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JESNA



JEWISH EDUCATION
SERVICE OF
NORTH AMERICA, INC.

החברה למען החינוך היהודי
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CM
April 7, 1994

cc: ADH
JESNA
[Signature]

Morton L. Mandel
Premier Industrial Corporation
4500 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44103

Dear Mort:

I'm looking forward to seeing you in two weeks at the CIJE meetings. I hope as well that it will be possible for us to meet directly in the not-too-distant future. In the meantime, I want to invite your comments on the enclosed draft proposal for JESNA to undertake some intensive follow-up planning to our Strategic Plan in the area of professional recruitment and education. Your personal involvement and expertise in this area, as well as the key role of CIJE and the support you've provided over the years to a number of our programs, make your input especially important to our leadership as we begin to define JESNA's long-term program for implementing the objectives articulated in our Strategic Plan.

As you'll note in the description of our current initiatives, we've come a long way in a relatively short period of time, from only the most rudimentary efforts to a full set of serious, and apparently successful, programs. The question the agency is facing is: where do we go from here? What should JESNA's long-term role be, and how can we put together the programs, staffing, and funding to fulfill that role effectively? We recognize the need for a careful planning process, and I'd welcome your ideas both with regard to possible directions and the process itself. In particular, I'd like your thoughts about how best to coordinate our efforts with those of CIJE.

I do hope that we can schedule a chance to meet to discuss this and other items. I have a call into your office to try to find out if you have any time to sit together during an upcoming trip.

I'm also enclosing for your interest the latest copy of *JESNA Update*.

With my best wishes.

Cordially,

Billie

Billie Gold

cc.: Jonathan Woocher

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR JEWISH EDUCATION: DEFINING JESNA'S ROLE IN MEETING THE CURRENT CHALLENGE

A Time to Act, the Report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, documented the scope and severity of the shortage of talented, qualified personnel that affects every aspect of Jewish education today. JESNA cannot respond to the full range of these needs, but it can play a critical role in addressing one particularly acute problem: the dearth of outstanding individuals to fill educational leadership positions, especially in communal settings.

The importance of having knowledgeable, skilled, committed professionals serving as directors and staff members of central agencies for Jewish education, as education planners in federations, and as leaders of community schools is magnified by the impact these individuals have on others in the educational system. They are (or should be) sources of system-wide leadership, catalysts for change, local repositories of expertise about how to make Jewish education work better. Individuals in these positions have the potential to reach key lay leaders, to build coalitions across denominational lines, and to create a community climate supportive of educational innovation and higher standards. To succeed in this work, however, requires a special perspective and a multitude of skills that go beyond pedagogy or administration.

Despite the importance of developing top-flight communal educational leadership, there are no programs today that provide the focused recruitment and training needed to increase the numbers and elevate the quality of these professionals. Each year, JESNA is asked to help fill such positions in both large and smaller communities for which qualified candidates are simply unavailable. When these positions are occupied by individuals without the requisite skills and knowledge, precious opportunities are lost. This is a problem JESNA cannot ignore.

THE FIRST GENERATION OF PROGRAMS

In fact, concern for developing communal educational leadership is not new for JESNA. In the 1970s, in the afterglow of the first efflorescence of federation concern for Jewish identity and education, JESNA's predecessor agency, the AAJE, was charged with implementing two leadership development programs: FIJEL, Fellowships in Jewish Educational Leadership, designed to encourage and support promising individuals to undertake training to become Jewish educators; and ATP, the Administrators Training Program, aimed at providing advanced academic training to especially talented educators already in the field to prepare them to become educational administrators, especially in bureaus of Jewish education.

The concepts behind these programs were sound, and many of those who participated in them remain in leadership positions today (including several on the staff of JESNA). But by

the mid-1980s it had become clear that the special financial support required to operate these programs (promised by the federations) had declined to the point where they were no longer viable, and the programs faded from the scene. For several years, as JESNA regrouped organizationally, its human resource development activities consisted only of occasional regional and local conferences or workshops for professionals, coupled with ongoing administration of placement and licensing activities.

NEW INITIATIVES

Clearly, this level of activity was and is unacceptable in light of the acute need for qualified senior personnel. The question facing JESNA has been how to reinvigorate its efforts in this human resources development arena.

