**MS-831: Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980–2008.**
Series C: Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE). 1988–2003.
Subseries 6: General Files, 1990–2000.

Box                    Folder
51                       11

Research Capability Project, 1991-1992.

# ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

A Proposal for a Planning Study
Submitted to the CIJE by Isa Aron
July, 1991

## The Questions

The ultimate question to be addressed by this project is: **What steps (both short and long term) can the CIJE take in order to encourage and support the development of a sophisticated research capability in the field of Jewish education?** Underlying this question are three assumptions: 1) that the quantity and quality of current research efforts in the field are highly inadequate (as discussed in *A Time to Act*, and subsequent CIJE documents). 2) That research is a pre-requisite for intelligent and deliberate choice, and as such, will be an integral part of both the Best Practices and Lead Communities Projects. 3) On the other hand, research has more than an immediately utilitarian purpose; thus, the CIJE wishes to support and encourage a broad range of research efforts.

The large question can be broken down into three smaller ones:

1) What content areas are in greatest need of research? To which topics will the CIJE assign highest priority? To what extent will the CIJE support research projects that stem from the conceptions of researchers, rather than the stated needs of the community?

2) What methodologies are most appropriate for which content areas?

3) Given the rather primitive state of Jewish education research, what institutions and/or mechanisms ought to be established for conducting and funding research, as well as for recruiting a cadre of researchers? What is each of these strategies likely to cost?

## The Planning Process

In order to answer these questions, I propose to proceed as follows:

### 1) Convening Groups of Stake-holders (and Potential Stake-holders) to Discuss the Questions Posed Above.

My assumption is that the most thoughtful and creative answers to the questions posed above can best be obtained by means of a series of group interviews. These questions have never really been posed in such a broad and immediate way, and few people will have given them much thought prior to the interview. A free-wheeling exchange of Ideas will be required to get people thinking both divergently & realistickly

Who would be interviewed, and according to what grouping? While various possibilities have occurred to me, I would opt for a geographical grouping. Thus, I would think in terms of making trips to the following eight sites:

a) Stanford University
b) Michigan State University
c) the University of Wisconsin at Madison
d) the site (as yet undetermined) of the fall meeting of the Association for Higher Learning in Jewish Education (AIHLJE)
e) the Federation's General Assembly (GA)
f) the CIJE board meeting (assuming there will be one between September and April)
g) the Boston area
h) the New York area

Obviously, these eight sites do not mean eight different trips; it is likely, for example, that the AIHLJE will meet in the Boston or New York area. In the case of the first six sites I would ask a designated person (e.g., Lee Shulman at Stanford or Steve Hoffman at the GA) to suggest a list of invitees, and, perhaps, to serve as the co-convener. I would guess that at least two and not more than five meetings would be held at each of these sites, and that some individual interviews might be needed as well. The balance of time allotted to each of the three questions would, of course, vary. At the universities, for example, the majority of time would be taken up with the second and third questions, in contrast, at the CIJE board meeting the first question would be the primary focus.

I include the Boston and New York areas for obvious reasons: each contains a large number of individuals who could make a significant contribution to this planning process. These sites (as well as Los Angeles) would probably be the best places for convening groups of practitioners, representatives of community institutions, as well as prominent academics and researchers, such as Israel Scheffler (Boston) and Matt Myles (New York). Just who would be invited and how these meetings would be arranged would have to be decided.

In addition to conducting these interviews, I would send out, as early as possible, a "request for ideas," addressed to people who have a vested interest in the issue of research. One group I have in mind is the members of the Jewish Education Research Network; a second possible group is bureau directors.

## 2) Organizing the Answers into a List of Alternative Strategies and Mechanisms

## 3) Convening an Advisory Board to Review the Options
Each option would be assessed according to the criteria of cost, feasibility, likelihood of success, and other criteria suggested by the advisory board

**4) Producing a Document Containing a Shorter List of Options (perhaps 20), Along with an Assessment of Each**
This document could then be reviewed by the CIJE Board, with specific options chosen for implementation.


# ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED

A variety of issues remain to be discussed:

**1) Is it necessary to document the paucity of research in Jewish education, or to take an inventory of the studies that exist?**
If so, how far back in time, should this review go?

**2) How early should members of the advisory board be designated?**
Certain people (e.g.,Shulman, Scheffler) are obvious. My own choice with regard to the others is to wait until after some of the interviews to identify the most appropriate person in each category.The "best" social planner, for example, will be the one who contributes the most to the group discussion. I do think, however, that we should set in advance the number and types of participants, and some guidelines for honoraria.

**3) How will this project be integrated with the Best Practices and Lead Communities Projects?**
I don't think this question can be answered in advance, but the intersections between the three projects should remain firmly implanted in our consciousness.

**4) How can I receive ongoing feedback from other CIJE "fellows?"**
I think it would be a good idea for me to write periodic "bulletins" from the "field," summarizing what I'm learning, and soliciting feedback on specific issues that arise. That way, there should be no surprises at any of the major junctures.

**5) Time Line for the Project**
I assume that the start-up time, before the first set of interviews can be conducted, will be 6 - 8 weeks, at least. (I have a vested interest in hurrying, since I hate winter!). I think that I can work on the project half time, at least until December; but my family situation precludes my traveling more than one week a month. With eight "sites", this means that it will probably be February or March, before the interviews are completed, and May or June before the final report can be produced. All this is assuming that HUC will release me half-time in the Spring semester, which has yet to be negotiated, because the dean and the faculty member who would have to take over my scheduled course are both on vacation. As I've mentioned to Shulamith and Steve, I am very keen on doing this project, now that I've gotten past my academic "myopia." But the issue may not be fully resolved until the third week in August.

# Transmittal Cover Sheet

Total Sheets (including cover sheet) __6__

**To:** Jack Ukeles

Attention _____

Company Name Ukeles Associates

Fax Number (212) 260 - 8760

**From:** Isa Aron

Name _____

Company Name _____

Phone Number (213) 934-0426

Other Instructions

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Los Angeles, CA 90035
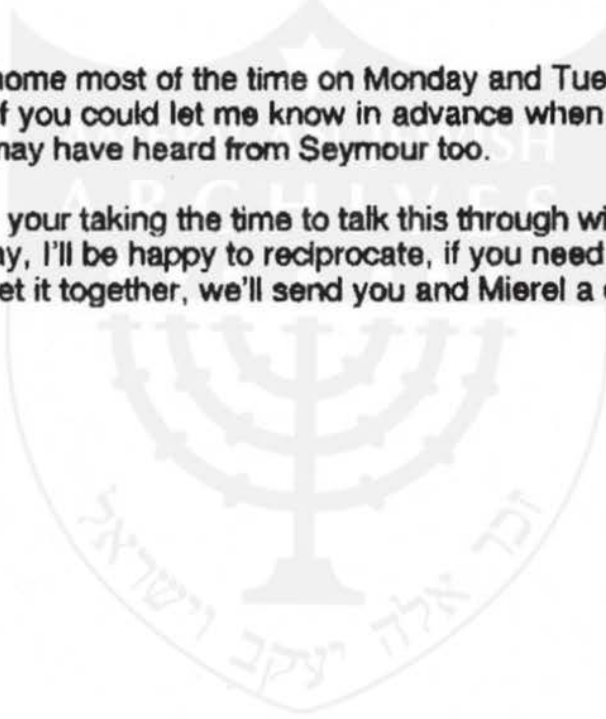(213) 934-0426

August 23, 1991

Dear Jack,

Thanks for your help last night. Enclosed is the one-page sheet we discussed
last night. Hope it does the trick. Also enclosed is the proposal I submitted to
Seymour in July.

I'll be working at home most of the time on Monday and Tuesday. It would help
me plan my time if you could let me know in advance when you'll be available
to talk. By then I may have heard from Seymour too.

I really appreciate your taking the time to talk this through with me. Once your
project is underway, I'll be happy to reciprocate, if you need any help. Also, as
soon as we can get it together, we'll send you and Mierel a copy of Bill's book.

B' Shalom,

Igo

CRITICAL ISSUES AND ILLUSTRATIVE OPTIONS FOR ENHANCING
RESEARCH IN JEWISH EDUCATION
Isa Aron, Ph.D.
August 23, 1991

**OVERALL QUESTION**: What steps (both short and long term) can the CIJE
take in order to encourage and support the development of a sophisticated
research capability in the field of Jewish education?

## CRITICAL ISSUES

**A) CONTENT**: What content areas are of highest priority? What is the
appropriate balance between:
-- basic and applied research
-- research that is derivative of research in secular education and research
   that is *sui generis* to Jewish Education
-- short term and long term needs
-- setting a programmatic agenda and encouraging the initiative of
   independent scholars

**B) METHOD**: What is the optimal mix of:
-- theoretical and empirical research
-- quantitative and qualitative methodologies

**C) INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS**: To what extent do we invest in:
-- training new researchers, while supporting existing researchers
-- creating a cadre of Jewish educational researchers, while drawing on the
   expertise of researchers in secular education
-- individuals vs. institutions

## ILLUSTRATIVE OPTIONS

-- create research centers
   a) at Jewish universities, secular universities, and/or independent entities
   b) endowed, and/or competing for centrally disbursed funds
-- endow research professorships at either Jewish or secular universities
-- establish training programs for new Ph.D.s in either Jewish or secular
   universities
-- establish postdoctoral programs for re-tooling Ph.D.s in related fields
-- establish a fund for researchers (NSF or NEH model)
-- offer grants (on a competitive basis) to reflective practitioners
-- establish a think-tank for Jewish Education in North America
-- create new mechanisms for dissemination
   a) conferences and symposia
   b) journals and other publishing venues

# ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

A Proposal for a Planning Study
Submitted to the CIJE by Isa Aron
September, 1991

The ultimate question to be addressed by this project is: **What steps (both short and long term) can the CIJE recommend in order to encourage and support the development of a strong and credible research capability in the field of Jewish education** ?

This question can be broken down into the following issues:

**A) Content** : What content areas are of highest priority? What is the appropriate balance between:
— basic and applied research
— research that is derivative of research in secular education and research that is *sui generis* to Jewish Education
— short term and long term needs
— setting a programmatic agenda and encouraging the initiative of independent scholars

**B) Method**: What is the optimal mix of:
— theoretical and empirical research
— quantitative and qualitative methodologies

**C) Institutional Mechanisms**: To what extent do we invest in:
— training new researchers
— supporting existing researchers
— creating a cadre of Jewish educational researchers
— drawing on the expertise of researchers in secular education
— individuals vs. institutions

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

**A) Intake Phase** (September through November, 1991)

### 1) Convene an Advisory Committee

The function of the advisory committee will be:
a) to provide advice and feedback throughout the planning process
b) to serve as conveners (each in his or her own location) of "focus groups. " In most cases I will be present to facilitate the discussion, but in a few cases the advisory committee member may have to conduct the meeting.
c) to meet as a group in January to review the preliminary report, and to weigh the options in light of agreed-upon criteria (see 3C, below).

