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Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education

April 9, 1991

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COUNCIL ON INITIATIVES IN JEWISH EDUCATION

I. Mission

The CIJE has six basic roles to fulfil -- advocacy on behalf of Jewish education; initiating action on the specific recommendations on personnel and community development called for by the Commission on Jewish Education in North America; forging new connections among communities, institutions and foundations; establishing and acting on a new research agenda; helping to facilitate synergism within the emerging foundation community; and energizing new financial and human resources for Jewish education.

A. Advocacy

The best lay and professional leadership of the Jewish community need to be attracted to the cause of Jewish education. Visions of what should and can be achieved in the 21st century need to be repeatedly placed before our communities' leadership and the wherewithal to do so obtained. The CIJE can provide a unique blend of individual and institutional advocacy in North America.

B. Initiatives

Several specific recommendations are being promoted by the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. These include the need to radically strengthen personnel in the field and deepen local community leadership's commitment to Jewish education. Through comprehensive planning programs and experimental initiatives in designated lead communities, CIJE will bring together continental institutions and other experts to yield breakthroughs in Jewish education development at the local level.

C. Connections

Creative people, institutions, organizations and foundations are all acting on new ideas in Jewish education. The CIJE seeks to provide a meeting place that will bring together:

- Funders and those with proposals for action;
- Proven ideas developed through foundation initiatives and communities eager to know what works;

- Institutions that are developing new approaches and the personnel and resources to make breakthroughs possible.

The CIJE will be a setting where funders can share accomplishments and possibly agree to join together in supporting new undertakings of large magnitude.

D. Research

While there are many people engaged in Jewish education research, there still appears to be no coordinated, systematic analysis of what works in Jewish education. Research interests have been understandably idiosyncratic. The Commission on Jewish Education in North America found gaping holes in what we can say we know with real confidence, rather than relying on conventional wisdom. A comprehensive, multi-year research agenda needs to be outlined by the best thinkers on the continent, assigned to the most promising talent, supported, and the findings critically examined and disseminated.

E. Synergism

One of the most exciting new developments in Jewish education -- one that holds great promise for the field -- is the serious entry of strong private foundations into Jewish life in general and Jewish education in particular. This is an unprecedented development. The foundations are deploying creative staffs and developing recognizable signatures of their interests and accomplishments. Recruitment, day schools, media, training high potential professionals, identifying master teachers and programs, and Israel experiences are just a few of the interests being pursued. The richness of foundation endeavors is a real blessing. Through the synergy of coming together at the CIJE, foundations could efficiently diffuse their best innovations throughout the lead communities and should they desire it even help each other advance their agendas by consulting with each other, exchanging professional resources, avoiding recreating notions, etc.

F. Energize

Through the work of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America and the work of other entities, a new group of professionals

for Jewish education has begun to be identified. Generally these are people who are experts in general education who have an interest in Jewish affairs. Also, academicians with expertise in Judaica, the humanities, and social sciences want to contribute. CIJE will seek to identify these people and provide them with effective avenues to use their talents on behalf of the Jewish people, much the way we now benefit from many of the best lay leaders in the business community and other professions.

Further CIJE will attempt to generate new financial resources within local communities in partnership with existing resources and on a continental basis to back the ideas that are proven to work in Jewish education.

CIJE hopes to energize new professional and financial resources to add to the gifted people already at work. Ultimately local federations, school supporters, congregations, and consumers will need to commit more resources to accomplish the Jewish education agenda for the next century. This will not be an easy thing to achieve. It is hoped that CIJE will be able to facilitate foundations interested in providing a quick start to the development of new innovative efforts and then provide some longer term support.

II. Method of Operation

The CIJE will not be a big new comprehensive direct service provider. It isn't seeking to displace any existing institution or organization. Rather, CIJE expects to operate with a very small core staff -- no more than 3 or 4 professionals -- and work through the efforts of others -- JESNA, JCCA, CJF, Yeshiva University, JTS, HUC-JIR, Reconstructionist College, Torah U Mesorah, denominational departments of education, Brandeis, Stanford, Harvard, Spertus, Boston Hebrew College, educator organizations, etc. This list could go on and on! The need is not for a new service delivery mechanism but for a catalytic agent -- one that can convene meetings of peer organizations on the national scene, including denominational institutions and departments, communal agencies, foundations, and the like.

No existing organization plays this role today in Jewish education. CIJE, building upon the already successful engagement of these entities through the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, can play this role. The identity of all partners would be preserved and their missions enhanced. The rich diversity of foundation interests would be infused into the consciousness of the established community.

III. Structure

A simple structure to govern the CIJE is envisioned.

A. Board

Approximately 20 to 30 people will govern the CIJE. They will be drawn from among the leaders of the foundation community, continental lay leaders, outstanding Jewish educators, and leading Jewish academicians.

B. Senior Policy Advisors

A group of 20 or so senior policy advisors will provide ongoing professional guidance to the professional staff and board of the CIJE. They will be drawn from the ranks of the continental organizations and institutions and outstanding individual professionals.

C. CIJE Fellows

Beyond the Senior Policy Advisors group, the CIJE intends to assemble 50 or so fellows to provide intellectual, educational content to its work. These Fellows would be identified from among the people currently at work in Jewish education, and leading academicians and practitioners in general education, Judaica, humanities, and social sciences with a strong interest in Jewish life. In addition to providing ongoing advice to CIJE, the Fellows should be a rich resource for consultants for lead communities, foundation initiatives, the research agenda of CIJE, and the institutional objectives of CIJE working in concert with others.

