be convinced of the vital link between Jewish education and meaningful Jewish continuity. As a result, the environment in the Jewish community is not sufficiently supportive of the massive investment required to bring about systemic change. This affects the priority given to Jewish education, the status of the field of Jewish education, and the level of funding that is granted.

Inevitably, insufficient community support limits the aspirations, inhibits the vision, and stifles the creativity of those involved in all aspects of Jewish education.

**\*\* An Underdeveloped Profession:**

There is severe shortage of talented, well-trained, and committed personnel for the field of Jewish education. This is true for every age group, every setting, for formal and informal education. The training programs graduate insignificant numbers of people. Educators are underpaid. The vast majority work part-time; few enjoy the status and conditions that would enable them to carry out their work effectively and creatively. This leads many of them to question whether they can make a real difference.

**\*\* The Lack of Reliable Data:**

There is a paucity of data about Jewish education. Decisions have to be taken in Jewish education without the benefit of clear evidence of need, and major resources are invested without sufficient monitoring and evaluation. For example, we do not know what people want to learn and we seldom know enough about what works in Jewish education. This is because very little research on Jewish education is being carried out in North America.

**o The difficulty of the problem -- where to begin**

Given these formidable problems the challenge to the Commission was where to begin? What to address first. At one point Commissioners suggested as many as 23 possible areas for intervention ranging from programs for early childhood; improvement of the supplementary school to the expansion of summer camps, and the introduction of the media for Jewish education.

The challenge was : within this complex picture, amid all of these challenges and opportunities, could one identify one or more areas of intervention that would be likely to have across-the-board and comprehensive impact and effect the whole system?

**o The building blocks of Jewish education**

After analysis the Commission found that two areas meet this requirement and clearly cut across all age-groups, setting and

programs -- we called these the building blocks of Jewish education : [slide 7]

These building blocks are

- 1) personnel--well-trained and dedicated educators,
- 2) the community--funding, leadership, and a supportive climate.

o What emerged was a plan whose core is to infuse Jewish education with large numbers of talented and dedicated educators. They are needed in every area and it is they who will inspire and educate students, develop curriculum, and design and carry out innovative programs.

This will happen when/if the leadership of the community provides the necessary funding and support and develops a congenial environment for education.

- o The blueprint

On this basis, the Commission prepared a blueprint. It includes both short- and long-range elements, both local and continental components. Implementation is beginning immediately because initial funding has already been provided, people have been recruited for the task and a mechanism has been set up to facilitate implementation.

What is the Commission suggesting? What are we going to do?  
There are five components : together a strategy for change:

The program involves many concrete steps -- numerous ideas have been presented -- some more tentative/some more certain. Let me give some examples in each of the areas of the blueprint.  
(see book)

#### SLIDE

- BUILDING THE PROFESSION OF JEWISH EDUCATION
- MOBILIZING THE COMMUNITY FOR JEWISH EDUCATION
- ESTABLISHING LEAD COMMUNITIES
- DEVELOPING A RESEARCH CAPABILITY
- CREATING THE COUNCIL FOR INITIATIVES IN JEWISH EDUCATION

[SOME DETAILS -- SLIDES AVAILABLE FOR EACH]

- o To change the personnel situation by building the profession

of Jewish education

setting up in North America an infrastructure to recruit, train and retain, improve salaries, empower (see book)

Lots of suggestions: fast track programs; Fellows of Jewish education; Jewish education corps etc. The purpose : to raise the annual number of graduates from 100 to 400 by 1995. Identify pools of potential educators and create new sources of personnel - market and recruit

o To make Jewish education into a top priority on the communal agenda through work with the community :

-- recruitment of leadership; spreading the word: information; the report; conferences

-- funding from conventional sources -- tuition, congregational budgets -- family foundations (tell the story) and increased federation allocation.

o In several lead communities, demonstrate what Jewish education at its best can do, the difference it can make to the lives of children and the life-styles of their parents.

Build them as laboratories to test best practices, infuse with qualified educators, encourage innovation. Monitor, evaluate, diffuse.

o To change the style of decisionmaking in Jewish education -- through data and research, we will make informed decisions, we will learn of the impact of educational efforts, we will monitor the implementation of programs.

o The commission has created a locus of responsibility: the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education has been set up to ensure and facilitate implementation of the program.

oo Most of all -- the commission is convinced that the will is there and the time to act is now.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

SLIDE 1

- ° The Commission on Jewish Education has issued its report

"A Time to Act".

SLIDE 2

- ° In the report, we have tried to communicate the following:

1. The Commission was convened to confront the crisis facing the Jewish community in North America today.
2. It recognized the crucial importance of Jewish education in contemporary Jewish life -- and the link between Jewish education and meaningful Jewish continuity.
3. The Commission studied the field of Jewish education, and found it to be a vast field -- beset by many problems.
4. It developed a program to revitalize Jewish education, enabling it to perform a pivotal role in the meaningful continuity of the Jewish people in North America.

SLIDE 3 ° The Commission on Jewish Education in North America met from 1988 - 1990.

1. During these two years, it held six plenary meetings and many consultations (phone, mail, personal).
2. It prepared a blueprint for the future.
3. It undertook steps to implementation.

SLIDE 4 ° How do we define the crisis? What is it?

Large numbers have lost interest in Jewish values, ideals and behavior, and there are many who no longer believe that Judaism has a role to play in their search for personal fulfillment and communality.

