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Letter of Understanding. Atlanta, Ga., 1992.

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COUNCIL FOR INITIATIVES IN JEWISH EDUCATION

LEAD COMMUNITIES PROJECT · Mailing Address · 163 Third Avenue #128 · New York, NY 10003
tel: (212) 532-1961 · fax: (212) 213-4078

MEMORANDUM

To: David Sarnat
From: Art Rotman
Date: October 21, 1992
Re: Letter of Understanding

Enclosed is a draft of the Letter of Understanding covering the mutual expectations of CIJE and Atlanta for participation in the Lead Communities Project. The draft incorporates suggestions made at the meeting in Atlanta with Shulamith Elster and Jack Ukeles.

Please note that on page one we have left room for you to insert a rationale statement that is specific to your community. We want you to be comfortable with this document, so feel free to edit it as needed.

If there are minor changes that you would like to make, please mark up the draft and send it back to me by fax.

If you have significant concerns with the document, I am available to come to Atlanta in early November to discuss the Letter of Understanding in more depth. Let me know as soon as possible, so that we can coordinate calendars.

If there are no substantive changes, then you should proceed with your own professional and lay review process. We would like to hold a formal signing ceremony in Atlanta before the end of the calendar year.

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October 21, 1992

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING

Dear Mr. Sarnat;

I am writing to confirm that the Jewish community of Atlanta and the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE) have agreed to participate in a joint local-continental collaboration for excellence in Jewish education, called the Lead Communities Project.

The Commission on Jewish Education in North America (COJENA) found that the best way to generate positive change at the continental scale is to mobilize the commitment and energy of local communities to Jewish continuity, and recommended the creation of lead communities.

The lead community is expected "to function as a local laboratory 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, 5}

The Jewish community of Atlanta has established a Council for Jewish Continuity. The community views the Lead Communities Project as an opportunity to

.....

This letter is a summary of discussions between the Council for Initiatives on Jewish Education (CIJE), and the Atlanta Jewish Federation. Its purpose is to clarify our mutual expectations with regard to the implementation of the Lead Communities Project in Atlanta.

⁴ A Time to Act (University Press of America, Lanham, Md., 1990), p. 17; see also pp. 67 - 69.

⁵ See also Lead Communities: Program Guidelines (January, 1992) pp. 7-11.

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This letter covers the three year period from Sept 1, 1992 through August 31, 1995.

1992-93 is the Planning Year (see below)
1993-94 is the first Action Year
1994-95 is the second Action Year

During 1992-93, the Jewish community of Atlanta with the advice and assistance of CIJE, will prepare a five year plan for improving Jewish education. The plan will include: a needs assessment, mission or vision statement(s), program priorities, and a strategy for financial and human resource development. The plan will build on the work of the Council for Jewish Continuity and incorporate appropriate elements of work already completed. The community by February 1, 1992 will prepare an outline of the 5 year plan identifying the major topics to be covered, preliminary findings, program ideas and tentative conclusions.

Along with the five year plan, the community will also prepare an Action Program for 1993-94 which will include the schedule of the specific improvements to be undertaken; and the costs and revenues associated with each specific improvement effort.⁶

The plan and the action program will be completed by May 31, 1992.

During 1993-94, the community will carry out the implementation of the first year's Action Program and prepare an Action Program for 1994-95.

During 1994-95, the community will carry out the implementation of the second year's Action Program and prepare an Action Program for 1995-96.

In support of these efforts, CIJE agrees to:

- Offer models of successful programs and experience through the Best Practices Project. Best practices will be identified in a variety of areas, including: Supplementary Education, Early Childhood Education, JCC programs; Israel Experience; Day School; Campus Programs; Camping; & Adult Education. Information on all areas will be made available between October, 1992 and the end of May, 1993. The lead community will adapt and introduce these models in the light of local needs and interests during the Action Years of the project, with the advice of CIJE.
- Provide technical assistance in planning and educational development. The community will have access to assistance from a roster of experts provided by CIJE at no cost to the community.

⁶ See Appendix A for a brief description of some of the possible areas of content of a Lead Communities Plan.

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- Introduce potential funders to the community -- including continental foundations interested in specific project areas.
- Negotiate with foundations, organizations, and providers of programs -- training institutions, JCCA and JESNA -- to define the nature of their involvement and their contribution to Lead Communities.
- Provide a monitoring, evaluation and feedback system to serve both the Lead Community and CIJE.
- Convene lead community leadership for periodic meetings on common concerns.