JESNA's recently completed strategic planning process has provided a critical piece of the answer by reexamining and restating JESNA's role. First, the Strategic Plan unequivocally sets professional development as a high priority for the agency. One of JESNA's primary goals, according to the Plan, is "to increase the numbers and quality of professional educators, especially educational leaders, in North America." Second, the Plan suggests a focus and strategy for achieving this goal: **JESNA should concentrate its efforts on identifying prospective educational leaders at critical stages in their careers, and on ensuring that they have access to high quality training programs that will prepare them to assume and to be successful in key leadership positions.**

Over the past few years, JESNA has taken concrete steps to begin to implement this vision by initiating a series of new programs, funded largely through outside grants:

1. Working together with the Bureau Directors Fellowship and the Jewish Community Day School Network, JESNA has mounted a half dozen professional seminars in Israel for central agency and community day school educators. These seminars have been subvented by a grant from the Joint Program for Jewish Education in Jerusalem and are implemented in cooperation with the Joint Authority for Jewish-Zionist Education.
2. In 1993, following an extensive planning process, JESNA launched an Executive Training Program, in cooperation with the Council of Jewish Federations and Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies. This program, implemented with seed funding from the Wexner Foundation, helps prepare future central agency directors and other community-based educational executives. It combines academic seminars with field observations. A group of six educators is currently participating in the first iteration of the ETP.
3. Another Wexner Foundation grant has enabled JESNA to join with Brandeis University to develop an Institute for in Jewish Educational Leadership for New

Principals of Jewish schools. The first session of the year-long Institute, which focuses on helping the twenty participants selected from a national pool of applicants make a successful transition into positions of institutional leadership, was held in June 1993, with follow-up contacts and a winter seminar held during the year since. A second group of principals will begin the Institute in June 1994.

4. JESNA collaborated with CLAL (the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership) to mount a Jewish Educators Leadership Institute, also held in June 1993, for a select group of central agency personnel, school directors, and other talented educators from throughout North America. The Leadership Institute, funded by a grant to CLAL from the CRB Foundation, sought to prepare these educators to assume more active and effective roles as community leaders in the current efforts to promote Jewish continuity. CLAL is coordinating follow-up activities with 1993 Institute participants. A second institute, with CAJE (the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education) as an additional co-sponsor, will be held in August 1994 in conjunction with the annual CAJE conference.
5. Finally, a second grant from the Joint Program for Jewish Education and gifts from several American donors have enabled JESNA to reach out to potential leaders even earlier, before they have made their career decisions. The Israel Interns for Jewish Education Program is a pioneering effort to encourage North American college students studying in Israel, one of the most promising pools from which to recruit, to become professional Jewish educators. Designed as a two-year program, with the first year in Israel (including a specially-designed course on Jewish education at the Hebrew University, co-curricular activities, and a field internship) and the second in North America (incorporating a supervised field placement, mid-winter seminar, and career guidance), Israel Interns has enrolled nearly fifty students in its two years of operation, with the first cohort completing the program in May 1994.

TOWARD A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

These new programs represent a significant, but tenuous beginning. Although all of the programs are too new to have been fully evaluated at this point, each has clearly met its initial benchmark objectives and the evaluations that have been done of program elements have been overwhelmingly positive. However, each of these programs is currently supported only by short-term grants (or dependent on funding from another organization, as in the CLAL-JESNA-CAJE institute). Thus, their continuation beyond the next year or two is not ensured.

These initiatives also represent only a first step in creating a planful, coordinated program for the future. They address a broad, but selective, set of needs, dictated as much by the availability of funding and partners as by a clear set of priorities. They fill some, but hardly all, of the critical gaps in the recruitment and preparation of educational leadership today.

The challenge JESNA faces today is how to build on its Strategic Plan and the initiatives already launched to meet more fully and over the long-term its responsibilities in the area of professional recruitment, development, and leadership education. Several key questions must be addressed:

1. How should JESNA define (and delimit) its long-term objectives in light of the broad goals of the Strategic Plan and its own unique capabilities and position within the continental system? At least three such objectives suggest themselves for further consideration:
 - a. JESNA should ensure the availability of a range of professional development opportunities for educators (and, today, educational planners as well) working in communal settings. JESNA should -- like its counterpart national agencies, CJF and the JCC Association, in their respective fields -- become the address to which communal educational professionals can turn for programs that will help them grow as professionals and advance in their careers.
 - b. JESNA should, working with a broad range of institutional partners, serve as a catalyst and facilitator for the development of new programs that meet the needs of other important educational leadership cadres (even where its own involvement may not extend beyond the stage of "pilot testing" such programs).
 - c. In its role as a continental planning and coordinating agency, JESNA should be engaged in identifying and finding ways of filling gaps in the overall system for recruiting and training the personnel who can occupy leadership positions in Jewish education well into the future.
2. What specific program and planning activities should be mounted in order to fulfill these (or other validated) objectives? What place should the initiatives currently underway have in JESNA's long-term program plan in professional recruitment and development? What staffing will be needed and what organizational framework within the agency is best suited (e.g., the Center for Educational Leadership Development, suggested in the Strategic Plan) to carry out these activities?
3. How can JESNA fund its professional recruitment and development activities over the long-term? (This includes funding to continue and further develop those current programs which are evaluated as effective and appropriate for JESNA's ongoing involvement.)
4. How can JESNA expand and intensify its partnerships with the many other institutions that share similar objectives and bring vital resources and capabilities to the work of professional recruitment, education, and leadership development? These include: the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE); the academic training institutions and their umbrella, the Association of Institutions of Higher Learning for Jewish Education (AIHLJE); the religious movements; central agencies for Jewish education; Israel-based institutions; other national agencies (such as CJF and the JCC Association); and foundations.