D. Advisory Council

At least once a year CIJE will reconvene the members of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, augmented with other key figures in Jewish education. This will provide an opportunity to check on the progress of implementing the Commission's recommendations and provide fresh insight on new developments that should be on CIJE's agenda.

E. Staff

The staff of CIJE will consist of a chief professional officer (initially Stephen Hoffman, the Executive Vice-President of the Cleveland Federation); a chief educational officer; and a planner. Appropriate support staff would be in place as well. An initial budget is attached.

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Mandel Institute

מכון מנדל

For the Advanced Study and Development of Jewish Education

Planning Workshop with the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education

January 7-10, 1991

Held at the Mandel Institute, Jerusalem

Participants:

Ami Bouganim, Shulamith Elster, Seymour Fox, Annette Hochstein, Steve Hoffman,
Alan Hoffmann, Danny Marom, Marc Rosenstein, Arthur Rotman, Jon Woocher

Introduction

S. Hoffman reviewed his paper on the mission, method of operation, and structure of the CIJE (Exhibit 1).

There was a discussion of relative priorities of the recommendations of the Commission in order to determine where to begin: lead communities, building the profession, research, and building community support.

There was general consensus that all areas interact, but that lead communities seems to serve as a focus for the others, as well as being visible, concrete and proactive. Therefore, it was agreed that this area should be our first priority. At the same time, there was consensus that the lead communities effort does not entirely subsume all other areas — and that we therefore must move on the other fronts too.

Lead Communities

Some concerns and dilemmas which arose in the discussion of how to implement the local communities project:

- a. We cannot ignore other efforts underway and focus only on lead communities; there may be other community and foundation projects deserving of our interest and support.
- b. In choosing candidates for lead communities, do we prefer those which have weaknesses (e.g. lack of top leadership) which we can remediate as a demonstration, or do we choose communities which are already strong, to model excellence (but possibly not significantly replicable)?

- c. There may be a tension between the local perception of the community's priorities and our view of what must be done to fulfill our goals for the lead community as a demonstration site or model of excellence.
- d. Possible considerations in selection process:
 - 1. city size
 - 2. geographical location
 - 3. lay leadership commitment
 - 4. planning process underway
 - 5. financial stability
 - 6. availability of academic resources
 - 7. strength of existing institutions
 - 8. presence of some strong professional leadership
 - 9. willingness of community to take over process and carry it forward after the initial period.

In general, there was difficulty in conceptualizing a clear set of criteria for choosing lead communities—and in deciding among the goals of replicability/demonstrability/models of excellence. What emerged from this discussion was consensus on the idea of differentiated criteria: different communities might be chosen for different reasons. On the other hand, we clearly cannot afford to fail: however we choose candidates, we must be convinced that between the community's resources and our own, success is likely.

There was agreement that the CIJE needs to clarify what a lead community is: what are the specific categories of actions and/or programs and/or processes which form the heart of the lead community effort. However, there was no closure on content. Two aspects were considered:

- a. The lead community is characterized by a certain type of planning approach, involving comprehensive, systematic planning; a national perspective and involvement (via various national educational institutions, movements, etc.); and the bringing in of outside resources, human and material.
- b. In addition to "a," the lead community would be required to make certain educational, programmatic commitments (e.g., to in-service training, leadership development, etc.)

The following points were agreed upon:

- a. The centrality of systematic assessment and planning and the role of the CIJE in providing resources and incentives for this process.
- b. The full support of top local lay leadership as a sine qua non.
- c. The overall goal of creating fundamental reform, not just incremental change; of creating new approaches, not just extinguishing fires.

- d. The importance of an approach based upon research, analysis and national decision-making.
- e. Lead communities serve as laboratories, but not as the only laboratories: we might be supporting experiments elsewhere for eventual application in a lead community.
- f. The need to establish a contractual relationship between the CIJE and the lead community.

The discussion moved on to the issue of what the CIJE would provide for a lead community. A model which served as a basis for discussion was that of an account manager: someone who must work closely with a client and understand all of his needs in depth and who must be creative in bringing in various other resources to fulfill those needs.

Thus, the CIJE would serve a facilitating, matchmaking, guiding, managing role. Closure was not attained on an exact role description, but a number of specific applications of this concept were discussed:

- a. Providing a "roster of experts" (persons and institutions) on whom the lead community can call for specific assistance.
- b. Arranging for the seconding of staff resources from existing institutions to the lead community.
- c. Providing up-to-date information on developments in general and Jewish education relevant to the communities' planning process.
- d. Finding and "certifying" best practices is a valuable service which the CIJE needs to provide to assist lead communities. This turns out to be not as simple as first appears. The CIJE will have to invest resources and energy into studying the whole concept of best practice, and developing procedures for finding, certifying, and communicating best practices to lead communities and others.
- e. Serving as a broker between lead communities and foundations, for providing funding and for particular programs relevant to the communities' needs.
- f. Guiding the local planning and research process, providing assistance as needed, quality control, monitoring and feedback.

There ensued a discussion of the essential "building blocks" which would have to be part of a lead community's plan of action. At this stage of our work, the following were suggested:

- a. Programs to train personnel.
- b. Lay leadership development.
- c. Israel program development.
- d. A framework or frameworks for deliberation on educational philosophy and goals.

