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"Guidelines for Meeting with Board Members", July 1992.

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June 24, 1992

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**CIJE -- Guidelines for Meeting with Board Members**

July 1992

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Every board member of the CIJE should be interviewed -- preferably in face-to-face interviews, by an appropriate staff member or senior consultant, before and after each board meeting of the CIJE.

In keeping with the culture developed in the course of the Commission on Jewish Education, the purpose of these meetings is to engage board members in the work of the CIJE, elicit their points of view, and learn from them as to our present work and future directions. We want to invite board members to participate in decisions and to shape the institution and its work, as their own.

This is of particular importance at the present time, because the scope of our endeavors depends partly on whether the CIJE becomes an important tool of the North American Jewish community for Jewish education, rather than belonging to a specific foundation and/or constituency. It is our conviction that only if it is widely owned and perceived as non-partisan, will the CIJE be able to muster the resources needed for its work, and achieve its full potential as catalyst for the improvement of Jewish education.

Therefore board members need to be engaged to know that they share in decisionmaking and to realize that the CIJE can serve as an independent instrument with an agenda they want, own, shape and endorse. This is probably a pre-requisite for the success of future funding requests too.

Thus our primary purpose in these interviews is to set the basis for the role of the CIJE.

**2. SETTING**

We have learned from past experience that the most effective setting for the interview was the home town of the interviewee, at the place of their choice. Interviews usually last 1-2 hours. Telephone interviews are poor seconds as regards the effectiveness of the interview, except where a good working relationship between interviewer and interviewee has already been established. Therefore, every effort should be made to meet personally with the principal board members.

### 3. THE CURRENT INTERVIEW

We should expect board members to be largely unaware of progress. The interview should therefore aim at the following:

- a. Update the board member so they know what is currently happening.
- b. Elicit their opinion as regards the selection of the three lead communities.
- c. Discuss with them the role of the CIJE with the lead communities.
- d. Ask for their input as to how this should be organized, brought about.

### 4. Update

You may want to remind board members about the last board meeting, bring them on board as regards progress with lead communities principally. The following reference points may be useful:

- a. Remind them of the general concept of lead communities (see Exhibit 1, paper of July 1991 -- for interviewer only).
- b. The recruitment process (have application booklet available).
- c. The success of the response: out of 57 eligible communities, 40 participated in the satellite video conference; 23 applied! Note if the interviewee's community has applied, and if yes what their status is -- finalist or not -- and why. (Exhibit 2)
- d. The selection process: a lead communities committee was set up. Its members are: Chuck Ratner (Chair), Charles Bronfman, Tim Hausedorf, David Hirshhorn, Mark Lainer, Melvin Merrians, Lester Pollack. The panels of educators (Exhibit 3); the rationale for choosing finalists. You may want to give them the list of finalists (Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Columbus, Metro West, Milwaukee, Oakland, Ottawa, Palm Beach). (Exhibit 4).

At this point you may want to discuss the second phase of the selection process and elicit opinions and points of view as regards the three lead communities. Tell the board member about the site visits and about the criteria we have applied so far (Exhibit 5 -- Letter to members of the Lead Communities Board Committee).

CJE, will involve the implementation of an action plan in the areas of building the profession of Jewish education, mobilizing community support and in programmatic areas such as day-schools or Israel experience programs. It will be carefully monitored and evaluated, and feedback will be provided on an ongoing basis.

Several Lead Communities will be established. Communities selected for the program will be presented with a menu of projects for the improvement of Jewish education. This menu, prepared by the staff of the CJE, will include required programs (e.g., universal in-service education; recruiting and involving top lay leadership; maximum use of best practices) as well as optional programs (e.g., innovation and experimentation in programmatic areas such as day schools, supplementary schools; summer camps; community center programs; Israel experience programs). Each LC will prepare and undertake the implementation of a program most suited to meet its needs and resources, and likely to have a major impact on the scope and quality of Jewish education provided. Each community will negotiate an agreement with the CJE, which will specify the programs and projects to be carried out by the community, their goals, anticipated outcomes, and the additional resources that will be made available. Terms for insuring the standards and scope of the plan will also be spelled out. The agreement will specify the support communities will receive from the CJE. A key element in the LC plan is the centrality of on-going evaluation of each project and of the whole plan.

Through the LCs, the CJE hopes to implement a large number of experiments in diverse communities. Each community will make significant choices, while they are being carefully guided and assisted. The data collection and analysis effort will be aimed at determining which programs and combination of programs are more successful, and which need modification. The more successful programs will be offered for replication in additional communities, while others may be adapted or dropped.

This conception of Lead Communities is based on the following conceptions:

- a. **Gradual Change:** A long-term project is being undertaken. Change will be gradual and take place over a period of time.
- b. **Local Initiative:** The initiative for establishing LCs will come from the local community. The plan must be locally developed and supported. The key stakeholders must be committed to the endeavor. A local planning mechanism (committee) will play the major role in generating ideas, designing programs and implementing them. With the help of the CJE, it will be possible for local and national forces to work together in designing and field-testing solutions to the problems of Jewish education.
- c. **The CJE's Role:** Facilitating implementation and ensuring continental input. The CJE, through its staff and consultants will make a critical contribution to the development of Lead Communities. (See Item 2a below.)
- d. **Community and Personnel:** Meaningful change requires that those elements most critical to improvement be addressed. The Commission has called these "the building blocks of Jewish education" or "enabling options." It decided that without community support for Jewish education and dealing with the shortage of qualified personnel, no systemic change is likely to occur. All LCs will therefore, deal with these elements. The bulk of the thinking, planning, and resources will go to addressing them.

## 5. The Role of the CIJE

The question of what lead communities will do and what the CIJE will offer them as support should be discussed (Exhibit 6): the CIJE will:

-- Content and quality: offer professional assistance (experts will go to lead communities as consultants): ensure the quality of the work by virtue of the best practices and monitoring, evaluation and feedback projects.

-- Resource coordination: build bridges between lead communities and our partners, JESNA, JCCA and CJF; between communities and foundations, on specific programs. It may be useful to point that lead communities will be expected to engage in the improvement of their major educational settings: day schools, supplementary schools, JCCs, adult education or early childhood, and the use of Israel as an educational resource. Additional areas of specific interest to communities are likely to be added, however the key areas will certainly be addressed. Links will be provided to purveyors of programs such as the training institutions, CLAL, CAJE and others in North America and in Israel.

We may want to explain the link to foundations by virtue of specific programmatic interests. For example, the Melton Foundation for adult education programs (the mini-school); the Bronfman Foundation for youth trips to Israel; the Cummings Foundation for Best Practices, etc.

Funding Facilitation: [prior to this interview the CIJE should take a decision concerning seed money for Lead Communities.] In the interview it will be important to indicate that seed money will serve the role of challenge grant. This together with community increases in allocations to education will provide a substantial amount of funds for the work to be undertaken. In addition the CIJE will assist in building bridges to additional

Communications and the dissemination of lessons learned in Lead Communities to other communities across the continent will be the way to widen the impact beyond the model communities.

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It is important to remind the interviewee of the upcoming Board Meeting -- August 25, New York City -- and to ascertain participation. The Board Committee's recommendation on the 3 Lead Communities will be discussed and decided upon.

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In your report to Ginny on the interview it would be useful if you could indicate how this interview might affect the agenda for the August Board meeting.