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MINUTES

COUNCIL FOR INITIATIVES IN JEWISH EDUCATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

August 25, 1992

10:00 A.M.-3:30 P.M.

UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies
New York, NY

Attendance:

Board Members:	David Arnow, Mandell Berman, Charles Bronfman, Gerald Cohen, John Colman, Alfred Gottschalk, Neil Greenbaum, Thomas Hausdorff, David Hirschhorn, Mark Lainer, Norman Lamm, Morton Mandel, Melvin Merians, Charles Ratner, Esther Leah Ritz, Richard Scheuer, Isadore Twersky, Bennett Yanowitz
Policy Advisors Consultants, and Staff:	Shulamith Elster, Seymour Fox, Ellen Goldring, Annette Hochstein, Stephen Hoffman, Barry Holtz, Stanley Horowitz, Martin Kraar, Virginia Levi, Arthur Naparstek, Arthur Rotman, Jo Ann Schaffer, Jacob Ukeles, Jonathan Woocher, Henry Zucker

I. Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Mr. Mandel called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed participants to the fourth meeting of the CIJE Board. He reviewed the Agenda and then introduced first-time attendees Dr. Ellen Goldring, a CIJE staff member, and Jo Ann Schaffer, Assistant to Art Rotman.

II. Introduction of CIJE Executive Director

Mr. Mandel prefaced his remarks by saying that in seeking an Executive Director for CIJE, the Search Committee confirmed the need for the American Jewish community to cultivate professional talent. The Committee was therefore especially pleased that Art Rotman agreed to serve as Executive Director of CIJE while retaining his position as Director of the Jewish Community Centers Association. CIJE has entered into a Purchase of Services agreement with JCCA for certain facilities, services and personnel to run the CIJE operation.

Mr. Mandel thanked Stephen Hoffman for serving as the interim Executive Director and noted his pleasure in welcoming Mr. Rotman to his position as the Executive Director of CIJE.

Mr. Rotman said that he had accepted this position because of his own assessment of the enterprise and his desire to play a part in its success. He said that the Purchase of Service agreement would allow him to utilize the expertise of several JCCA executives. Mr. Rotman added that he was excited by the opportunity of working with the kind of people involved in this endeavor.

III. Population Study and Implications

The chair introduced Dr. Norman Lamm, President of Yeshiva University, a member of the Commission, and now a member of the CIJE Board, to give his reactions to the CJF Population Study.

Dr. Lamm noted that the most shocking thing about the fact that out-marriage in the Jewish community in North American is now about 52-53% is that anyone was shocked at all. He laid much of the blame on the diluted Jewish education children now receive.

Dr. Lamm believes that the the full extent and meaning of this catastrophe has still not been absorbed by the Jewish community. He questions the wisdom of communities investing their limited resources in outreach programs to those with a non-Jewish spouse, thus reducing the funds available to educate Jewish children.

Dr. Lamm noted that this problem affects Jewish communities worldwide, including Israel, and the only remedy he sees is in a program of intensive Jewish education. However this loss of Jews to the community will also make it more difficult to financially sustain Jewish education. He urged everyone in the room to "play to your strength and not to your weakness" by focusing away from marginal Jews and on those of more serious commitment. Dr. Lamm added that this Board "is the best and greatest hope for a new infusion of leadership, ideas, resources, and moral support" for the Jewish educational system.

IV. Lead Communities at Work

Mr. Mandel stated that the Lead Communities Project may be a key factor in the success of American Jewish continuity and education. He noted that this is a high risk and expensive enterprise, but has the potential to improve the situation substantially.

Mr. Mandel called on Mrs. Annette Hochstein, a consultant to the CIJE who has helped design the content and shape the general thrust of the Lead Communities Project.

- A. Mrs. Hochstein reviewed the five recommendations of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America: (1) to establish the CIJE, which has been done; (2) to build the profession of Jewish education -- four major grants have already been awarded to improve training opportunities for Jewish education; (3) to mobilize community support -- the number of Jewish community leaders with Jewish education as a top priority is growing, but more needs to be done; (4) to develop a research capability -- background work has begun in this area; and (5) to establish the Lead Communities Project, to be discussed at this meeting.

The nine candidates for Lead Communities were: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Columbus, MetroWest, Milwaukee, Oakland, Ottawa and Palm Beach.

The Lead Community process will engage an entire community in major efforts to develop and improve programs in Jewish education. The purpose is to demonstrate what can be accomplished with an infusion of outstanding personnel, the recognition by the community and its leadership of the importance of Jewish education, and the commitment of the necessary resources to meet additional needs.