It was agreed that the "tone" set by the CIJE is important: we need to embody and stand for excellence, continuously to hold before the communities a model of thoughtful, serious planning, research, and implementation.

The consensus was that the CIJE has a responsibility to set the very highest standards possible, demanding tough quality control, never "settling" for compromises on work quality.

ACTION AGENDA FOR IMPLEMENTING LEAD COMMUNITIES

1. Recruit planning team (in-house and/or borrowed) to map out overall program.
2. Develop selection procedure and criteria, and "visiting team" if necessary.
3. Prepare assessment/diagnostic tools to assist communities in self study ("educational profile").
4. Set up monitoring/feedback loop: procedure and framework for ongoing evaluation.
5. Set up process for identifying, documenting, and disseminating "best practice."
6. Set up framework for training and assisting community leadership in developing:
1) proposals, 2) community educational plans, and 3) local monitoring/feedback loop.
7. Establish framework for creating "programmatic menus" to help communities choose new ideas and programs for implementation.
8. Start ongoing process of accumulating "roster of experts" — contacts in the academic world (and other worlds) who can provide assistance to communities in self-examination, planning, and introducing innovations.
9. Start ongoing process of building contacts with foundations with interests in supporting specific categories of programming, in order to help find funding for lead communities' innovations.
10. Develop key elements of contract defining relationship between lead communities and CIJE; what are the specific requirements of the lead community and of the CIJE?
11. Create framework for discussions with and among continental agencies (e.g., JESNA, JCCA, denominational education bodies, etc.) regarding a) their providing services to lead communities; b) the identification of "best practice" programming which may exist on a continental level under the auspices of these agencies and may be useful to lead communities.

Building the Profession

All participants contributed to a list of components of the process of building the profession of Jewish education:

- recruitment
- pre-service training
- in-service training
- senior personnel development
- retention
- image and recognition
- certification
- compensation
- professional organizations and networking
- career development
- supervision and evaluation
- research
- the contribution of general education
- empowerment
- paraprofessionals and volunteers.

Of these, five received highest priority ranking by the group:

1. Pre-service training
2. In-service training
3. Recruitment
4. Compensation
5. Networking

In discussion of how to attack this list, the issue arose of the tension between the CIJE's inclination to do its own process leading to a master plan for, say, pre-service training, and the need to involve other "players" in the planning (e.g., Y.U., J.T.S., H.U.C., J.C.C.A., federation planners, etc.). What will happen if there are conflicts between CIJE's standards, methods and directions and the possibly less exacting approaches of existing institutions? The Mandel Associated Foundations, the Wexner Foundation and others must also be integrated into the picture since they have decided to invest in pre-service education. It was agreed that this is a difficult issue, requiring sensitive and creative thought.

Moving to pre-service training, several suggestions were made:

1. We should see what we can learn from work being done in general education, and possibly use scholars and institutions from that world in our planning.
2. We should talk to all the current "players" to get a picture of the state of the art.
3. We could involve other foundations (Bronfman Foundation to fund Israel Experience components of teacher- training, Wexner Foundation for the training of elites, etc.).
4. The Mandel Institute in Jerusalem may be running a world-wide planning seminar in the spring, of which we could take advantage.
5. We must keep all options open and under careful scrutiny and look at all possible options including those in general education.

A. Hochstein accepted the assignment to produce a paper defining the questions and issues which must be addressed in developing a master plan for pre-service training, to guide the CIJE in beginning the process. A. Hoffmann accepted a similar assignment for in-service education.

With respect to compensation, discussion was brief; no closure was reached on a plan of action, or even whether the CIJE should remain in a study/advocacy role or actually become involved, for example through encouraging the setting up of a national pension plan.

Networking was also discussed briefly; while there was consensus that networks must be studied and supported, no specific suggestions were made.

ACTION AGENDA FOR BUILDING THE PROFESSION

1. A. Hochstein's paper to guide development of a master plan in pre-service training.
2. A. Hoffmann's paper to guide development of a master plan in in-service training.
3. Coordinate efforts with MAF in developing plans with existing pre-service training institutions.
4. Establishing contact with interested foundations to become involved in parts of the program.
5. Set up a planning team to map out efforts and assign roles in pursuing the five top priorities (and others).

Research Agenda

Two aspects of educational research which are necessary were presented:

- Policy research, including monitoring, evaluation and program design.
- Pure research including the education of educators, the philosophy of education, etc.

Participants suggested a number of areas crying out for research attention:

- standardized achievement testing
- market research
- research itself—a "map" of the field is needed
- best practices
- data about teachers
- evaluation methods
- history and philosophy of Jewish education.

And they proposed several different ways in which the CIJE might serve the needs of Jewish educational research:

- a. Coordination of research efforts; influencing and stimulating.
- b. Reaching out to research institutions to create centers for Jewish educational research.
- c. Making useful connections among research needs, researchers, and sources of funding.
- d. Modeling research-based planning.
- e. Work to create new centers of research and train/recruit new researchers.

Three concrete results:

- a. The CIJE will commission a preliminary paper, preferably by Israel Scheffler, on the state of Jewish educational research. This will serve as the basis of the work of a high level task force which will recommend a course of action in order to establish a research capability.
- b. J. Woocher will prepare a thought paper on the issue of maintaining a data base of Jewish educational research.
- c. There is a need to pay special attention to current good research while the longer term approach is being developed.

