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Senior Policy Advisors meeting. 13 June 1990. Minutes,
June 1990.

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MINUTES: Senior Policy Advisors, Commission on Jewish
Education in North America

DATE OF MEETING: June 13, 1990

DATE MINUTES ISSUED: June 20, 1990

PRESENT: Morton L. Mandel, (Chair), David S. Ariel,
Seymour Fox, Mark Gurvis, Annette Hochstein, Stephen
Hoffman, Joseph Reimer, Arthur Rotman, Herman Stein,
Jonathan Woocher, Henry L. Zucker, Virginia Levi (Sec'y)

GUESTS: David Finn, Dena Merriam

COPY TO: Martin S. Kraar

I. IMPRESSIONS OF THE JUNE 12TH COMMISSION MEETING

There was general agreement that the meeting went very well. Commissioners were actively engaged, and we received valuable input into the drafting of the final report.

The following points were raised for consideration as the final report is redrafted:

- A. The report should make clear that our concern is not just for education in the school setting, but in informal settings, through families, etc. It was suggested that the family as an environment for Jewish education is different from the other programmatic areas and should be interwoven into the text of the report. The family might be described as a tool for improving the environment for Jewish education.
- assignment It was noted that Joe Reimer and Carolyn Keller have written papers on family education. VFL will circulate these to senior policy advisors.
- B. What are the audiences for our report? Its focus may differ if we wish to reach the unaffiliated. It was suggested that by reaching the affiliated and the marginally affiliated, we hope to draw in the unaffiliated. However, current efforts will not focus on the unaffiliated.
- C. Are we over-selling the claim that improved Jewish education will encourage Jewish continuity? It was suggested that the report should state both that we wish to improve the quality of Jewish education for its own sake and for potential impact on Jewish continuity. It was noted that this could be related to traditional Jewish views of learning.
- D. Should the report include a "vision statement", either Isadore Twersky's or some other? There was general support for use of Twersky's statement, but expanded to define Jewish education more broadly.
- E. Some commissioners raised questions about the title and definition of "lead community." It was suggested that the report should clearly

define lead community, not as an elite community, but as one where major effort will be undertaken to try new approaches and develop systems which can be replicated elsewhere.

- assignment F. Since a question was raised about the relationship of the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education to JESNA, it was suggested that a strong, positive written statement of support from JESNA be prepared as soon as possible for use as appropriate. It was noted that a year from now, when the Council is up and running, positive interaction between the Council and JESNA will be evident.
- G. Several commissioners argued for emphasizing the importance of empowerment of teachers and parents. There may be some tension between those seeking to stress family education versus those who are anxious to bolster the teacher's role.
- H. It was suggested that we place Jewish education in context, not by emphasizing statistics, but by describing Jewish education qualitatively. Some commissioners suggested an environmental scan, providing a general contemporary context for the recommendations.
- I. In general, the commissioners responded positively to the idea of the Council as a logical outgrowth of the Commission's recommendations. It was suggested that a definition of the Council, how it will operate and its relationship to existing organizations, should be developed as soon as possible. The Council should be seen as another instrument to develop emerging ideas. Commissioners will have an opportunity to respond as the design of the Council emerges.
- J. It was suggested that the role of the seminaries and the denominational movements on the Council may need to be reconsidered.
- assignment K. There were a number of requests for specifics in the report. It was agreed that examples might help to clarify the Commission's recommendations. It was agreed that specific emerging ideas might be both helpful and acceptable. JW and AR agreed to provide examples of activities currently under way for use in clarifying the report. It was suggested that the report discuss the ideal community of the future. VFL will circulate JW's paper on a vision of the ideal educational community as well as the definition of Jewish education prepared by AR.
- assignment L. It was suggested that the programmatic options be listed in the report and that it state that many will be dealt with through lead communities. At the same time, we should make clear how and why we limited ourselves initially to community and personnel.
- assignment M. It was suggested that the draft report be shared with critical groups other than commissioners before it is released to the public. It was agreed that a plan will be developed for communication with communities and constituent groups to take place before and after the release of the final report. MG will work with senior policy advisors to determine with whom we must share the report before it is released.
- N. It was suggested that the report not use statistics nor "1982 data." We may wish to state that the development of accurate data is a major goal of the Council. It was agreed that this point requires further discussion.

- O. Will the Council have funds of its own to disburse? It seems likely that it could eventually have limited funds with which to support relatively modest proposals. In general, the Council will serve as a bridge between funders and projects. A challenge to the Council will be to create a spirit of team work among foundations to encourage a sense of collective responsibility.
- P. One commissioner recommended that the Council organize a leadership conference to encourage key community leaders to focus more heavily on Jewish education.

II. NEXT STEPS

Work will now focus on redrafting of the sections of the final report which were reviewed at the Commission meeting and on the preparation of Chapters one and six. Meetings will be held with some commissioners in anticipation of this process.

It is anticipated that the next draft of the final report will be in the hands of senior policy advisors by August 15th. Policy advisors will be asked to provide their feedback within one week so that the revised version can be ready to send to commissioners by September 1st. Interviews with commissioners will occur in early September and their reactions will be submitted to SF and AH by September 15th. The final document will be available to send to commissioners in mid-October.

III. UPDATE ON RESEARCH

- A. The paper by Scheffler and Fox on the relationship of Jewish education to Jewish continuity will be written by August 15th.
- B. The Reisman draft on informal education is under review, will be redrafted shortly, and will be sent to senior policy advisors thereafter.
- C. Senior policy advisors currently have the Reimer paper on the synagogue as a context for Jewish education and are to submit their reactions as soon as possible.

IV. OUTREACH, PUBLIC RELATIONS, AND A FINAL EVENT

A tentative date of November 8, 1990, was set for a celebratory event at which to distribute the final report. It was suggested that this be accompanied by a briefing session with the media. In addition to commissioners and media representation, we may wish to include prominent secular and Jewish educators and communal leaders.

It was suggested that we begin work on public relations toward the end of August, when we have a better idea of the document and of timing.

A presentation to occur at the GA must be carefully planned.

It was agreed not to prepare press releases to accompany each research paper. MG will consider the question of whether or not to copyright research papers. They will not be published, but will be made available upon request. They might be distributed by JCCA, JESNA, or the Council.

Assignment It was suggested that a letter be prepared from MLM to commissioners bringing them up to date on the time table, perhaps proposing a date for the final event, and transmitting minutes of the Commission meeting.

V. NEXT MEETING

A meeting for senior policy advisors was scheduled for Sunday, September 16th in New York City. The purpose is to review a PR Plan, to consider any open questions, to discuss commissioner response to the final report, and to hear an update on the establishment of the Council.