Answering these questions will require a planning process within JESNA, involving its lay leadership and professional staff, as well as input from the agency's constituencies and collegial institutions. We propose that this planning, guided by the questions listed above, be carried out by a sub-committee of the Operational Priorities Committee, beginning in July 1994, with a report to the JESNA Board at its Spring 1995 meeting.



PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE CJF-JESNA-CIJE PARTNERSHIP

Background

The commitment of the federated system and the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) to building Jewish identity and promoting Jewish continuity has grown over the past several decades. Following the 1969 General Assembly in Boston, which first brought these issues to the forefront of the federation movement's consciousness, CJF and numerous federations launched initiatives designed to strengthen Jewish education and identity. Since that time, educational and, more recently, continuity planning and support have become widely-accepted responsibilities of the federated system, both locally and continentally.

In 1981, recognizing the importance of providing local federations and central agencies for Jewish education with high quality guidance and services and the federated system with an effective advocate and planning instrumentality for educational concerns, CJF and the American Association for Jewish Education created a new agency, the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), to fulfill this mission.

Throughout the 1980s, increasing attention was focused worldwide on the serious problems of Jewish education and on new strategies to address these. Several federations initiated new community-wide planning endeavors in the areas of Jewish education, identity, and continuity. In 1988, the Mandel Associated Foundations, together with JESNA and the JCC Association, and in collaboration with CJF, convened the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, under the chairmanship of Morton L. Mandel. The Commission's report, *A Time To Act*, was issued in 1990, and outlined an aggressive plan for radically improving Jewish education in North America. The Commission recommended the creation of a new entity, the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE), to serve as a catalytic agent for the implementation of this plan. CIJE took up this charge and has launched a series of projects, most notably the Lead Communities project, the Goals project, and the Best Practices project, aimed at stimulating and modeling systemic educational reform. CIJE concentrates on the twin building blocks of:

- 1) building the profession of Jewish education; and
- 2) mobilizing community leadership for Jewish continuity.

The release in 1991 of the first reports from CJF's 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, documenting the extent of assimilation, produced a palpable shock-wave in American Jewish organizational life. The federated system recognized its responsibility to make additional efforts in identity- and community-building. JESNA undertook a strategic planning process, which has helped to focus and strengthen its endeavors in educational and community services and development. In November 1993, CJF convened a broad-based North American Commission on Jewish Identity and Continuity to frame an overall agenda for continuity endeavors, to promote the sharing of ideas and information, and to build new relationships among the key actors in this arena, especially the federated system and the religious movements. This Commission will present recommendations at its November 1994 meeting, immediately prior to the CJF General Assembly.

At the same time as the Commission was being established, CJF and JESNA took a series of steps to intensify their partnership in providing service and leadership for the federated system in its continuity endeavors. The two agencies have jointly staffed the North American Commission and collaborate in consultation, information gathering and dissemination, networking, and professional development activities for federations and local Jewish continuity commissions.

An Expanded Partnership: CJF, JESNA, and CIJE

These efforts and achievements provide the base from which we now move forward to a new framework of partnership -- more encompassing and even more capable of providing the federated system with effective leadership in addressing the challenge of Jewish continuity. CJF, JESNA, and CIJE have agreed to enhance their collaboration and mutual support to form a strategic alliance for identity- and community-building and educational improvement.

Each agency is retaining its unique character, mission, and relationships. But they have committed themselves to work to strengthen one another and to work together on the common elements in their agendas through the vehicle of a new CJF Special Committee on Jewish Continuity. This Committee will be a joint venture of CJF, JESNA, and CIJE. It will monitor, facilitate and encourage collaboration in the activities of these agencies aimed at stimulating, guiding, and assisting initiatives of the federated system for Jewish education and continuity. The Committee will also respond to selected strategic policy issues relating to developing and implementing the Jewish continuity agenda. In this context, it will assume responsibility for ensuring the further development and implementation by CJF through JESNA and CIJE of certain recommendations that will be made by the North American Commission on Jewish Identity and Continuity.

The Committee, which will begin its work after the 1994 General Assembly, will include representatives of local federations and continuity commissions; national leadership from CJF, JESNA, and CIJE; representatives of national agencies that play important roles in the federated system's continuity efforts; and outstanding leaders identified with the effort to promote Jewish education and continuity. The Committee will consult regularly with other bodies and groups deeply involved in the work of Jewish continuity, especially the religious movements.

In addition to their central role in relation to the CJF Special Committee, JESNA and CIJE are taking several steps to strengthen their direct working relationship on a day-to-day basis.

This agreement represents an important next step in the process of ensuring that the federated system, and ultimately the North American Jewish community, will have the quality of leadership and support it needs to translate the desire to build a vibrant Jewish future into dynamic, thoughtful, and effective action.