ACTION AGENDA FOR RESEARCH

1. Commission a preliminary paper, preferably by Israel Scheffler, on the state of Jewish education research and on the need for strategic planning.
2. Based on this paper, set up a high level task force which will recommend a course of action in order to establish a research capability.
3. J. Woocher will prepare a thought paper on the issue of maintaining a data base of Jewish educational research.
4. Seek to develop connections among and support for existing researchers, on specific need-drive projects, while waiting for the entire system to be rebuilt.
5. Actively model research-based planning from the beginning, commissioning research and borrowing researchers to provide a research base for every project we undertake.
6. Make it clear, to our lay leadership and to that of communities (e.g., lead communities) and agencies interacting with us, that we do not move without research.

Developing Community Support

A number of suggestions were made regarding models and directions for pursuing this goal:

- a. The model of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America: give top leaders important decisions to make and let them work with outstanding professionals.
- b. A constant flow of special events, programming, support, and personal cultivation is necessary to keep lay leaders enthusiastic and involved.
- c. We need to select and cultivate first-echelon leaders in the federation and UJA worlds and bring them into education.
- d. We should use exciting and dramatic methods to interest our target leadership; e.g., prestigious retreats, meetings with high-status leaders and scholars like Nobel laureates, university presidents.
- e. We should capitalize on the headway already made in this direction, by working to involve people who already have been touched by the Commission.
- f. Systematic creation of a supportive climate by PR and marketing activities; e.g., wide distribution of *A Time to Act*, newsletters, materials for rabbis, encouragement of Commission members to speak and write.

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- g. We should develop new programs for educating lay leadership, and work with existing ones (e.g., CLAL, JESNA, JCCA).
 - h. We need to cultivate the heads of the three religious movements.

No specific plan of action was agreed upon, though there was consensus that we need to develop one. Meanwhile, S. Hoffman undertook personally to work to involve several key leaders of national stature in the work of the CIJE.

ACTION AGENDA FOR DEVELOPING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

1. Marketing plan for *A Time to Act*.
2. Efforts to cultivate top echelon continental leadership from non-educational settings for involvement in CIJE.
3. Reach-out to existing top leadership with interest in education (e.g., denominations, Commissioners).
4. Planning team to develop series of high level programs for attracting new top leadership and keeping those already involved excited (e.g., retreats, prestigious meetings, etc.).
5. Establish systematic ongoing public-relations program.

Putting It All Together

The final session was devoted to considering some of the elements of a rough strategic plan, connecting priorities in a logical order and fitting them to a calendar.

Several general principles were agreed upon:

- a. Work of CIJE must be characterized by expertise, quality, and excellence.
- b. We must focus on change — planned, systematic, monitored change.
- c. We must have a comprehensive outlook.

MINUTES
COUNCIL FOR INITIATIVES IN JEWISH EDUCATION
SENIOR POLICY ADVISORS
MARCH 12, 1991
10 A.M. - 4 P.M.
COUNCIL OF JEWISH FEDERATIONS
NEW YORK CITY

Attendance

Jack Bieler, David Dubin, Shulamith Elster, Sylvia Ettenberg, Joshua Fishman, Seymour Fox, Irving Greenberg, Stephen Hoffman, Richard Joel, Martin Kraar, Sara Lee, Virginia Levi, Daniel Pekarsky, Bernard Reisman, Arthur Rotman, Alvin Schiff, Barry Shrager, Stephen Solender, Eliot Spack, Jonathan Woocher

Copy to

Robert Abramson, Josh Elkin, Robert Hirt, Morton L. Mandel, Henry L. Zucker

I. Introductory Remarks

The chair noted that the senior policy advisors of the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE) is a group in formation. We anticipate additions to this group from the Reform movement, the Orthodox movement, and the Association of National Youth Group Directors. This group will work with the board and staff of the CIJE, contributing individual and collective expertise to the CIJE effort.

It was noted that the Commission on Jewish Education in North America chose to focus on the areas of personnel and community in an effort to enhance Jewish education for Jewish continuity. Throughout its deliberations, the Commission noted a lack of adequate data and the importance of establishing a more far reaching research component for the field of Jewish education. The role of CIJE is to take the ideas of the Commission and make them concrete through demonstration and implementation activities.

Since the final Commission meeting in November 1990, Dr. Shulamith Elster has been designated chief education officer, effective July 1, 1991, and a search is under way for a planning officer to bring expertise in community organization and social planning. Negotiations are under way for space at CJF and funds are being raised to cover the core budget of CIJE for a period of three years.

A preliminary planning meeting took place in Jerusalem in January. The minutes of that meeting were distributed to senior policy advisors and served as a basis for discussion throughout the day.

The purpose of this meeting was to recommend how to move ahead with the establishment of lead communities, with efforts to build the profession, and with the building of a research capability. It was anticipated that the day would result in proposals to the CIJE board of a game plan which CIJE staff and identified experts could proceed to execute.

In the discussion that followed, it was agreed that the three directions to be discussed are interconnected and that one role of the senior policy advisors and staff is to maintain the linkages among them. Another role will be to bring the expertise of regional and national organizations to work with lead communities in accomplishing their goals.

Several advisors raised questions about the role of the CIJE in funding its initiatives. It was suggested that lead communities should be expected to support a local planning effort with local funds and that the CIJE's role would be to provide expertise and to help identify funders to assist with specific implementation action. The concept of the lead community itself should energize a community and its personnel to take action for Jewish education. Advisors noted that some pool of funds available to the CIJE for implementation of lead community efforts could be important and should be suggested to the board.