The following is a partial list of proposed advisory committee members:
Hanan Alexander
Adam Gamoran
Mark Gurvis
Alan Hoffman
Barry Holtz
Sharon Nemser
Susan Shevitz
Lee Shulman
Jack Ukeles
Michael Zeldin

Yet to be added are representatives of the Orthodox community, and an additional person with a background in informal education. Robert Hirt and Arthur Rotman will be approached for suggestions. Other suggestions from the Senior Policy Advisors are welcome

## 2) Review "Focus Group" Procedures with Advisory Committee Members

The major activity during this "intake" phase will be to convene "focus groups" of knowledgeable individuals to discuss the issues outlined above. The following is a preliminary list of the different types of groups to be convened:

a) established researchers at three secular universities (Michigan State, Stanford, and The University of Wisconsin at Madison) who have indicated an interest in Jewish education;

b) researchers in Jewish education, who may be located at Jewish universities, secular universities, Bureaus, or other educational institutions;

c) Federation executives, planners and other communal leaders;

d) Bureau directors and JESNA staff;

e) a selected group of practitioners;

f) it had been suggested that selected CIJE policy advisors and members of the Board be interviewed; if this is still thought to be a good idea, this group will be included as well.

I will rely heavily on the advice of advisory committee members regarding the invitees, and the procedures by which the limited time available can be put to best use. In some cases, I will ask members of the advisory to offer the invitation; in a few cases, namely locations or events to which I will be unable to travel, I will ask advisory committee members to facilitate the meeting.

## 3) Convene "Focus Groups" to Discuss the Issues

People who are unable to attend the focus groups, and whose input is particularly important can be interviewed by phone or in person

In addition to conducting these interviews, I would send out, as early as possible, a "request for ideas," addressed to the members of the Jewish Education Research Network.

**B) Organizing the Input Received During the Intake Phase into a List of Alternative Strategies and Mechanisms; Production of the Preliminary Report** (December, 1991)

Without pre-judging the outcomes of "intake" phase, it would seem likely that the following options will be among those discussed in the report:

- the creation of research centers
    - a) at Jewish universities, secular universities, and/or independent entities
    - b) endowed and/or competing for centrally disbursed funds
- the endowment of research professorships at either Jewish or secular universities
- the establishment of training programs for new Ph.D.s in either Jewish or secular universities
- the establishment of postdoctoral programs for re-tooling Ph.D.s in related fields
- the establishment of a fund for researchers (NSF or NEH model)
- offering grants (on a competitive basis) to reflective practitioners
- the establishment of a think-tank for Jewish Education in North America
- the creation of new mechanisms for dissemination
    - a) conferences and symposia
    - b) journals and other publishing venues

**C) Convening the Advisory Board to Review the Preliminary Report** (January, 1992)

Each option would be assessed according to the criteria of effectiveness, feasibility, likelihood of success, cost, and other criteria suggested by the advisory board. It will be particularly important at this juncture to assess the available resources, in terms of both personnel and funding.

**D) Producing a Final Report, Containing a Shorter List of Options Which are Deemed Most Feasible** ( February through March, 1992)

The options listed in this document (which would number between four and ten) would be fully adumbrated, in terms of available personnel, cost, and other relevant considerations. The first draft of the final report will be completed in March. Revisions will be made in time for the April meeting of the CIJE board.

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**DRAFT**

**The Development of a Research Capability for Jewish Education in North America:** The Research Project of The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education

Among the recommendations made in the final report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America was one concerning the development of a research capability for Jewish education in North America.

"A research capability for Jewish education in North America will be developed at universities, by professional research organizations, as well as by individual scholars. They will create the theoretical and practical knowledge that is indispensable for change and improvement. A comprehensive long-range agenda will be outlined. It will involve the creation of settings where scholars and practitioners can think together systemically about the goals, the content and the methods of Jewish education." - A Time To Act

The policy paper now being prepared will respond to the following question: What steps can the Council For Initiatives in Jewish education (CIJE) now recommend to encourage and support the development of a strong and credible research capability for Jewish education in North America?

The question is based on several assumptions:

- The process of informed decision-making in every human endeavor is most credible and reliable when it is based on research; the field of Jewish education is no exception.
- Current research efforts in the field of Jewish education are highly inadequate, in terms of both quantity and quality. They provide an insufficient basis for fulfilling the mandate of the Commission for the reform and renewal of Jewish educational institutions.
- To establish a research capability will require a systematic approach. A number of different mechanisms for funding and supporting research will have to be created.
- Recommendations may include, but may not be limited to suggestions for the establishment of a variety of mechanisms for funding and support research, for training and recruitment of researchers, e.g.,
    - establishing training programs for researchers at the doctoral or post-doctoral level
    - creating research centers

Page Two

- creating new venues for the dissemination of research
- developing funds to support individual researchers
- To fulfill the mandate of the Commission, a variety of research efforts will be needed. They range from the practical to the theoretical and from 'basic' to 'applied.' The policy paper will suggest points of departure and initial areas for research.

"The major stakeholders in Jewish education - practitioners, policy-makers, consumers, as well as researchers and representatives of their institutions - have important contributions to make to the process of establishing a research agenda since each will be contributors to and recipients of the resultant research."

The Project is directed by Dr. Isa Aron of the Hebrew Union College. She will work with an advisory committee of researchers from the denominational institutions, representatives of the Association of Institutions of Higher Learning in Jewish Education and major researchers from top-ranking research universities.

She will solicit opinions and direction through group and individuals interviews - from Board members, commissioners and Senior Policy Advisors. Dr. Arons plans include consultations with Jewish educators, researchers at major research centers who have demonstrated interest in Jewish education, and staff members of groups which regularly conduct research in the field of education - e.g., RAND Corporation.

The Project will extend from October 1991 to March 1992.

The issue related to the development of a research capability will be addressed in the final report. Options will be presented to the Board of Directors of the CIJE for its consideration. Each option will be fully review as to effectiveness, feasibility, likelihood of success, cost and other criteria.

Estimated cost:  $55,000

SRE
10/91

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**TO: Jack Ukeles**

**FAX NUMBER: 212-260 - 8760**

**FROM: Isa Aron**

**FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526**

**Date: 10/31/01**                    Page___1___ of ___11___

Dear Jack,

This is to confirm that the teleconference regarding the "research capability" project will be on:

Tuesday November 5th at 11:30 a.m. (EST)

I realize that you'll only be available for the first 45 minutes. (If I chair it, I'll let you go first!)

The following is my proposed agenda (the enclosed two-page memo spells these out in detail)...

1) the need for a coordinating / "governing" body

2) what does it mean to maintain "the relative importance of the various items?"

3) funding parameters -- minimum to maximum

4) the need to convince people of the importance of research

5) additional interviews which need to be set up:
   -- Board members?
   -- Commissioners?
   -- Scheffler?

6) communication with advisory committee, including possible January meeting

Also enclosed, FYI, the latest draft of the various options I'm considering; this document is being used as a starting point for my interviews and focus groups.

Memo to: Steve, Seymour, Annette, Shulamith, and Jack
From: Isa
Re: Questions to be discussed at the teleconference

Enclosed is my interim report for October. It summarizes the planning process in which I have been engaged, and outlines the options that have surfaced thus far. While I would certainly welcome input from all sources on these options, I don't think this needs to be the primary focus of the teleconference at this stage. Rather, I would like some guidance on the following questions:

1) In her fax of 10/20, Annette pointed out that the CIJE itself is not empowered to bring any of the options into being; that its role will be to encourage others to implement those options which it recommends. This raises the question of the need for a coordinating body, the equivalent of the U.S. government's Office for Educational Research and Information. If the CIJE cannot function as this body, what agency or organization will?

I guess what I am suggesting is that one of the recommendations made in my report may have to be the creation of a Jewish Education Research Council (bad acronym, but never mind that for the moment). This council would set the programmatic agendas, endow the centers, organize the competitions for funds, etc. If I'm correct about this, then we come to the sticky question of who sits on the council, and by what authority? I don't think this question is insoluble -- the answer, I would guess, lies in some combination of appointed and elected representation. But it does raise all the ugly issues of turf.

Am I right in suggesting the need for a council? If so, how shall I deal with the issues it raises? For the time being, I have listed it as option #10. Any other suggestions?

2) Also in Annette's fax of 10/20:
    "The rationale must be spelled out of why a fund, a professorship, (etc.) are the way to go.
    "Many of these items are in your documents, but is important for us to maintain the relative importance of the various items. The research agenda is but one of a whole set."
I've tried to set forth the rationale for each option in the enclosed report. But I don't understand the last 1 1/2 sentences. I am assuming that by the end of the planning process, several of the options may be eliminated, and the rest will be prioritized. Is that what you mean, or is there something else that I'm missing?

3) In connection with the process of elimination and prioritization, which will begin in phase 2, I think that it will be impossible to discuss this intelligently without some funding parameters. Are we talking about $15 million, $5 million, or $1 million? It's OK to create minimum, medium, and maximum plans but I would still need approximate dollar figures for each.

4) Annette's letter, as well as recent conversations with Lee Shulman and Sam Heilman (who, by the way, agrees to serve on the advisory board), point to an important issue which is partly taken into account by the final option in my report, but, in actuality goes far beyond this. In the current climate, it is not enough to create a blueprint for research -- we also need to implant firmly in people's minds the notion of the critical importance of research. We need to create a climate in which research is valued.

My specific question is: does creating a strategy for valuing research fall within the purview of my project? If so, how shall I approach this task? As several members of the advisory committee have pointed out, this calls for marketing expertise of some sort. To whom can we turn for advice in this area?

5) In Shulamith's description of my project (p.3) it says:
"[Isa] will solicit opinions and direction through group and individual interviews -- from Board members, commissioners and Senior Policy advisors."
Thus far, I haven't been given any names of board members or commissioners to interview. If you want me to do these interviews, I can probably work them into my December trip -- but I need to know now.

That's it for major questions. Now for some little details:

1) How can I reach Abe Tanenbaum? I tried YU, but his number is incorrectly listed, and no one in the various Deans' offices seems to know which department or school he's in.