The Lead Community project will be characterized by the content, scope and quality of the endeavor. Each community will emphasize two basic elements: building the profession of

Jewish education to meet the shortage of qualified Jewish educators, and mobilizing community support. In addition, each will articulate their visions and goals.

It is envisioned that the Lead Community will hire 2-3 outstanding educators to energize its education workforce. The community will also develop intensive in-service training programs for its educators. It is expected that within 5 years virtually all educators in the community will be participating in on-going in-service training, that new forms of recruitment will be developed, and that the terms of employment (salaries and benefits) will be improved. In addition, there is a need for leadership to be engaged in and knowledgeable about Jewish education. Each Lead Community should have one or more leaders who would ensure that Jewish education is a priority. There should be increased funding for Jewish education in the community; an on-going public debate regarding goals and visions; and a wall-to-wall coalition of key lay leaders, rabbis, and educators.

A Lead Community must also be characterized by the scope of its endeavor: most institutions in the community dealing with Jewish education will be involved in the Project which should touch the lives of most members of the community.

CIJE has initiated two projects to help ensuring the quality of work in Lead Communities. To discuss the first of these projects, Mrs. Hochstein introduced Dr. Barry Holtz, the Director of the Melton Center for Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, who has been directing the Best Practices Project for the past year.

B. Best Practices Project

Dr. Holtz explained that the aim of the Best Practices Project is to create an inventory of best practices in contemporary Jewish education to provide Lead Communities with examples of excellence and models which they can adapt and implement. A secondary mission of the Project is to create a knowledge base about North American Jewish education which will be of use to Jewish educators throughout the U.S. and Canada.

The Project began by determining the areas of Jewish education on which to focus. A team of experts has been or will be formed in each area to identify successful programs, conduct site visits, and prepared written reports.

There are currently four areas being examined:

- Work in the area of supplementary schools, where the majority of children in North America get their Jewish education, is nearing completion. This area is perceived as a particularly weak component of Jewish education.
- An examination of early childhood Jewish education will begin in September. Successful programs will be those that result in a high proportion of children that go on to other forms of Jewish education.
- The third area is the Israel experience. The work of the CRB Foundation in this area will serve as the basis for recommendations.
- The fourth area of study will be the JCC world. The JCC Association will help to identify outstanding Jewish educational programming in the Jewish Community Center world.

For 1992-93 four new areas will be studied: the day school, the college campus, summer camps, and adult Jewish education.

Implementation of examples of Best Practices remains to be designed. The Lead Communities will learn about a new project by visiting it, by bringing the people from that project into the community, and by creating seminars for its educators so they can learn how to adapt that example to their community.

Dr. Holtz noted that the team remains open to what he calls the "Department of Dreams" -- innovative ideas in Jewish education that have not yet been implemented and which may inspire Lead Communities to move in new directions in Jewish education.

C. Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback Project

Mrs. Hochstein continued, stating that in order to gauge the impact and effectiveness of programs, the CIJE has hired Dr. Adam Gamoran of the University of Wisconsin to head its project for monitoring, evaluating and providing feedback in the Lead Communities.

Three field researchers have been hired to perform this function. The researchers will collect and analyze data and offer it to community leaders and practitioners for their immediate consideration. The purpose is to improve and correct implementation while the work is going on so that, when needed, change can occur immediately.

In addition, we will be evaluating progress and assessing the impact, effectiveness, and replicability of programs. Lead Communities as a concept for systemic change will also be studied. The resulting data base will be used to assess the state of Jewish education in North America. This work may result in a periodical on "the State of Jewish Education" as suggested by the Commission.

During 1992-93 the researchers will focus on three questions:

- (1) What visions for change in Jewish education are currently held by members of the community?
- (2) To what extent is the community mobilized, not only in terms of leadership, but financially as well.
- (3) What is the professional life of educators in the community like?

In addition, during the first year the Lead Communities will be asked to undertake a "self-study" which will help determine the next steps for implementation.

The Lead Communities will be invited to form a local committee to serve as the locus of responsibility for the implementation of the Project. The role of the Lead Community Committee will be to convene all leaders, educators, rabbis, and institutions in the community and invite them to join in the decision making, planning, and implementation of the Project. During the first year it is expected that the local committee will prepare a one year plan for 1992-93, undertake a self-study, begin to develop pilot programs, and draw up a five-year implementation plan. The Committee will manage the process of implementation by coordinating the efforts of various agencies, by initiating programs and efforts where required, and by facilitating improvement where necessary.