II. Review of Working Papers

Senior policy advisors spent most of the day in working groups, each reviewing preliminary papers on one topic, and concluding with the following recommendations.

A. Lead Communities

1. How will Lead Communities be Identified?

Two possible approaches will be recommended to the board. The first, described as the buckshot approach, would invite any community in North America to apply to be a lead community. The second approach is to ask senior policy advisors to identify 10-12 communities with the potential to succeed, and to invite them to apply. From the applicants, 3-5 communities would be selected.

2. What Criteria should be used in Selecting Lead Communities?

The following criteria will be suggested for use in selecting lead communities.

- a. City size
- b. Geographic location
- c. Lay leadership commitment

- d. The existence of a planning process
- e. Financial stability
- f. Availability of academic resources
- g. Strength of existing institutions
- h. Presence of some strong professional leadership
- i. Willingness of a community to take over the process and carry it forward
- j. Replicability
- k. Commitment to coalition building (synergism)
- l. Commitment to innovation
- m. Commitment to a "seamless approach," involving all ages, formal and informal education
- n. Commitment to the notion of Clal Yisrael - willingness to involve all segments of the community
- o. Agreement with the importance of creating fundamental reform, not just incremental change

3. What might CIJE bring to Lead Communities?

- a. Expertise of CIJE staff and planning teams
- b. Help with the cost of outside experts
- c. The ability to link projects with potential funders

4. Program Areas to be Addressed by a Lead Community

- a. Programs to train personnel
- b. Lay leadership development
- c. Israel program development
There was discussion about the value of pointing to a single program area. It was suggested that not all lead communities need focus on a single program area. This is to be discussed further.
- d. An ongoing focus on goals and philosophy
Advisors felt that this area should be a focus of planning teams, but might not be a necessary precondition for every lead community.

5. Best Practices

It was suggested that work begin now to identify an array of successful approaches for possible implementation by lead communities. Each "best practice" would be accompanied by the names of one or more experts to be consulted.

It was suggested that the CIJE periodically convene representatives of the lead communities for workshops on how best to treat a program area such as early childhood, family education, media and technology, etc.

It was suggested that each community be assigned an "account executive" and a team of experts to work with it. It was further agreed that the senior policy advisors would maintain close contact with this team and with the lead communities to provide quality control.

B. Training

The working group on training identified the following concerns for further consideration:

1. Recruitment

What type of recruitment activities should be undertaken? How can these reflect the variety of needs within the field? How many students can current programs accommodate? What efforts can be undertaken to enhance the profiles of the training institutions?

2. Definitions of "professional"

How should "professional" be defined? What are the elements of a working definition: full-time vs. part-time, professional training programs, certification, appropriate compensation?

What is the role of the professional school in the building of the profession? What role can professional organizations play? How can this definition reflect the "stratification" of the field and differentiated staffing within institutions?

3. Training objectives

What is the mission of current programs? How is this mission articulated? What is their "vision" of the profession? What should be the objectives of training programs? Should programs train for current needs and current delivery systems? Should institutions be working to design programs to prepare personnel to meet future needs?

4. Training

The training of professionals for Jewish education should be thought of as a continuum: pre-service/professional training--in-service/ continuing education.

What alternatives exist to degree granting programs? What training needs can be met through continuing education units? How can these programs be implemented--local sites, CAJE?

5. Standards for training and for the profession

How can standards of "excellence" be implemented? " 'Good enough' is not acceptable."

6. Selected research issues

Identification of the qualities, or character traits, of highly regarded educators to serve as models of professionalism.

Identification of inhibiting and enhancing factors that contribute to participation in in-service and continuing education programs.

The impact of participation in continuing education activities and in-service programs.

Building the Profession should include a thorough examination of all of the above.

7. Next steps

- a. The important first step is the mapping of the field--including a full description of training opportunities and identification of the needs of those currently working in the field.

A study should be made of available and unfilled positions in the field and projections made as to needs five and ten years out.

- b. Recruitment strategies should be developed to meet these needs and programs developed at the training institutions to meet the training needs of the recruits.
- c. The research agenda should include issues related to the building of the profession.

In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that it will be difficult for communities to provide professional training to part-time educators in the same way that full-time educators are prepared. Each lead community might look at particular ways of training and upgrading part-timers.

It was suggested that one goal of the effort to build the profession might be to create careers within the synagogue setting. There should be room for one to two full-time people in most synagogues to focus on classroom education, family education, etc. These positions would require a special kind of training.

In this same context, it was noted that we anticipate the lead community concept identifying new kinds of personnel, which will require new training systems. We need to think creatively.

C. Research and Development of a Data Base

It was suggested that priorities for research include the following:

1. Development of an Agenda

A researcher working with staff and an editorial board should map out what is currently available, creating a blueprint or framework for further study.

- a. A research agenda should be defined in reference to the CIJE's other agendas.
- b. Any mapping or planning process should involve those currently working in the field.
- c. This study should be done in the context of various definitions of research, e.g. experimental research anticipated in the framework of lead communities should be included.
- d. This should show how research can lead to better practice and professionalism. The challenge is to effect change.

2. There is a need to develop a data base as quickly as possible. This can be accomplished by bringing together a group of experts (JESNA and JCCA have people available) for brainstorming, consultation, and preparation of a paper. They should identify the audience--the key decisionmakers--and determine what they need to know. They should indicate what this data bank will do for Jewish education.