2) Please let me know when Seymour has reached Scheffler.

3) David Cohen hasn't returned any of my calls. Sharon has urged him to call me, but no luck so far.

4) Please let me know as soon as possible:
   a) Seymour and Annette's January schedule
   b) whether there will be money for an advisory committee meeting

B'Shalom,

Isa

Isa

## BUILDING A RESEARCH CAPABILITY FOR JEWISH EDUCATION
### Questions and Issues for Discussion
### Working Draft #4

The purpose of this project is to present the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education with a set of proposals which would lead to the enhancement of research in Jewish education. The starting assumption of the project is that current research efforts in the field of Jewish education are highly inadequate, in terms of both quantity and quality, as is discussed in section A. If the CIJE adopts these proposals, it will seek funding for them from among its affiliated foundations and organizations.

In its first phase (through December, 1991), this project aims to explore a broad array of options for encouraging research, to clarify the rationale for each option, and to raise questions about the feasibility of each option. In the second phase (January through March, 1992), these options will be winnowed down to a small number of the most desirable; following this, the cost of each option, in terms of money, personnel, institutional support, and other factors, will be projected.

The options presented in Section B deal primarily with the structural changes which will be required to produce more and better research, and not with the content of the resultant research. When specific topics for research are cited they are intended only as illustrations. The options are not conceived of as mutually exclusive; on the contrary, it is assumed that some combination of several options will be required.

The outline of this document is as follows:
   --Section A describes the current state of research in the field;
   --Section B presents 10 possible options for improving the situation;
   --Section C sets forth a number of assumptions regarding the nature of
      research, and how it is best organized.


## A: The Current Situation:

Research on Jewish education in North America has been carried out for at least 50 years. Most researchers in the field have been trained in American research universities, and have held Ph.D.'s or Ed.D's. Their studies have drawn heavily on educational research paradigms and methodologies in the field of general education, and have included work in history, philosophy, history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political organization. However, the entire enterprise of research in Jewish education has been hampered by the following factors:
-- At the present time, there is no routine collection of even the most basic data on enrollment, staffing patterns, or finances. There are no generally accepted and validated achievement tests. Moreover, the voluntary nature of Jewish

education and the loose organizational structure of its institutions, militate against the collection of this data.

--There are only 20 full-time academic positions in the field of Jewish education. Of these, 12 carry with them administrative responsibility, and most of the others require involvement in community education projects, thereby curtailing the time available for research. At least 75% of the research that exists, was conducted by Ph.D. or Ed.D. students as part of the requirements for their dissertation.

--There is no infrastructure to support research in Jewish education:
-- no regular sources of funding exist; occasional funding is disbursed by agencies or foundations on an ad hoc basis.
-- there are no centers for research in Jewish education
-- there exists no journal devoted to research in Jewish education. Those conducting research must either attempt to publish in journals devoted to general education, publish abridged versions in the one or two journals devoted to Jewish education, or seek out venues for "occasional papers."

-- A significant number of studies are planned, and even partially executed, either by Bureaus or individual researchers; most of them are ultimately abandoned due to a lack of time or funding. The annual conferences on research in Jewish education, of which there have been five, receive submissions of only 5 - 10 papers per year; in addition, they receive 10 - 12 reports of research in progress, but many of these studies do not seem to be completed.

-- There is only one Ph. D. program in North America (at Stanford ) which is geared towards research in Jewish education. This program was unable to open in 1991-92, for lack of qualified applicants.

-- There are perhaps two dozen practising Jewish educators, or people with a deep interest in Jewish education who are enrolled, at any given time, in Ph.D. programs in education at their local universities. Often these people do not write their dissertations on topics related to Jewish education, either because they cannot find faculty advisors, or because it is recommended to them that a dissertation in general education would make them more "marketable."

## B: Options for Enhancing the Current Research Capability

• 1) Research centers dedicated to specific research areas. Each center would be funded for a five to ten-year period, and would pursue a programmatic research agenda in its designated area, much as the National Research Centers funded by OERI. A center might be located in one institution, or it might be created as a consortium of a number of institutions. The centers might be established by either competition or invitation. This type of arrangement would lend itself to policy-oriented research. Some examples of the research agenda adopted by a particular institution are:
-- in-depth study of the "best practices" in schools, camp, and/or JCCs

-- envisioning (and possibly experimenting with) alternative models of Jewish education, both formal and informal
-- teacher recruitment, preparation, and assessment
-- leadership in Jewish educational institutions

Rationale:
-- If certain research topics are of importance to the CIJE, or to particular donors, research ought to be focused in this direction.
-- Sophisticated, policy-oriented research requires the collaboration of a team of researchers over a sustained period of time.

Questions to be answered:
a) Would the research centers be established by competition or by invitation (assuming that the invited proposals would be refereed)?
b) How could the research projects serve to strengthen the institution(s) in which they were located, rather than being isolated entities, at best, and energy drains, at worst?

**2) Endowed research professorships and/or research centers, either at existing institutions or as independent entities.** The major difference between this option and the first is that in this option the researchers would be free to select their own research topics, and would not be tied to a programmatic research agenda. (Of course, these researchers could also compete for other funding, but the assumption is that at least part of their staff would be on "hard," rather than "soft" money.)

Rationale:
-- Research ought not to be linked entirely to perceived needs; there is a need for more "basic" research, and for greater freedom for the researcher.
--A research professorship and/or center at an existing school of education would insures that research and training were linked together; it would also begin to create a climate validating research in that institution.

Questions to be answered:
a) How many researchers would it take to maintain both the integrity and productivity of an endowed center? How could a sufficient number of researchers be enticed into the field?
b) Could a consortium arrangement be worked out between a number of institutions?

**3) One or more centers for field testing curricula and programs as they are being developed.** These might be organized by region, denomination, or type of setting (day school, supplementary school, camp, JCC, etc.).

Rationale:
Jewish education is relatively rich in the area of new textbooks, curricula, and programs; but these are rarely field-tested in a systematic way that can provide feedback to the developers.

**4) The encouragement and funding of "reflective practice" and action research.** Practitioners (perhaps in teams, perhaps individually) would be trained to do research, perhaps in summer workshops, or as an ongoing course in a particular location. As their research proceeded, they would be guided and supported by experienced researchers.

Rationale:
-- This would link research and practice in two important ways: first, research topics would be generated from the concerns of people in the field; second, it might facilitate dissemination, as research done by practitioners would presumably be more credible to other practitioners.
-- This would also serve as a form of professional development for some of the finest practitioners, who may be looking for opportunities for growth.

Questions to be answered:
a) Would practitioners be interested in this type of project? What might serve as an incentive for them to participate?

**5) A fund to support research.** Individuals or teams of researchers could obtain funding from an established fund, through a competitive process. Those applying for funds might include academicians in Jewish institutions, academics in other institutions, practitioners, and/or Bureau personnel.

Rationale:
-- Not all research ought to be linked to the perceived needs of policy-makers. There is a need for research that is more "basic" and independent than the types of research which would be generated under the options 1,3, and 4.
-- The process of funding would be more open, and funds would be available to more people than under option 2.
-- This might serve as an incentive for researchers whose primary focus is not Jewish education to get involved in a particular research project.

Questions to be answered:
a) Would these awards be governed by any pre-set criteria or conditions?
b) How would the review process work? Would the panel of reviewers rotate each year? Would the panel which reviewed proposals for programmatic research be appropriate to review these proposals as well?
c) What would be an appropriate funding balance between programmatic research and individual research?

## 6) Fellowships for doctoral candidates and beginning researchers.

Rationale:
At present there are not enough researchers who are free to focus on Jewish education as an area of study. Established researchers, who are already committed to a line of research, are less likely to become involved than those at the beginning of their careers.

## 7) Data collection regarding enrollment, personnel, finances, etc.

This effort might be organized locally, regionally, nationally, by type of setting, or by denomination. Data to be collected might include:
  --enrollment in pre-schools, schools, camps, and other institutions;
  --staffing patterns (numbers of staff in different categories, hours of employment, qualifications);
  --finances (tuitions, salaries, scholarships);
  --perhaps some basic curricular information, e.g., hours allotted to different subject matters.

It is important to note that although the decision concerning what data to collect, and the creation of certain types of instruments (such as survey questionnaires and achievement tools) would constitute research problems, the collection of the data itself would not constitute research. Some have argued, therefore, that this item ought not even to be included among the research options, since it might lead to a misconception regarding the nature of research.

Rationale:
-- This information is critical to policy-makers, and can serve as the baseline for other research efforts.
-- There is a danger, however, that this type of low-level data collection might be seen as a sufficient research effort, in and of itself. Thus, the usefulness of this type of data must be balanced against the usefulness of findings emanating from other research efforts.

Questions to be answered:
a) What purpose would the data serve? Every item would have to be justified in terms of its usefulness to either researchers, policymakers or practitioners, in order to justify the costs involved in its collection.
b) Need this data be collected universally, or would a representative sample suffice?
c) Past experience with the JESNA-Hebrew University Census and others suggests that schools either do not have much of this information readily available, or will not voluntarily fill out forms, and that (in contrast to public school systems, in which data collection can be required by law and subject to rewards and/or penalties) only a few local bureaus can provide incentives for schools to cooperate. How could this problem be overcome?

## 8) Venues for dissemination.
These venues might include (but not be limited to):
   --the creation of one or more journals;
   --endowing a fund for the publication of books;
   --sponsoring and/or subsidizing conferences;
   --using new technologies to create data banks, clearinghouses, networks, and/or teleconferencing opportunities.

   Rationale:
   -- Research that is not disseminated is of limited use
   -- Along with a research capability, there is a need to develop an audience which reads and understands research.

## 9) Developing an awareness of and appreciation for research among a broad range of stakeholders. This might involve some sort of marketing or public relations plan. The current efforts of the National Academy for Education might serve as a useful model; other models also need to be explored.

   Rationale:
   -- The dissemination venues listed in option 8 are too limited. There is a need for a broad appreciation of the role that research can play in shaping our educational future.
   -- Without broad-based support, research efforts will be the last to be funded and the first to be cut.

   Questions to be answered:
   a) Who has expertise in this area? To what individuals or groups can we turn for guidance?

## 10) Some sort of over-arching council to oversee and coordinate the research efforts that are brought into being.

   Rationale
   Implicit in most of the options listed above is the notion that some agency is initiating and/or coordinating the disparate elements. For example, regarding option 1, some group must be responsible for deciding which areas of research are of highest priority, and appropriate for a research center. Regarding options 5 and 6, some group must be responsible for reading proposals and deciding among candidates. The CIJE sees its role as enabling, not implementing, the options it will endorse. The question of who will implement the proposals, once they are approved, is, as yet, unanswered.