Given a social setting where the family and neighborhood no longer play the major role they used to play in the transmission of values, the responsibility for developing Jewish identity and instilling a commitment to Judaism now rests primarily with education.

- ° The Commission studied the field of Jewish education.

It found it to be an extensive and diverse field,

SLIDE 5                with thousands of institutions (as many as 2,600 schools), many formal and informal settings, tens of thousands of educators, and hundreds of thousands of students.

- ° It also learned that there is a core of deeply committed Jews who have established day schools, yeshivot, teacher seminaries, and whose very way of life ensures meaningful Jewish continuity from generation to generation.
- ° It learned of some outstanding educators and of some great programs.
- ° However, the Commission found that, by and large, the system of Jewish education fails to engage a major segment of the Jewish population.
- ° Why is this?

Several problems beset the field of Jewish education.

-- The Commission studied them under five headings:

SLIDE 6

- \* Sporadic Participation
- \* Deficiencies in Educational Content
- \* Inadequate Community Support
- \* An Underdeveloped Profession
- \* The Lack of Reliable Data

Let's look at them one by one.

\*\* Sporadic Participation:

Though most American Jews have attended some form of Jewish schooling at one time in their life, for many, attendance is short-lived and sporadic. How can we ensure the transmission of the great ideas of the Jewish traditions if, at any given time, less than 50 percent of Jewish children attend Jewish schools?

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**\*\* An Underdeveloped Profession:**

There is a severe shortage of talented, well-trained, and committed personnel for the field of Jewish education. This is true for every age group, every setting, for formal and informal education. The training programs graduate insignificant numbers of people. Educators are underpaid. The vast majority work part-time. Few enjoy the status and conditions that would enable them to carry out their work effectively and creatively. This leads many of them to question whether they can make a real difference.

**\*\* The Lack of Reliable Data:**

There is a paucity of data about Jewish education.- Decisions have to be taken in Jewish education without the benefit of clear evidence of need, and major resources are invested without sufficient monitoring and evaluation. For example, we do not know what people want to learn, and we seldom know enough about what works in Jewish education. This is because very little research on Jewish education is being carried out in North America.

**° The Difficulty of the Problem -- Where to Begin**

Given these formidable problems, the challenge to the Commission was where to begin. What to address first. At one point, Commissioners suggested as many as 23 possible areas for intervention, ranging from programs for early childhood; improvement of the supplementary school to the expansion of summer camps; and the introduction of the media for Jewish education.

The challenge was: within this complex picture, amid all of these challenges and opportunities, could we identify one or more areas of intervention that would be likely to have across-the-board and comprehensive impact and effect the whole system?

° The Building Blocks of Jewish Education

After analysis, the Commission found that two areas meet this requirement and clearly cut across all age groups, setting and programs -- we called these the building blocks of Jewish education.

SLIDE 7      These building blocks are:

- 1) Personnel -- well-trained and dedicated educators.
- 2) The Community -- funding, leadership, and a supportive climate.

What emerged was a plan whose core is to infuse Jewish education with large numbers of talented and dedicated educators. They are needed in every area, and it is they who will inspire and educate students, develop curriculum, and design and carry out innovative programs.

This will happen when/if the leadership of the community provides the necessary funding and support, and develops a congenial environment for education.

° The Blueprint

On this basis, the Commission prepared a blueprint. It includes both short- and long-range elements, both local and continental components. Implementation is beginning immediately, because initial funding has already been provided, people have been recruited for the task, and a mechanism has been set up to facilitate implementation.

What is the Commission suggesting? What are we going to do?

There are five components, together a strategy for change:

The program involves many concrete steps -- numerous ideas have been presented -- some more tentative/some more certain. Let me give some examples in each of the areas of the blueprint (see book).

- BUILDING THE PROFESSION OF JEWISH EDUCATION
- MOBILIZING THE COMMUNITY FOR JEWISH EDUCATION
- ESTABLISHING LEAD COMMUNITIES
- DEVELOPING A RESEARCH CAPABILITY
- CREATING THE COUNCIL FOR INITIATIVES IN JEWISH EDUCATION

(SOME DETAILS -- SLIDES AVAILABLE FOR EACH)

- ° To change the personnel situation by building the profession of Jewish education, setting up in North America an infrastructure to recruit, train and retain, improve salaries, etc.

SLIDE 8

Lots of suggestions: fast track programs; Fellows of Jewish education; Jewish education corps, etc. The purpose: to raise the annual number of graduates from 100 to 400 by 1995. Identify pools of potential educators, and create new sources of personnel -- market and recruit.

- ° To make Jewish education into a top priority on the communal agenda through work with the community:

- Recruitment of leadership; spreading the word: information; the report; conferences.

- Funding from conventional sources -- tuition, congregational budgets, family foundations (tell the story) and increased federation allocation.

- ° In several lead communities, demonstrate what Jewish education at its best can do, the difference it can make to the lives of children and the life-styles of their parents.

Build them as laboratories to test best practices; infuse with qualified educators; encourage innovation. Monitor; evaluate; diffuse.

- ° To change the style of decision making in Jewish education -- through data and research, we will make informed decisions; we will learn of the impact of educational efforts; we will monitor the implementation of programs.

- ° The Commission has created a locus of responsibility: the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education has been set up to ensure and facilitate implementation of the program.
- ° Most of all -- the Commission is convinced that the will is there, and the time to act is now.