During the consultation phase the team should talk with the experts involved in data gathering, talk to people in the field to be sure that the data is needed, and be honest about what is available and what is not. It will be important to clarify such terms as formal and informal education so that everyone is talking about the same issues.

3. Research should play a central role in the work of the CIJE. The CIJE should serve as a model, showing that good education planning flows from a strong research program. It was suggested that one member of the CIJE staff serve as coordinator of the research effort.

4. Next Steps

Based on the foregoing report it was suggested that a researcher be identified to prepare a map of the field and that a group of JESNA and JCCA staff be asked to prepare a paper on the data base for possible presentation to the CIJE board.

III. General Discussion

In the short time that remained at the conclusion of the reports, general comments were invited.

It was suggested that an issue to consider in the future is the need to create a market. This encompasses the issue of how to attract to Jewish education those people not at all involved with the current system. In this context, it was suggested that each lead community be encouraged to include a marketing component in its efforts.

Future meetings of the senior policy advisors will be scheduled for early summer and early fall.



PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT
of
THE NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH EDUCATION DATA BANK

Background

In recent years, the organized Jewish community in North America has come to see Jewish education as the key to Jewish continuity and survival and a primary guarantor of the quality of Jewish life. Consequently, providing effective Jewish education for all segments of the population has attained a high priority on the communal agenda. Jewish education is no longer viewed as a "private enterprise" (of concern only to parents, children and Jewish educators) and as an ideological or school-based responsibility alone, but rather as a communal focal point as well.

With more institutions and agencies assuming stakeholder roles, decision making about Jewish education is becoming both more widespread and decentralized. Lay and professional leaders in continental organizations and denominational bodies, federations, central agencies for Jewish education, academic institutions, and local formal and informal educational institutions share responsibilities for Jewish educational planning and delivery. In each of their contexts as educational planners, resource developers, funders and practitioners, they are called upon to appraise the best ways to provide the highest quality Jewish education for the greatest number of individuals.

In 1988 the Commission on Jewish Education in North America was established to pool the energies and resources of all sectors of the Jewish community in a mutual effort to enlarge the scope, raise the standards, and improve the quality of Jewish education. Through two years of study, the Commission identified several fundamental problems endemic to the Jewish educational system, and developed the blueprints for a plan to address them. Among the deficiencies identified was "the absence of a research function to monitor results, allocate resources, and plan improvements."

The Need for a Centralized Research Mechanism for Jewish Educational Statistics and Information in North America

Decision-making is most effective when informed by relevant and accurate background knowledge and data. Determining the best way to maximize Jewish educational effectiveness demands, at the outset, a clear and objective picture of the current state of Jewish education (e.g., descriptive data on existing educational programs, providers, and participants), an enlightened vision of what some favored outcomes might be, and knowledge of promising means to achieve those goals (e.g., inventory of best practice). To date sufficient resources to support a systematic, coordinated research endeavor for collecting, analyzing and disseminating the requisite basic data on Jewish education in North America have not been available. As was noted in *A Time to Act*, the Commission's final report, "there is a paucity of data about the basic issues, and almost no evaluation has been made to assess the quality and impact of programs."¹

In the interim, descriptive information about Jewish formal and informal education in North America has come from a variety of sources and different perspectives, using different methodologies and achieving varying degrees of coverage.² As a result, making inferences and drawing comparisons has demanded caution. Furthermore, in the absence of a systematic, coordinated research program, decision-makers have been left with a series of "snapshots" from which to try to piece together "the big picture." Without complete, valid, and reliable information and statistics, educational planners and decision makers have too often made choices about allocating human and financial resources and implementing educational programs and initiatives based on impressionistic information or partial and fragmented data.

As the Jewish communal emphasis on Jewish education continues and expands, and investment in it continues to grow, the need to establish a centralized data bank becomes more acute. As part of its plan to infuse Jewish education with new vitality, the Commission itself has called for "developing a research capability." Such an entity will provide the most cost effective and efficient means of access to current, valid and reliable data and information required for informed decision-making by the many stakeholders in the Jewish educational enterprise. Common sense would dictate that initial data collection should be determined by its primary users, and should be focused on data collection, analysis and dissemination in areas of greatest

need and most immediate utility to Jewish educational decision makers, areas such as participants, personnel, programs, and provisions (economics).

Proposal for Establishment of the North American Jewish Education Data Bank

Building on their unique coordinating, planning, training and research roles in Jewish education, the JCC Association and JESNA are proposing to jointly create and administer a new research mechanism to help address the need for more and better knowledge about the actual status of Jewish education in North America. The overall goals of the North American Jewish Education Data Bank will be to furnish Jewish education planners, resource developers, funders and practitioners who serve as lay and professional leaders in continental organizations and agencies, federations, central agencies for Jewish education, academic institutions, and local formal and informal educational institutions with the knowledge they need to make decisions about various plans to improve Jewish education.