   Questions to be answered:
   a)How much coordination will actually be necessary? When the options are narrowed, we will have to consider which can stand on their own, and which would benefit from a connection with others

b) Who would convene the coordinating body? What sort of representation would be given to various stakeholders, i.e., donors, practitioners, Bureaus, JESNA, schools of Jewish education, and researchers themselves?

## C: Working Principles

Underlying the options presented in section B are a number of assumptions regarding the elements that contribute to an environment in which research of high quality can be carried out. In addition, there are a number of assumptions regarding models and resources for improving the current situation. These working principles are:

### C.1 Research in Jewish education is not a "frill" or a luxury, but a necessary component of reform and renewal.

The process of informed decision-making in every human endeavor is most ~~credible when it is based on research; the field of Jewish education is no~~ exception.

> [It has been suggested that a preamble to this document be written to make this point more vivid and forceful. The preamble might include some vignettes of very compelling, innovative, detailed forms of Jewish education, and an argument that research has an important role to play in conceptualizing, bringing to fruition, and continually field testing and modifying these new forms. Would this be a good idea?]

### C.2 The assessment of research priorities and the funding for research must come from a variety of sources and perspectives.

All the stakeholders in Jewish education (practitioners, policy-makers, consumers, as well as researchers and representatives of their institutions) have important contributions to make to the process of establishing a research agenda, since each will be contributors to and recipients of the resultant research. One of the challenges will be to strike the appropriate balance between these groups.

### C.3 The process by which priorities are set and funds disbursed must be open, democratic and flexible.

The history of research (in both the natural and social sciences) abounds with examples of opportunities missed and challenges unmet because a narrow group which controlled research in a particular field developed tunnel vision and failed to pursue a wide enough range of research questions. The only way to guard against this sort of ossification is by creating a decision-making process which is inclusive and democratic, as well as rigorous and fair.

**C.4 An endeavor as complex as Jewish education can best be studied through a plurality of research paradigms and methodologies.**

**C.5 There is a comparable need for a variety of contexts for promoting and supporting research.**

The justification for both of these principles can be as simple as the folk warning against putting all one's eggs in one basket. A more sophisticated justification may be found in the works of Dewey, Schwab, and more recent educational scholars who argue that the traditional disciplines and structures of knowledge can obscure as much as they reveal, and can teach us more when they are, in Schwab's terms, "harnessed together."

**C.6 The great success of many research endeavors in the field of secular education in the past two decades offers much hope to those concerned about the state of research in Jewish education.**
Research in secular education can contribute to research in Jewish education in at least two ways:
-- a variety of models have been developed for the organization and support of research. We can learn a great deal from both the successes and failures of these models.
-- quite a few of the most highly regarded researchers in secular education are committed, affiliated Jews, who have expressed an interest in contributing, in some way, to research in Jewish education. While these established researchers will not abandon their own research programs, they may be happy to work on particular projects on a part-time basis, supervise the work of doctoral students, serve on advisory boards and review panels, and make other, as yet unspecified, contributions to the field.

**C.7 In setting a research agenda for the field, we would do well to take a systemic perspective.**
In other words, it is not sufficient to fund research; we must also concern ourselves with the training and placement of researchers, the dissemination of results, and with the creation of a climate which will assure future appreciation and support of research efforts.

*JUST THE FAX...*

## REVISED AGENDA FOR TELECONFERENCE
### Tuesday 11/5, 11:30 EST

1) Review of process to date -- Isa

2) Review of interim report of 10/28

**For an elaboration of items 3 - 9 see Isa's 2 - page memo:**

3) Need for a coordinating / "governing" body?

4) What does it mean to "maintain the relative importance of various items?"

5) Funding parameters -- can we project minimum and maximum amounts?

6) Need to convince people of the importance of research?

7) Additional interviews to be set up:
     -- board members?
     -- commissioners?
     -- Scheffler?
     -- David Cohen?

8) Ongoing communication with advisory committee

9) Possible advisory committee meeting, January 24th or 27th?

10) Initial discussion of final report

Talk to you soon!

B'Shalom,
Isa

nI/

*Dear Jack —*
*I'll be in NY on*
*the 9th & will try to*
*call you to talk*
*about this —*
*Is.*

cc: √im

**Honorary Chair**
Max M. Fisher

**Chair**
Morton L. Mandel

**Acting Director**
Stephen H. Hoffman

**Chief Education Officer**
Dr. Shulamith Elster

December 4, 1991

Dear advisory committee member,

Along with this letter, I am sending the latest "working draft" for the Research Capability project. As you'll see, this version is considerably longer (14 pages), and reflects both the changes you have suggested and the feedback I've received from the various "focus groups." In particular, I'd like to point out the following two changes:

1) Two entirely new sections at the beginning (sections 1 & 2), which address head on the question of why we need research, and what comprises a research capability. At Lee Shulman's suggestion, I have introduced the question of "why research?" through a vignette. I'm not sure this is the type of vignette Lee had in mind, and I worry that it seems a bit hokey. Please let me know your reactions: do you have suggestions for improving it, or do you think I should discard the vignette altogether?

2) At the end of the document (in Section 5), I offer three preliminary plans. This was suggested to me by David Cohen, who thinks that the sooner we start putting the pieces together the better. I'm not particularly attached to any of the three proposals -- they are merely intended to get the ball rolling. My hope is that each of you will suggest changes, or, better yet, come up with alternative proposals.

David's suggestion was that I send this out on bit-net to those of you who have bit-net addresses, so that we could have a many-way electronic conversation. As some of you know, I tried very hard to do this. It seems that, although the computer told me that the file was sent, several of you (perhaps all of you) didn't receive it. I spent several hours on the phone with the USC computer center consultants trying to figure out what to do; but when they said, "We have to look this up in the manual," I gave up. Maybe I'll have my system working for the next round. Just in case, and for your information, I'm enclosing a list of all members of the advisory committee, their Bit-net addresses and Fax numbers. For this round, I'll take care of collating and sending out your responses, so you can at least have some inkling of what the others are saying.

I want to let you know that the meeting I had hoped to have on January 27th will not take place, because the CIJE staff feels that they need to devote that time to the "lead communities" project. A smaller meeting will be held at the end of January or early February, either in Northern or Southern California. I'm not sure, as yet, how many people the budget will allow me to bring out. This makes it all the more important that I get your feedback, so please let me hear from you! I'll be on the East Coast between December 8th and the 16th, but home otherwise.

Finally, I want to thank all of your generosity in meeting with me, arranging meetings for me, and being at the other end of the line when I needed you.


Happy Hanukkah! (or, if this arrives to late, happy winter vacation)

                                        B'Shalom,

                                        Isa

                                        Isa

# Research Capability Project
## C.I.J.E.

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# BUILDING A RESEARCH CAPABILITY FOR JEWISH EDUCATION
## Discussion Draft #6
## Prepared by Dr. Isa Aron
## December, 1991

The purpose of this project is to present the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE) with a set of proposals which would lead to the enhancement of research in Jewish education. The starting assumption of the project is that current research efforts in the field of Jewish education are highly inadequate, in terms of both quantity and quality, as is discussed in section 3. If the CIJE adopts these proposals, it will seek funding for them from among its affiliated foundations and organizations.

Research is a complicated enterprise, and deciding which programs and/or institutional arrangements will yield the highest payoff is not an easy task. The purpose of this working draft is as follows:

--To explain why research is critical to the process of reform and renewal in Jewish education; this issue is addressed in section 1.
--To set forth, in broad terms, what a fully developed research capability would consist of (section 2).
-- To survey the current situation (section 3).
-- To explore the different components of a fully developed research capability (section 4).
-- To begin putting together the various components into a number of possible plans (section 5).

Since this is a working draft, I welcome all manner of comments on each section. In particular, your reactions to the very preliminary plans outlined in section 5, and any alternative plans you might suggest, are critical to moving the planning process to the next stage.

## SECTION 1: WHY RESEARCH?

*Imagine Atid, the Jewish educational institution of the future....*

*At first glance, Atid might not seem very different from the educational institutions of today. Like many large synagogues and Jewish Centers, Atid houses a day school, a religious school, and a nursery school, a day camp, a youth group, and a variety of programs for adults and families. A closer look, however, reveals some striking differences: the formal classes of today have largely been replaced by small groups, tutorials, and individual work at learning stations. A relaxed, but purposeful attitude prevails. Parents and*

*children are working together on various projects. Teachers often teach together, plan together, and interact with students of all ages.*

*What most distinguishes Atid from today's institutions, however, is its underlying philosophy and structure. Atid is committed to two goals, which are not easily combined: meeting the diverse needs of diverse learners, and maximizing the Jewish learning of each participant. In order to meet both goals, each program Atid offers is carefully articulated, and designed to dovetail with the others. Thus, a student who attends both the day school and the camp is exposed to a different aspect of the Jewish tradition at each; a student who attends the religious school and the camp will be offered a modified camp program, designed to replicate some of the day school students' experiences. For students who don't attend the camp, an effort is made to replicate some of that experience through retreats and family programs.*

*Atid recognizes that children of working parents require after-school care; thus, for both day school and religious school students it offers a homey environment in which to relax and do homework. In addition to their formal classes, religious school students are exposed to Judaica through a varied format of learning centers, craft activities, and performances. Public school students on a year-round calendar are offered special Judaic "institutes" during their winter break. Students who cannot attend regularly on weekends are given an extra weekday option; a network of interactive computers links students who are unable to attend on certain days, as well as adults who are looking for an intellectual challenge. Atid offers special groups, classes and/or programs for the children of divorced families, for the children of intermarried families, and for the learning disabled; it's policy is to try to accommodate any special needs that may arise.*

*Atid's recognizes that families are the primary Jewish educators and that its role is to empower and support them. It recognizes that adults, despite their interest in learning, have a multitude of conflicting demands on their time; consequently, it offers a variety of venues for adult learning. Atid realizes that Jewish teachers are an endangered species, in need of special attention, support, and educational enrichment. And, although the students at two nearby colleges are served by Hillel and Judaic Studies programs, Atid reaches out to these students as well, offering them jobs as assistant teachers and counselors, and finding other roles for them in the community .*

What enables Atid to combine curricular and programming ideas from a variety of sources into a coherent, holistic plan that works? What does this educational institution of the future have that the institutions of today lack? Three key features stand out:

-- Atid has developed a guiding educational philosophy, a vision of the knowledge, skills, identifications and activities which contribute to the

creation of committed Jews. Atid's philosophy is coherent without being dogmatic, flexible, without being relativistic.