The Lead Community agrees to:

- Establish a Lead Community Committee to direct the project. The Committee will be made up of top community leadership representing all elements of the community -- Federation, congregations, institutions involved in formal and informal education, and the full spectrum of religious movements represented in the community. The Committee will be chaired by
- Provide opportunities (such as town meetings or subcommittees) for stakeholders from all sectors of the community to meaningfully participate in the planning process -- including consumers of Jewish education, (e.g. parents and students), educators, board members and Rabbis.
- Appoint a Lead Communities Planning Director to staff the Lead Communities Committee and to coordinate the work of educational and planning professional resources in the community on the Plan. Senior professionals in the community (e.g. the Planning Director of Federation and the Director of the BJE) are expected to be fully involved in the process.
- Prepare a five-year plan, and annual action programs (as described above).
- Appoint a Lead Communities Director to direct the Action Program for 1993-94 onward.
- Integrate the findings of the Best Practices Program appropriate to the Lead Community. (as discussed above).
- Identify and begin one or more experimental programs within the first year.
- Build the profession of Jewish education, and thereby address the shortage of qualified personnel.

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- Mobilize community support to the cause of Jewish education.
- Significantly expand the communal resources committed to Jewish education. Based on one community's experience in implementing the recommendations of its Commission on Jewish Continuity, "significant expansion" should result in at least a 40% increase in communal resources for Jewish education by the third year action program. Communal resources include regular allocations, endowment funds, local foundation grants, and other sources of local funds.
- Collaborate with CIJE on the monitoring, evaluation and feedback system, and utilize the results.
- Work with CIJE to disseminate the results of their experience to other communities.

During the summer of 1993 and the summer of 1994, the work of the preceding year will be reviewed by the partners. This Agreement may be terminated at the end of one of these reviews if it appears to either partner that the other has failed to perform in relation to this agreement.

CIJE

Federation

By: _____

By: _____

Title:

Title:

Date: _____

Date: _____

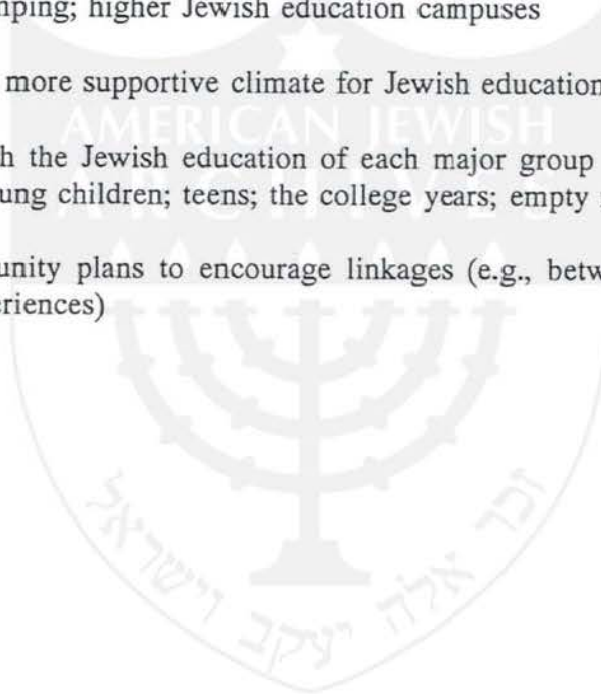
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(ILLUSTRATIVE)

APPENDIX: TOPICS LIKELY TO BE ADDRESSED BY A LEAD COMMUNITIES PLAN

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- How the community plans to approach major improvements in educational personnel (e.g., in-service education for all educators)
- What improvements are envisioned for each major setting within which Jewish education takes place: congregations and supplementary schools; JCC's, Israel experience; Day schools; and camping; higher Jewish education campuses
- How to create a more supportive climate for Jewish education
- How to approach the Jewish education of each major group in the life cycle: singles; families with young children; teens; the college years; empty nesters; older people
- How the community plans to encourage linkages (e.g., between formal and informal educational experiences)



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Phone: (212) 532-1961 • Fax: (212) 213-4078

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November 17, 1992

Mr. David I. Sarnat
Executive Director
Atlanta Jewish Federation
1753 Peachtree Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30309

Dear David:

We at CIJE were delighted at the response of the Atlanta community to the Lead Communities Project at the GA last week.

We are eager to move forward on the Letter of Understanding. I have asked Jack Ukeles to work with Steve Gelfand to move us towards closure on the document. He will be hearing from Jack this week.

It was good to see you last week and I am looking forward to working with you on the Lead Communities Project.

Sincerely,



Art Rotman