Establishment and organization of the North American Jewish Education Data Bank must be based on knowledge of its clients and their needs, potential models of the best ways to respond to those needs, and requirements for human and financial resources to implement various models and plans. Specifically, establishment of the North American Jewish Education Data Bank will require knowledge of:

- the information needs of potential decision-makers and their advisors, and the priority placed on each body of data,
- effective models for collecting similar data and information (e.g.: Would centralized data collection be most effective and efficient, or should other researchers be commissioned to undertake specific data collection projects?)
- models for organizing and analyzing data and information (e.g.: How are other comparable databases and clearinghouses organized? What technology is used? How are they administered? What are the costs and benefits associated with each model?)
- models for providing access to and disseminating data and information (e.g.: Is regular compilation and dissemination of reports necessary or feasible? Should the data simply be maintained, with reports prepared in response to specific data requests?)

Request for Funding to Support Phase I in Establishment of North American Data Bank: Research and Development

This proposal requests funding to support the initial planning phase necessary for establishing the Data Bank. Its goals are:

- to identify potential users
- to inventory and prioritize potential user's data and information needs and desires
- to identify and review existing models for collecting data and information
- to identify and review existing models for organizing and analyzing data and information
- to identify and review existing models for providing access to and disseminating data and information

Based on analyses of results of their inquiry, the JCC Association and JESNA will jointly propose a blueprint for the proposed North American Jewish Education Data Bank. The blueprint will include options for the limiting or expanding the scope of data collection, based on level of funding provided.

Research Capabilities and Staff

The JCC Association and JESNA will build upon their existing research capacities, the JCC Association/Florence G. Heller Research Center and JESNA's Department of Research to create the North American Jewish Education Data Bank. Their respective Directors of Research, Dr. Edward Kagen and Dr. Leora W. Isaacs, will be the co-directors of the project and will staff the initial research and development phase. Additional staff (e.g., a project manager) will be added in later phases of implementation, as needed.

Timetable and Activities in Phase I: Research and Development

The activities proposed for Phase I of this project are based on a four month timetable, assuming 20% FTE devoted to the project by each of the Co-directors.

Month 1-2 In consultation with CIJE staff and advisors and professional staffs of JCC Association and JESNA, identify key informants among potential data bank users (*e.g.*, federation planners, selected heads of national agencies/denominational educational bodies and staffs, heads of community educational agencies, academics, key professional and lay leaders from local formal and informal educational institutions including JCC Executive Directors, Committee Chairs, Early Childhood Directors and Camp Directors).

Conduct series of consultations with key informants from various groups of potential data bank users (by phone or in contexts where they regularly meet, *e.g.*, CJF Quarterly, professional meetings) to inventory and prioritize their data and information needs and desires.

Summarize findings and prepare interim report on potential users' needs.

Month 2-3 Collect and review descriptions of existing comparable data banks and clearinghouses

Consult individually with experts on potential models, technologies and costs for data bank.

Prepare draft blueprint for establishment of North American Jewish Education Data Bank, including options for varying levels of support.

Month 3-4 Convene professional advisory group of experts on establishment and administration of data banks and informational clearinghouses for one day consultation to critique blueprint.

Revise and submit proposal for North American Jewish Education Data Bank to CIJE Senior Policy Advisors and Board.

NOTES

1. The decentralized nature of Jewish education makes it very difficult for planners and decision-makers to get an accurate picture of the functioning and effectiveness of Jewish educational institutions. There is not enough reliable and valid descriptive data about the following aspects of the Jewish educational enterprise in North America:

- formal and informal educational institutions and settings
- participants
- educators
- economics and finances
- learning programs and curricula
- materials and resources
- evaluation and assessment (qualitative and quantitative)

2. For example, censuses of Jewish schools have been conducted by the Hebrew University's Institute of Contemporary Jewry and JESNA. These surveys have collected information from the perspective of Jewish formal education "providers" on their enrollment and faculty, their nature and ideological orientation. Many central agencies for Jewish education conduct annual or biennial local censuses of Jewish education in their local communities. Community studies and needs assessments of Jewish education conducted by JESNA in many communities have included descriptive components.

The Florence G. Heller - JCC Association Research Center has conducted a number of studies which considered the JCC as an instrument of Jewish Education including the following: 1) *Reaching the Unaffiliated: An Evaluation Study of Project Connect* which considered a program of outreach at the 92nd Street Y; 2) *Enhancing Jewish Education and Content at JCCs* which is a report on the Scholar-in-Residence program at the JCC on the Palisades; 3) *The Jewish Day Camp as an Educational Setting* which involved a pilot study of informal Jewish education in four camps and a subsequent follow-up in seven camps.

The National Jewish Population Study and demographic studies of Jewish communities across the country have collected data directly from representative samples of American Jews. These studies not only provide estimates of the total Jewish population in various areas and age groups, but also report current, past and projected enrollment and participation in formal and informal programs from the perspective of Jewish education "consumers."

A Time To Act

עת לעשות

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

The Report of the
Commission on Jewish Education
in North America

November 1990

Heshvan 5751

Convened by the Mandel Associated
Foundations, JCC Association, and JESNA
in Collaboration with CJF



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Jewish community of North America is facing a crisis of major proportions. Large numbers of Jews 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. This has grave implications, not only for the richness of Jewish life, but for the very continuity of a large segment of the Jewish people. Over the last several decades, intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews has risen dramatically, and a major proportion of children of such marriages no longer identify themselves as Jews.

It is clear that there is a core of deeply committed Jews whose very way of life ensures meaningful Jewish continuity from generation to generation. However, there is a much larger segment of the Jewish population which is finding it increasingly difficult to define its future in terms of Jewish values and behavior. The responsibility for developing Jewish identity and instilling a commitment to Judaism for this population now rests primarily with education.