-- Atid neither deprecates nor idealizes its members; it understands that they are both highly accomplished and greatly in need. It does not ignore the demographic facts -- the rates of assimilation, intermarriage, and divorce, the lack of time parents and children have to spend together. It sees the Jewish tradition not as an additional commitment to be taken on by an already overburdened family structure, but as a resource which has the potential for enriching people's lives.

--Finally, Atid has an additional advantage over the educational institutions of today -- it has a fund of knowledge on which to draw: knowledge of what works in classrooms and in camps; knowledge of how curricular units can be individualized and transmitted through a variety of media; knowledge of the assistance teachers require in order to grow in their sense of profession and vocation; and knowledge of the kind of leadership required to keep an educational enterprise afloat and on course.

How can we move from the institutions of today to our ideal institution of the future? How can today's schools, centers, synagogues and camps be imbued with a philosophical mission, an understanding of their clientele, and a firm grasp of the available alternatives? Certainly strong leadership and great resourcefulness will be needed; but these alone are not enough. Without knowledge, intelligent decision-making is impossible. The move from the institutions of today to the institutions of the future will require the kind of broad-ranging knowledge that derives from serious research.

### What is research?

Research is commonly thought of as the work of a scientist in a laboratory, or of a scholar in a library, but my use of the term research in this document is much more inclusive: *research is the serious study of a subject over a sustained period of time, through a variety of modalities.* Research in education includes conceptual analysis, anthropological interpretation, historical documentation, the gathering of pertinent data, experimentation, assessment and evaluation. Research in a field such as education enables one to articulate a philosophy, identify the core components of a curriculum, understand the relevant characteristics of both learners and teachers, express concretely what success would mean, and shape the environment to maximize one's chances of success.

A caveat, however, is in order: it is important that we not view research simplistically, as a "quick fix," or a means for finding sure-fire prescriptions. Research in education rarely provides unequivocal answers. Rather, it can

provide something which is ultimately more important -- a thoughtful and insightful approach to the enterprise. Research forces us to look more closely at situations which we presume to understand. It enables us to explore and assess a range of alternative actions, rather than the one or two which spring to mind immediately. Most importantly, research can bring new intellectual energy to a field, infusing activities that have become routine and unreflective with new ideas and new vision. In a field such as Jewish education, research can be a vehicle for bringing some of the most creative and rigorous thinkers in American universities into an enterprise which has become intellectually impoverished.

## SECTION 2: WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A CREDIBLE RESEARCH CAPABILITY ?

If knowledge is the key to transforming the educational institutions of today, and if this kind of knowledge is best generated by research, then the following questions arise:  What kinds of knowledge will support and encourage the renewal of the Jewish educational institutions of today? And what manner of research capability will be required to produce and disseminate that knowledge?

A credible research capability comprises, at minimum, the following six elements:

-- Scholars and researchers; people who understand the context of Jewish education, and possess expertise in a number of research methodologies.

-- One or more universities in which these researchers are trained.

--  A number of settings (such as universities, research centers, and/or central agencies) in which these researchers can work. In addition to enabling researchers to support themselves, the available positions must offer them opportunities for career advancement, and continued intellectual growth.

-- An infrastructure which supports research. This would include technological and other assistance. It would also include colleagial networking through conferences, journals, and other venues.

-- Avenues for dissemination to the public in general, and to policy-makers and practitioners in particular.

-- At least one coordinating body, which would serve as an advocate for research, and  a gatekeeper for funding and publication.

In Section 4 I will discuss each of these components in detail. But even this schematic listing demonstrates an important point: *No one of these elements can stand alone*. It makes no sense to create positions without

qualified people to fill them. These people require rigorous training; but few will enter lengthy training programs if there is little hope of a future position. Without an infrastructure, a position alone will not produce much research. Without dissemination there will be little interest in, and public support for, either the positions or the infrastructure. And without some sort of coordination, findings, no matter how important, are hard to disseminate.

Thus, the problem of improving the research capability of the field of Jewish education is quite complicated. It will require not one, but an interlocking set of institutions, agencies and funds in order to sustain itself. The analogy which comes to mind is that of Lego blocks. On its own, any one Lego block is little more than a piece of plastic; it is only in combination that Lego constructions become functional and inspiring. And the most artful of these constructions involve considerable planning; one must choose the building blocks carefully, understanding the properties of each, and their potential for combination.

The ultimate purpose of the "research capability" project is to propose a number of plans or programs through which a strong and credible research capability might be established in the field of Jewish education. In Section 4 I examine the different components which might be utilized in the ultimate construction of the plan. Like Legos, each component has a number of variants, and each variant has advantages and disadvantages. I try to outline the assets and liabilities of each variant in this section. Then, in Section 5, I attempt to put together a few constructions -- to see what a completed structure might look like if one or another of the possible combinations were realized. These constructions are only first approximations, intended to raise certain issues and to inspire the reader to suggest alternate constructions, so that the ultimate choice will be informed by a great deal of discussion and debate. But before I turn to the building blocks themselves, I want to describe briefly the current state of research in Jewish education -- to lay out the few elements that are already available, and to point out the many others that are missing.

## SECTION 3: THE CURRENT SITUATION

Research on Jewish education in North America has been carried out for at least 50 years. Most researchers in the field have been trained in American research universities, and have held Ph.D.'s or Ed.D's. Their studies have drawn heavily on educational research paradigms and methodologies in the field of general education, and have included work in history, philosophy, history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political organization. However, the entire enterprise of research in Jewish education has been hampered by the following factors:

--There are approximately two dozen full-time academic positions in the field of Jewish education. Half of these carry with them administrative responsibility, and most of the others require involvement in community education projects, thereby curtailing the time available for research. At least 75% of the research

that exists, was conducted by Ph.D. or Ed.D. students as part of the requirements for their dissertation.

--There is no infrastructure to support research in Jewish education:
  -- no regular sources of funding exist; occasional funding is disbursed by agencies or foundations on an ad hoc basis.
  -- there are no centers for research in Jewish education
  -- there exists no journal devoted to research in Jewish education. Those conducting research must either attempt to publish in journals devoted to general education, publish abridged versions in the one or two journals devoted to Jewish education, or seek out venues for "occasional papers."

-- At the present time, there is no routine collection of even the most basic data on enrollment, staffing patterns, or finances. There are no generally accepted and validated achievement tests. Moreover, the voluntary nature of Jewish education and the loose organizational structure of its institutions, militate against the collection of this data.

-- A significant number of studies are planned, and even partially executed, either by Bureaus or individual researchers; most of them are ultimately abandoned due to a lack of time or funding. The annual conferences on research in Jewish education, of which there have been five, receive submissions of only 5 - 10 papers per year; in addition, they receive 10 - 12 reports of research in progress, but many of these studies do not seem to be completed.

-- There is only one Ph. D. program in North America (at Stanford ) which is geared towards research in Jewish education. This program was unable to open in 1991-92, for lack of qualified applicants.

-- There are perhaps two dozen practising Jewish educators, or people with a deep interest in Jewish education who are enrolled, at any given time, in Ph.D. programs in education at their local universities. Often these people do not write their dissertations on topics related to Jewish education, either because they cannot find faculty advisors, or because it is recommended to them that a dissertation in general education would make them more "marketable."

## SECTION 4: POSSIBLE STEPS TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RESEARCH CAPABILITY

### I. ENLARGING THE POOL OF RESEARCHERS

**A) The creation of Ph.D. programs specifically for researchers in Jewish education.**
-- At present, none of the Jewish universities have a faculty of sufficient size, and with sufficient expertise to prepare students for a variety of research methodologies.
-- It is not clear that any research university other than Stanford is prepared to mount a doctoral program in research in Jewish education; even Stanford's program is predicated upon outside funding and relies on visiting professors of Jewish education.
-- If various institutional requirements could be circumvented, a Ph.D. program offered jointly by a Jewish and a research university might be a possibility.

**B) The creation of post-doctoral programs**
- in Jewish education, for researchers trained in research universities
- in research, for Ph.D.s with experience in Jewish education
-- This may be a more feasible alternative than doctoral programs.

**C) Institutes and/or stipends for reflective practitioners and/or action research**
-- This is a very important avenue for linking research and practice, and improving practice as well (see IIC, question 4); but it doesn't seem likely that this will greatly expand the pool of researchers. On the contrary, it will probably require additional researchers to work with practitioners.

**D) Attempting to involve Jewishly identified researchers at research universities in collaborative research projects.**
-- This does not seem like a promising short-term strategy, since few researchers are both sufficiently flexible in their career paths, and sufficiently clear about the research topics they might pursue, to agree to participate in a new and very different research project in the near future.
-- It would be a promising long-term strategy, if an ongoing effort were made to cultivate the interest of a group of researchers. In talking to researchers who might fall into this category, I found a great deal of interest in an ongoing seminar, or series of conferences, on areas of mutual concern with regard to Jewish life ("the transformation of Jewish life" was suggested as an overarching theme by one group with whom I spoke). This format would allow researchers in education and related fields to form informal networks, which might, further down the road, lead to research projects.

## II: CREATING POSITIONS FOR RESEARCHERS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

### A) Endowing research professorships at Jewish universities
Although this would seem like one obvious solution, a number of caveats are in order:
-- Most educational research operates within a social science research paradigm, which has increasingly come to involve large, multi-site, cross-methodological studies. In the absence of a colleagial network and a supportive infrastructure, an individual research professorship (or even two or three) may not be productive way to seed research.
-- Jewish universities demand a great deal of their faculty in terms of teaching, supervision, and community outreach. These calls on a faculty member's time would limit his or her availability for research. If, on the other hand, research professors were exempt from these obligations, various internal problems might arise.

### B) Endowing professorships in Jewish education at research universities (a combination of an endowed chair and half-time junior positions has been suggested; joint appointments in Judaic studies and education have also been proposed)
--This arrangement would only work if the research conducted by faculty members had a universal educational appeal, as well as a Jewish focus, since these faculty members would be expected to publish in the same journals as their colleagues. Might this serve to skew research topics, and would this kind of skewing be good or bad?
-- Judaic studies departments and programs have been notoriously inhospitable to Jewish education in the past; this attitude may not be prevalent in some newer programs, and might be changed in others.
-- It would be unfortunate if the effort to create new positions for researchers were to undercut the viability of the departments of education at Jewish universities, many of which have made great strides in recent years.