V. Lead Communities Selection

Mr. Mandel explained that Chuck Ratner had been asked to chair the Lead Communities Selection Committee. He praised Mr. Ratner as an exceptional Chair who brought to this task not only a fine, clear mind, but also a Jewish heart.

Mr. Ratner stated that the 57 communities invited to participate in the Project represented 3.5 million of the 5.5 million Jews in the United States. Twenty-three responded within a very short time frame with proposals of exceptionally high quality.

Mr. Ratner expressed pleasure in working with the committee, comprised of Charles Bronfman, John Colman, Tim Hausdorff, David Hirschhorn, Mark Lainer, Mort Mandel, Mel Merians and Lester Pollack, and with staff support from Steve Hoffman, Shulamith Elster, Art Rotman, Jack Ukeles, and Jim Meier. He noted that the process was as honest as any he'd been involved with; it was certainly fair; and very tough -- for the communities as well as for the Committee.

Mr. Ratner then introduced Dr. Jacob Ukeles to explain the process of selection.

Dr. Ukeles reported that 57 communities received program guidelines; 34 participated in a national satellite teleconference, and 23 submitted proposals. Each proposal was reviewed by two four-person panels. An overall rating and a composite score was agreed upon for each proposal and the results were submitted to the Lead Communities Selection Committee.

The finalist communities were Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Columbus, MetroWest, Milwaukee, Oakland, Ottawa and Palm Beach County.

Prior to the final selection of the Lead Communities, site visits were conducted by Board members, professionals and staff members. The finalists were asked additional questions based on gaps in their preliminary proposals. Levels of participation in educational programs, information on campaign results, and spending on Jewish education were reviewed as clues to the level of financial commitment and capacity. Leadership, financial resources, program, planning, and institutional human resources were considered in determining whether a candidate might be successful as a Lead Community.

There were two important, unanticipated by-products of this process: (1) the site visits increased the understanding and enthusiasm for the Lead Communities Project across the continent; and (2) the site visits themselves acted as catalysts in many communities to advance the commitment to local initiatives for excellence in Jewish education. Communities reported that these visits helped local advocates for Jewish education focus attention, generate excitement and heighten community interest in Jewish education.

Board member John Colman was asked to describe his site visit to Milwaukee.

He reported that he, Shulamith Elster, and Sol Greenfield of the JCC Association had visited Milwaukee looking for symptoms of strengths and weakness in the community. They were conscious of the fact that they were dealing with first impressions and were aware of the importance of putting the community's presentation in perspective.

Following the site visit they evaluated their impressions and summarized them for the Committee.

Mr. Ratner spoke about the most significant tension with which Committee members had to contend: the issue of picking communities that would have the best chance to succeed vs. those

communities with the greatest need. It was decided that the priority was to pick the three communities that were most likely to succeed.

The Committee recommended that Baltimore, Atlanta, and Milwaukee be invited to become Lead Communities. Each is involved in building the profession and each has brought new talent to the community in the very recent past; each has mobilized community support and demonstrated leadership on both the lay and professional levels; and, each has a vision and articulated goals.

The Committee also recommended that the three communities be asked to enter into a formal letter of understanding with CIJE which would clarify the roles of each in the partnership.

Before the final vote was taken, Mr. Mandel stressed that the decision is not final between the CIJE and Atlanta, Baltimore, and Milwaukee until both sides are satisfied on details. The recommendation that Baltimore, Atlanta and Milwaukee be invited to join CIJE in the Lead Communities Project was passed unanimously.

In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that the Board consider at some future date the growing suburbanization or small town movement within the Jewish community. There are increasing numbers of communities too small to maintain a rabbi and a congregation. The JCC Association's lay leadership model for military communities might be used for such a purpose.

VI. Concluding Comments

The meeting ended with the thoughtful concluding comments of Mandell Berman, past President of the CJF and JESNA.

Mr. Berman spoke about his involvement in Jewish education which began in the 1950s. He noted that at that time there was very little commitment among lay leaders to Jewish education. He admitted that four years ago when it was decided to form a commission to study issues affecting Jewish education and recommend new directions, he was skeptical. However, he would be leaving this meeting with his skepticism dissipated. He had watched the process; watched as leaders from around the Jewish community were sensitized to the issues. Mr. Berman noted that this is only a beginning, but he was enthusiastic. He felt that this group was committed to making a difference.. "For that, Mort, I thank you."