The Jews of North America have built an extensive and diverse system of education that takes place in many formal and informal settings. Outstanding educators who are excellent teachers and role models for young people and adults can be found throughout North America in classrooms and community centers, on educational trips to Israel, and in summer camps. However, the system of Jewish education is plagued by many problems, and because of its inadequacies it is failing to engage the

minds of a critical segment of the Jewish population who have no other way of experiencing the beauty and richness of Jewish life.

Careful study of the current state of Jewish education reveals that much of the system, in its various forms and settings, is beset by these problems — sporadic participation; deficiencies in educational content; an underdeveloped profession of Jewish education; inadequate community support; the absence of a research function to monitor results, allocate resources, and plan improvements.

Recent developments throughout the continent indicate that a climate exists today for bringing about major improvements. However, a massive program will have to be undertaken in order to revitalize Jewish education so that it is capable of performing a pivotal role in the meaningful continuity of the Jewish people. It was to achieve this goal that the Commission on Jewish Education in North America was established.

After analyzing the problems, the Commission decided to focus its effort on the two building blocks upon which the entire system rests — developing the profession of Jewish education and mobilizing community support to meet the needs and goals of Jewish education. In order to secure these essential building blocks, a blueprint for the future consisting of a series of concrete steps was worked out by the Commission. The plan includes both short- and long-range elements, and implementation can begin immediately with initial funding already provided.

The core of the Commission's plan is to infuse Jewish education with a new vitality by recruiting large numbers of

talented and dedicated educators. These educators need to work in a congenial environment, sustained by a Jewish community that recognizes Jewish education as the most effective means for perpetuating Jewish identity and creating a commitment to Jewish values and behavior.

The plan developed by the Commission includes the following elements:

1. *Building a profession of Jewish education* – By creating a North American infrastructure for recruiting and training increasing numbers of qualified personnel; expanding the faculties and facilities of training institutions; intensifying on-the-job training programs; raising salaries and benefits of educational personnel; developing new career track opportunities; and increasing the empowerment of educators.
2. *Mobilizing community support* – By recruiting top community leaders to the cause of Jewish education; raising Jewish education to the top of the communal agenda; creating a positive environment for effective Jewish education; and providing substantially increased funding from federations, private foundations, and other sources.
3. *Establishing three to five Lead Communities* – To function as local laboratories for Jewish education; to determine the educational practices and policies that work best; to redesign and improve Jewish education through a wide array of intensive programs; to demonstrate what can happen when there is an infusion of outstanding personnel into the educational system, with a high level of community support and with the necessary funding.

4. *Developing a research capability* – By drawing up a comprehensive research agenda for Jewish education; creating the theoretical and practical knowledge base needed to monitor results and make informed decisions; conducting ongoing studies on the state of Jewish education in general, and on the progress of each component of the Commission's plan.

5. *Creating the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education* – A new entity that will operate as a catalytic agent, working mainly through the efforts of others to ensure the implementation of the Commission's plan; helping to secure necessary funding; overseeing the establishment of Lead Communities; coordinating research activities; providing a setting in which creative people, institutions, organizations, and foundations can work together to develop new undertakings in Jewish education; and helping to replicate the successful experiences in Lead Communities throughout North America.

The Commission is confident that its blueprint is realistic and feasible, and will indeed provide the foundation for a new era in Jewish education. An enormous investment of resources and energies will be required to bring this about, but the Commission is convinced that the will is there and the time to act is now.

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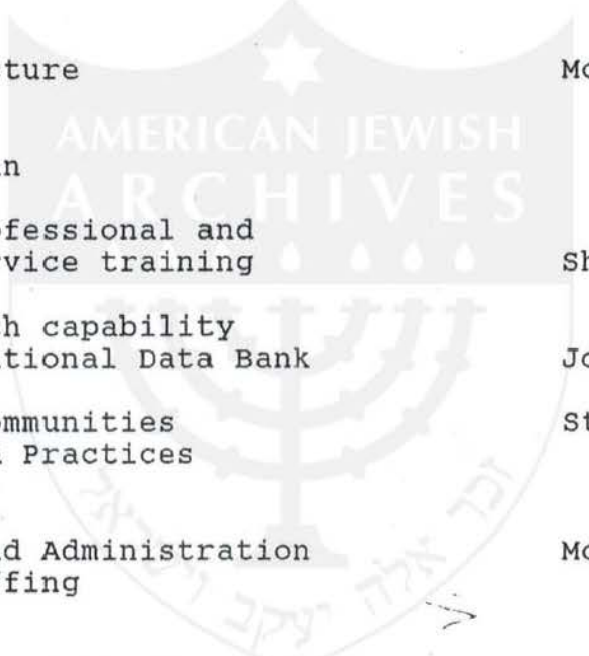
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Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education

Board of Directors

April 9, 1991
Noon - 4:15 p.m.

AGENDA

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|--|------------------|
| I. Welcome and Introductions | Morton Mandel |
| II. CIJE Structure | Morton Mandel |
| III. Action Plan | |
| A. Pre-professional and
In-service training | Shulamith Elster |
| B. Research capability
and National Data Bank | Jonathan Woocher |
| C. Lead Communities
Good Practices | Stephen Hoffman |
| IV. Finance and Administration
Staffing | Morton Mandel |
| V. Foundation Community Contacts
and Issues | Stephen Hoffman |
| VI. Concluding Comments | Norman Lamm |