### C) Creating positions for researchers at centers for research, which are either independent, attached to a graduate school of education, or located in a central agency.
-- An independent institution would presumably be free of the constraints listed in 1 &2; nonetheless, its creation might be interpreted as an abandonment of existing institutions.
-- An independent institution might not be able to attract researchers, unless it were able to offer them joint appointments with a university.
-- A good argument can be made, I believe, for supporting the efforts of existing institutions at Jewish universities and central agencies, while building in safeguards to assure that the research program is not neglected.
-- Given all the constraints discussed above, the creation of research consortia might be the best solution. Research centers funded by OERI are often created

through various consortia arrangements, either with individuals or with their institutions. A number of different models exist, which bear investigation.

A variety of questions might be raised regarding research centers:

1) Should they be funded by endowment, by competitive grants, or by some combination of the two?Competition for research funds makes the process more democratic, and can spur individuals and institutions to marshall their creativity and resources. On the other hand, established researchers (or even less-established researchers who are very busy) may not be inclined to enter into competition; these researchers might only be enticed to devote their energies to research in Jewish education if they are invited to do so. Which is likely to yield research of the highest quality -- invitation or competition?

2) Should the center be organized around a programmatic research agenda set at the outset by some coordinating or governing body? Given the CIJE's need for research related to the "best practices" project and the evaluation of progress made in the "lead communities," these areas, at least, would seem to require programmatic research. On the other hand, some have argued that research of high quality is best obtained when scholars are left to set their own agendas; What is the optimal balance of programmatic and more individualized research?

3) Of what priority is the need for a center devoted to the field testing of curricula and/or programs?

4) Should there be one or more centers devoted to reflective practice and/or action research? Research efforts undertaken by practitioners can add a new dimension of knowledge and understanding; they can also create closer linkage between research and practice, and serve as catalysts for institutional change.

5) Should there be a center or comparable agency devoted to the collection of data on enrollment, staffing patterns, finances, etc.?This tends to be what communal leaders think of when they think of research. A number of people have raised their concern that funding limitations will result in a research effort which is limited to this kind of data collection; they have argued that in the absence of more contextual, interpretive research, this data is of little use.

If the decision is made to create research centers, in an effort to foster programmatic research, these and other questions must be discussed. Nearly all the established researchers with whom I spoke suggested that if centers were to be established, a coordinating group would have to be formed, consisting of approximately 30 researchers, funders, practitioners and communal leaders. This group would meet several times to hammer out a research agenda, set the parameters for the centers, and oversee the competitions, if these were agreed upon. The group, or its designees, would

continue to be involved in reviewing the resultant research and monitoring the centers' productivity..

## III: THE CREATION OF AN INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT RESEARCH

### A. Funding for equipment, technology, research assistance, etc.

**1) A centrally administered research endowment might be established**. Researchers would submit proposals to a review panel, composed of prominent researchers, and (possibly) other stakeholders .

**2) Special funds might be designated for certain groups,** e.g., doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, or established researchers not previously involved in Jewish education research.

### B. Colleagial networking:

**1) The establishment of a journal**
-- At the present time, there is not enough research being done to fill a quarterly journal of high quality. One alternative might be beginning with an annual publication. Another might be commissioning articles by established researchers, to set a high level at the outset, and instituting blind peer review only when sufficient papers became available.

**2) Expanding the conferences of the Network for Research in Jewish Education.**
-- Seminars might be held to encourage and/or plan research on specific topics.
-- Researchers not previously involved in Jewish educational research might be invited for exploratory discussions, as suggested in IC.

**3) Holding sessions on research in Jewish education at the conferences of other scholarly associations, such as the AJS and the AERA.**

**4)The creation of an annotated bibliography of existent research and/or a clearinghouse, comparable to ERIC, for research in Jewish education.**

None of these suggestions would be particularly difficult or costly to implement. All, however, would require one or more people designated to carry them out, and compensated for their time in some way. This points to the need for a coordinating council.

## IV. VENUES FOR DISSEMINATION

For purposes of discussion I am separating the scholarly exchange of ideas, (components of which were proposed in section III), from more popular forms of dissemination, whose purpose is to create an interest in research, and to share the findings of research with a broader audience.

**A) The establishment of a magazine comparable to Educational** *Leadership*, **or or a newsletter like the Harvard** *Education Letter*.
   -- the practitioners interviewed for this study indicated that they regularly read (or, at least, peruse) magazines such as Educational Leadership, and newsletters related to the teaching of English, math, and foreign-languages.

**B) Commissioning articles in the Jewish press summarizing research findings, and spelling out their implications for practice and policy.**

**C) Sponsoring sessions on research as a regular feature of conferences such as the GA, CAJE, denominational groups, etc.**

## V. A COORDINATING COUNCIL

It is hard to imagine how many of the suggestions outlined above could be implemented, without the existence of some sort of coordinating council. Such a council might serve some of the following functions:
   a) setting a research agenda for programmatic research centers
   b) awarding and administering grants
   c) dissemination and publication, as enumerated above
   d) serving as an advocate for research
   e) seeking new sources for funding research

Though the need for such a council would seem self-evident, a number of questions arise regarding the method by which it would be convened, and its composition:

1) Which group or organization has the authority to convene such a council?
2) In what proportion (if at all) should the following groups of stakeholders be represented on the council:
   -researchers from Jewish institutions
   -researchers from research universities
   -practitioners
   -communal leaders
   -funders
   -members of the CIJE board?
3) Would membership on the council be rotated?
4) Would the council require a professional staff?

## SECTION 5: PUTTING THE COMPONENTS TOGETHER: THREE PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS

The components delineated in the previous section might be combined in any number of ways. This section contains three "first approximations" -- combinations which highlight some of the differences between the possible components. These proposals differ as to their cost -- the first is probably the most expensive, while the third is deliberately scaled down. As we collectively assess these proposals, and the others which I hope will be forthcoming, my hope is that we will be able to arrive at a consensus as to which is most feasible in terms of economics and institutional constraints, and which will yield the type of research which meets the needs of our current situation.

### PROPOSAL 1: A NETWORK OF RESEARCH CENTERS ORGANIZED AROUND A PROGRAMMATIC RESEARCH AGENDA

This proposal is based on the following assumptions:

1) The greatest need at the present time is for programmatic research that is sustained over a period of years, cumulative, and focused on a number of pressing needs.
2) Rather than trying to study everything, the community of scholars in Jewish education ought to concentrate on a few areas to which it can contribute the most.
3) Rather than avoiding or circumventing the Jewish training institutions, we should enrich them by making them partners with some of the leading research universities in the research endeavor.
4) The participation of scholars from research universities will require an investment over the short run; that investment will ultimately yield important new work.
5) Along with a major funding effort for research centers, a smaller, but not insignificant fund should be established to support the work of independent scholars from various institutions and from various disciplines.

In this proposal most of the research-related activities would emanate from and be organized by a core group of 30 researchers, funders, practitioners and community leaders which would serve as the initial "Research Council." Over the course of a year and a half, the Council would:
a) set a research agenda for the field
b) prioritize the research agenda
c) ascertain how much concerted research in each priority area would cost
d) ascertain how much money is available, and consequently, the number of centers that can be established.
e) coordinate the creation of research centers, either by invitation or by competition.

f) create a mechanism to oversee the competition, if there is one, and to monitor the work of the centers

g) create a mechanism for reviewing and awarding individual grants.

h) delegate a subgroup to create seminars, summer institutes, or some other mechanism whereby a network of Jewish researchers holding positions in research universities can begin meeting to discuss common concerns related (either directly or tangentially) to Jewish education.

## PROPOSAL 2: ESTABLISHING RESEARCH PROFESSORSHIPS AT MAJOR UNIVERSITIES

The assumptions behind this proposal are:

1) The key to producing research is the training of researchers and the creation of attractive positions for these researchers.

2) Universities are the best structure in which to conduct research and train new researchers.

3) The scholarly initiative of individuals will produce research of higher quality than that of research centers organized around a programmatic agenda.

4) Publishing and promotion are key elements in the reward structure for researchers.

The core component of this proposal is the creation of positions for researchers in Jewish education at major universities. Some of these positions would be for senior faculty, and others for more junior faculty; some might be in the school of education, while others might be in Judaic studies. If possible, all would be joint appointments with an existing department (such as sociology of education or curriculum and teaching). An issue which would require considerable discussion is that of the criteria by which some universities would be selected for these positions. And an important sub-issue would be the question of whether positions would be created at Jewish institutes of higher learning, as well as at research universities.

This proposal would also require the creation of some sort of coordinating body, but its function would be limited to:

a) raising and disbursing funds for research

b) publishing or funding a journal and a series of books.

c) publishing a newsletter for the non-scholarly public, for which the editorial responsibility would be shared by the universities with endowed professorships.

d) awarding doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships.

## PROPOSAL 3: A "GRASS ROOTS " APPROACH

Two major assumptions are at the root of this proposal:

1) That the sums of money required by proposals 1 and 2 will not, at least initially, be obtained.
2) That the centralized coordination of these two proposals is either: a) too oligarchic, or b) impossible to achieve, given the fragmented nature of the Jewish community.

This proposal, therefore, calls for more modest and experimental efforts, parts of which, if proven successful, might be expanded in the future. It would include the following components:

1) The creation of two post-doctoral programs, one at a Jewish university (for Ph.D.s with strong research skills, who need to learn more about the context of Jewish education), and one at a research university (for Ph.D.s familiar with Jewish education, but lacking in research skills).

2) The creation of a fund for research, to which any individual or institution might apply.

3) The creation of special funds for specialized research efforts. Requests for proposals in specific areas would be sent out, and individuals, teams of researchers, or institutions might apply.

4) The endowment of a journal, and appointment of an editorial board.

Note that this proposal would create only a few new positions for researchers (at the universities where the post-doctoral programs were located). The grants for research would create additional positions, but these positions would be funded only by "soft" money. In addition, the proposal (as it stands) would not include any form of dissemination to a broader audience (though such a component might be added).

ACADEMY FOR ED. LEADERSHIP

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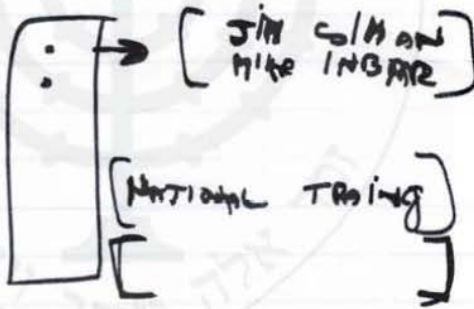
[JIM COLMAN
MIKE INBAR]

[Kenedy School
training]

[NATIONAL TRAINING]

Technology

# COUNCIL FOR INITIATIVES
# IN JEWISH EDUCATION

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Chair
Morton L. Mandel

Acting Director
Stephen H. Hoffman

Chief Education Officer
Dr. Shulamith Elster

February 12, 1992

Dear advisory committee members,

Enclosed is a first draft for the final report of the "research capability" project, minus the various tables, which are not yet completed. It reflects decisions that were made and changes that were suggested at a meeting two weeks ago, at which some members of the committee were present.

I would like to receive your feedback, on matters of both form and content:

1) The proposed solution begins with a first phase which is consists of the initiation of 3 programmatic research endeavors, and the creation of a small fund for field - initiated research. This solution is based on the perception of many that: a) funders will be cautious in their initial investments in research, and will want to go with established figures and projects which are perceived as critical to the CIJE's success and b) the annual budget for the first phase should be relatively modest.

Although I think that this solution is a pretty good one, I am a bit uneasy on two counts, and would like some suggestions from you in addressing them:

a) I worry that not enough attention is paid in Phase One to the creation of an infrastructure. What might be done to plant the seeds for such an infrastructure earlier than Phase Two?

b) My second worry is that Phase One, as currently configured, relies almost entirely on a process by which the CIJE will serve as a broker between donors and a few prominent researchers. Where will this leave researchers from the Jewish institutions, or younger researchers who are not as well known, but have a great deal to contribute? To reach out to these people would be to begin creating the infrastructure, so perhaps this question and the one in a) are the same.

2) Regarding the form of the report:

a) It was suggested that I keep the main body of the report to 4 - 5 pages, and put the rest into appendices and tables. The current version exceeds that limit considerably. The obvious section to cut is the penultimate one (section V) -- the 9 points which build the argument for the proposals that

follow. But I hesitate to cut them, because it seems to me that they lay the groundwork for the solutions. Any suggestions?

b) Do I need to write a conclusion? If so, what should it say?

As always, I would like to receive your response as soon as possible, and no later than March 1st, since the final draft is due by the end of March. Please call, if it's too cumbersome to write.

Finally, I want to thank each and every one of you for the time spent talking with me in person and over the phone, responding to previous drafts, and writing statements of your own. Though not all of your suggestions are reflected in the final document, all were paid very close attention, and many will find their way into various appendices.
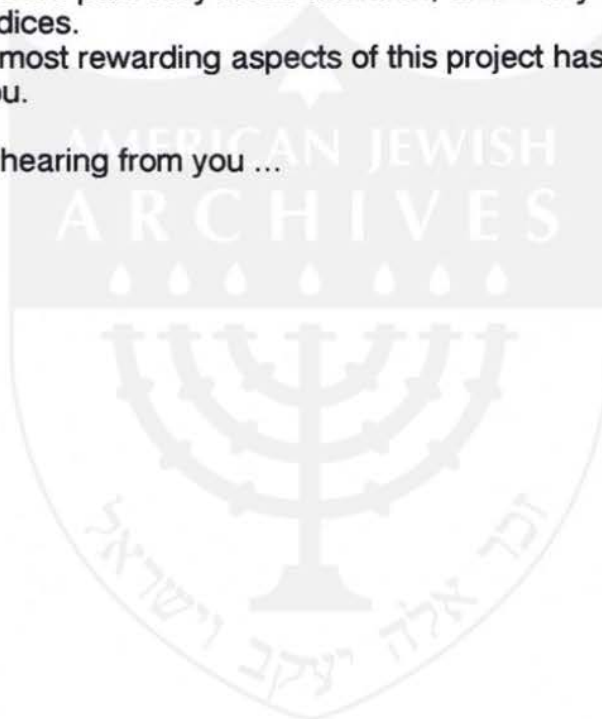For me, one of the most rewarding aspects of this project has been my interactions with you.

Looking forward to hearing from you ...

B'Shalom

Isa

*JUST THE FAX...*

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TO: Jack Ukeles

FAX NUMBER: 212-260 - 8760

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 1/15/92 ‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥‥ Page___1___ of ___8__
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Hi Jack!

Thanks for your comments on draft #6, which were very helpful!

I know you're really busy right now, but if you have time, I'd like your reactions to the enclosed, especially to the proposal which begins on p.3.

The documents on the lead communities look great! I'm sorry I won't be at the meeting on the 27th to learn more.

I'll try to reach you by phone next week

B'Shalom,
Isa

Dear advisory committee member ,

Many thanks to all of you who responded to my last mailing (draft#6).
I found your comments quite helpful -- I've tried to take the major
changes you suggested into account in the enclosed outline. For
those few of you who didn't respond, here's another chance ...

Enclosed you will find an outline for the next draft (which, as per Jack
Ukeles' suggestion, I am calling a preliminary version of the final
report). It is in outline form because: a) I haven't yet had the time to
write all of it up, and b) before I spend the time writing, I want to have
general agreement on the changes I am planning to make.

Eventually, I will want your comment on the entire outline. But, right
now, I have a more immediate request:

The final section is more than an outline -- it is a new action proposal,
which is based on your reactions to the three proposals in draft #6,
and on a seemingly endless string of conversations I've had with
many of you. I think it takes into account the various objections which
were voiced regarding the previous proposals.

I NEED YOUR IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK ON THIS PROPOSAL!
To be more specific, I need to hear from you before January 30th,
because on the 31st a meeting of the West Coast and Israel branches
of the advisory committee will be held (in Northern California), and I
would really like the advice (dare I ask for consent?) of all members of
the committee before I go into that meeting.

I'm sorry to give you such short notice -- I am working as fast as I can,
but it never seems to be fast enough.

You can convey your reactions to me by phone, or fax (I won't recount
the ongoing saga of my nightmsrish tangle with bit-net; siffice it to say
that I'm not yet up and running). If you don't have time to mull over the
entire outline, please give me your reactions to the proposal at the
end, and your reactions to the other sections later.

Thanks, in advance, for your help!

B'Shalom,

Isa

## Outline of the Final Report of the CIJE's
## Research Capability Project
(with special note of changes from draft 6 and questions which remain)

### Section 1: Why Research?

This section will begin with a vignette inviting the reader to imagine what an educational institution might be able to accomplish, if it had at its disposal certain research findings. For example,

a) What might a supplementary school director do differently if he or she had: 1) an inventory of teacher knowledge and skills; 2) an instrument for assessing the capabilities and deficiencies of his or her teachers and 3) a series of learning materials and/or learning opportunities through which teachers could improve in specific areas of deficiency?

b) How might a day school director utilize research on the impact of day school education on families, including an analysis of which day school graduates continue their Judaic studies after their graduation, and the factors involved in the decision to continue?

c) How might a central agency structure area-wide programming for teenagers, if it had access to a study of successful post Bar/Bat Mitzvah programs?

QUESTIONS: DOES THIS APPROACH ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS WHICH WERE RAISED WITH REGARD TO THE PREVIOUS VIGNETTE? ARE THESE THE RIGHT EXAMPLES? SHOULD THERE BE A VIGNETTE MORE EXPLICITLY RELATED TO INFORMAL SETTINGS AND/OR JCC'S? IS 3 THE RIGHT NUMBER?

Following this, would be a sub-section entitled "What is Research?", a slightly modified and expanded version of a similar section in draft #6. It will be pointed out that we need a variety of research efforts -- both "decision-oriented" and "conclusion-oriented."

## Section 2: What are the elements of a Credible
## Research Capability?

As in the previous draft, this section will delineate the components necessary for the establishment of a research capability. It has been suggested that the 4th item, the infrastructure, be expanded to include funding (not explicitly mentioned before) and the coordinating function (which had previously been a separate item).  The revised version will list the following five components:

1) Scholars and researchers; people who understand the context of Jewish education, and possess expertise in a number of research methodologies.

2) One or more universities in which these researchers are trained.

3) A number of settings (such as universities, research centers, and/or central agencies) in which these researchers can work. In addition to enabling researchers to support themselves, the available positions must offer them opportunities for career advancement, and continued intellectual growth.

4) An infrastructure which supports research . This would include:
   a) reliable sources of funding, disbursed through a process which would allow for an open submission of proposals which would be  reviewed on their merits;
   b) at least one coordinating body, which would serve as an advocate for research, and  a gatekeeper for funding and publication.
   c) opportunities for collegial networking through conferences, journals, and other venues.

5) Avenues for dissemination to the public in general, and to policy-makers and practitioners in particular.

## Section 3: The Current Situation

This section, too will remain essentially the same, but will be re-organized so as to parallel the order of the five elements outlined in section 2.

## Section 4: Possible Steps towards the Establishment
## of a Research Capability

This section will contain, as it currently does, an elaboration of the possible variations within each of the components of a fully developed research capability. In addition, each element will be assessed according to the following criteria:

-- cost
-- time frame -- how long might it take to implement, and how long might it take before some results can be shared
-- feasibility in light of institutional constraints and available personnel
-- potential impact on field
-- quality of resultant research
-- responsiveness to communal needs
-- encouragement of individual initiative

This assessment will be more systematic than the rather random comments contained in draft #6, but the essential points will remain the same.

QUESTION: HOW CAN THIS SECTION BE SYSTEMATIC WITHOUT BECOMING TEDIOUS? IS THERE ANY WAY TO COLLAPSE OR SUMMARIZE SOME OF MY ASSESSMENTS? (I may not know until I start writing them)

## Section 5
## Short and Long-term Proposals for Establishing
## a Research Capability

Although the components enumerated in section 4 might be varied and combined in any number of ways, an assessment of each variant in light of the five criteria narrows the range of options considerably. As a result of this weighing of the alternatives, I will offer a short-term and a long-term proposal. These proposals are based on the following assumptions:

1) Without a supportive infrastructure, researchers, regardless of the positions they occupy, will not be able to function at an optimal level. Thus, the creation of an infrastructure must be given priority over the creation of positions and over training, at least in the first phase.

2) At the present time, both of the most likely settings for potential researchers have serious limitations, through for different reasons:
   a) The institutions of higher learning in Jewish education, although closely connected to the field, and keenly interested in the findings which might be generated by research, are not, as currently configured, able to sustain large research efforts. Faculty members at these institutions are few in number and have multiple demands on their time; there is no tradition, in these institutions, for research furloughs or frequent sabbaticals.

b) Large research universities have the reverse problem. While explicitly configured to support research efforts, they are largely removed from the realities of Jewish education. Researchers at these universities might face two problems: i) they might not have sufficient contact with the field to appreciate the important differences between Jewish and public education; ii) the reward structure in the university setting would place a premium on research of a more universal bent, sacrificing, in the process, its potential impact on the field of Jewish education.

Over the long run, none of these problems is insurmountable: the Jewish institutions can be encouraged to recognize the centrality of research to their mission, and to make appropriate structural accommodations; likewise, if research in Jewish education were to achieve a high profile through important studies and serious publications, research universities might recognize and reward research efforts that might otherwise have seemed parochial. Indeed, over the long term, both Jewish training institutions and research universities could become ideal settings for both housing researchers and preparing new ones.

3) An appropriate balance must be struck between "decision - oriented" and "conclusion-oriented" research -- research derived from the perceived needs of various stakeholders, as well as research initiated by researchers and stemming from their intellectual interests. Both types of research must be endorsed and supported, but the balance between them may shift over time. In the short-term, it will be crucial to win over the skeptics who see research as an academic indulgence, and to conduct, relatively quickly, a number of studies with potentially high impact on the field. As research in Jewish education became more established and accepted, increased funding for scholar - initiated research efforts would be justified.

Proposal for Phase One (years 1 - 5):
A National Institute for Research in Jewish Education

The institute would have the following functions:
a) to initiate and coordinate a small number (two to four) of programmatic research efforts; these might be organized by either competition or invitation, as determined by the governing board (see below);
b) to administer a competition for research grants to individuals and/or institutions;
c) to serve as a spokes-person and advocate for research in Jewish education, among practitioners, potential funders, and the community at large.

In addition, the Institute might choose to undertake one or more of the following projects:
d) a competition for post-doctoral fellowships for either practising Jewish educators interested in strengthening their background in research or researchers interested in learning more about Jewish education;

e) a seminar for "reflective practitioners"

f) seminars or retreats for Jewish researchers at research universities, whose purpose would be to interest them in becoming involved, in some way, with research in Jewish education;

g) the dissemination of the findings of research generated under its auspices, either in coordination with existing organizations or on its own;

h) raising funds for additional research efforts.

The Institute would be governed by a board composed of prominent researchers, representatives of the CIJE board, and other potential stakeholders. This board would meet regularly for extended periods of time, to set policies, including the appropriate topics for programmatic research, procedures by which the various competitions were organized, and budgetary parameters for other projects. Smaller committees would be responsible for overseeing individual projects.

Initially, the Institute's staff might be limited to a director, an associate director, and a secretary. The director would be a prominent researcher, who might serve a two-year term, on leave from another position; he or she would take an active role in conceptualizing the programmatic research efforts, and might serve as a team leader in one of the studies. The associate director, who would also have a research background, would have a more permanent position, and would be responsible for the institute's administration.

Some of the staff of the Institute's programmatic research efforts would likely be researchers at various universities and central agencies, who would participate on these projects on a part-time basis; graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at various universities might also be employed. Alternately, some staff members might be based in the Institute itself.

A minimum budget for such as Institute would be $500,000 a year, half of which would be allocated to administration and half to research. Additional funding would allow for more extensive research efforts.

<div align="center">
Proposal for Phase Two (years 5 - 10):<br>
The Creation of Professorships and Research Centers
</div>

As the projects initiated in Phase One proceeded, certain institutions would emerge as natural centers for research, by virtue of their faculty/staff, and by virtue of their interest in and support for research. In Phase Two, some number of these institutions would receive substantial endowments for research professorships and centers, which would enable them to either initiate new Ph.D. programs or enhance existing programs, and establish themselves as important centers for research. In keeping with the notion that positions alone are not sufficient, the endowments would include allocation for research centers at these locations. Such a center might be housed in a single institution or emerge from a consortium between several institutions.

In this Phase the National Institute would continue to operate, hopefully expanding its budget and its funding capabilities. The extent of the Institute's involvement in the selection of sites for professorships and research centers would be determined at a later date.

The cost of such endowments would be high -- between $1 and $2 million for each senior position, and perhaps half that for each junior position. The annual budget for a research center could be as little as $200,000 or as much as $5 million.

## CITIES IN NORTH AMERICA WITH JEWISH POPULATION OF BETWEEN 15,000 - 300,000

| State | City | Jewish Pop |
|-------|------|-----------:|
| PA | Philadelphia | 254,000 |
| IL | Chicago | 248,000 |
| FL | Miami | 226,000 |
| MA | Boston | 200,000 |
| DC | Washington | 165,000 |
| ONT | Toronto | 135,000 |
| CA | San Francisco | 128,000 |
| NJ | Metro West | 121,000 |
| FL | Ft. Lauderdale | 116,000 |
| MI | Detroit | 96,000 |
| NJ | Ocean County | 95,000 |
| PQ | Montreal | 95,000 |
| MD | Baltimore | 94,500 |
| CA | Orange County | 90,000 |
| NJ | Bergen County | 69,300 |
| GA | Atlanta | 67,000 |
| FL | Palm Beach County | 65,000 |
| NE | Omaha | 65,000 |
| OH | Cleveland | 65,000 |
| FL | South Broward | 60,000 |
| NY | Rockland County | 60,000 |
| MO | St. Louis | 53,500 |
| FL | S Palm Beach County | 52,000 |
| CO | Denver | 46,000 |
| AZ | Phoenix | 45,000 |
| PA | Pittsburgh | 45,000 |
| TX | Houston | 45,000 |
| CA | San Diego | 42,000 |
| TX | Dallas | 36,900 |
| CA | Oakland | 35,000 |
| NJ | Middlesex County | 35,000 |
| NJ | Monmouth County | 33,600 |
| NJ | Central New Jersey | 32,000 |
| CA | San Jose | 30,700 |
| CT | New Haven | 28,000 |
| NJ | Southern New Jersey | 28,000 |
| NJ | North New Jersey | 28,000 |
| WI | Milwaukee | 28,000 |
| CT | Hartford | 26,000 |
| NY | Rochester | 25,000 |
| OH | Cincinnati | 25,000 |
| MA | North Shore | 22,000 |
| MN | Minneapolis | 22,000 |

## CITIES IN NORTH AMERICA WITH JEWISH POPULATION OF BETWEEN 15,000 - 300,000

| State | City | Jewish Pop |
|---|---|---|
| AZ | Southern Arizona | 20,000 |
| BC | Vancouver | 20,000 |
| WA | Seattle | 19,500 |
| MO | Kansas City | 19,100 |
| NV | Las Vegas | 19,000 |
| NY | Northeastern NY | 18,500 |
| NY | Buffalo | 18,100 |
| CT | Bridgeport | 18,000 |
| VA | Tidewater | 18,000 |
| RI | Rhode Island | 17,500 |
| NJ | Atlantic County | 15,800 |
| FL | Orlando | 15,000 |
| OH | Columbus | 15,000 |
| MAN | Winnipeg | 14,800 |

**Building a Research Capability in Jewish Education**
**Prepared for the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education**
**by Dr. Isa Aron**

**Final Report -- Draft #1**
**February, 1992**

## Why research?

When members of the newly formed Commission for Jewish Education in North America were asked, in 1988, what they saw as the most critical issues to be addressed by the Commission, few mentioned research. Most saw the task of the Commission as fairly straightforward: to identify the educational needs of the Jewish community, and to discern the ways in which educational institutions could be strengthened and/or reconfigured in order to meet these needs. The problems of the community and its educational institutions seemed rather obvious, at first, as did the potential solutions to these problems.

Over time, however, it became clear that neither the maladies nor the remedies were quite so simple. For example, it was widely agreed that there exists a critical shortage of qualified teachers in both day and supplementary schools. But what qualifications were deemed important for each of these settings? And what measures would be required to upgrade current teachers and/or recruit new ones? To take a second example, there was widespread dissatisfaction with supplementary schools, but few were able to articulate a vision of what a good school would look like, or what goals it could realistically accomplish.

These questions, and a number of others, formed the basis for the first research reports sponsored by the Commission, and published under its imprimatur. But the matter did not rest there, because each report spawned new questions:
   --What special knowledge and skills do teachers of Judaica and Hebrew require? How might a teachers' knowledge and skills be assessed? What modes of pre-service training and in-service staff development are most appropriate for different educational institutions?
   -- What are the essential characteristics of a good supplementary school? What successful programmatic elements can be replicated, and under what conditions?
   --How much is the Jewish community currently spending on its various educational programs? Do the budgets of superior institutions differ from those of mediocre ones? How much money will be required to turn various institutions around?

As the questions multiplied, it became clear that it would be shortsighted for the Jewish community to undertake a massive educational effort of the kind imagined by the Commission without, at the same time, generating the knowledge essential to informed decision-making. Just as the development and marketing of successful new products is based on extensive research and

development, and just as the solutions to medical problems are sought in research and experimentation, the infusion of new energy and funding into the field of Jewish education would have to be accompanied by a comparable research effort.

Thus, when the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education was created, and charged with the implementation of the Commission's recommendations, one of its first projects was the "Research Capability Project." Over a period of eight months educators and community leaders, including several members of the CIJE board, were interviewed, to gain a sense of their perceived research needs. Researchers in both Jewish and secular universities were asked to imagine the steps which might be taken to generate high quality research in a number of areas, research that would facilitate the work of the Council, and give a range of stakeholders the tools to understand and change the current situation.

This report offers a strategy for the establishment of a research capability that is both sophisticated and responsive, drawing upon the energies of both established researchers in research universities and a nascent community of researchers in Jewish universities. Three overlapping phases of increasing comprehensiveness are proposed, beginning with the funding of a limited number of highly visible studies, through the creation of a coordinating body called the National Research Institute, and culminating, in eight to ten years, in the establishment of professorships and research centers in major colleges and universities. Before elaborating the plan, it will be necessary to:
  -- define research, and justify its importance in the process of educational reform;
  -- outline the essential elements of a credible research capability;
  -- survey the current situation, in terms of the presence or absence of these elements;
  -- review the assumptions which lead to the final recommendations.
These items will be discussed in sections II - V of this report; section VI will outline the plan.


## II: What is Research, and Why Do We Need it?

Research is the serious study of a subject over a sustained period of time, through a variety of modalities. Research in education includes assessment and evaluation, experimentation, conceptual and statistical analysis, anthropological interpretation, and historical documentation. It enables one to articulate a philosophy, identify the core components of a curriculum, understand the relevant characteristics of learners, teachers and educational leaders, express concretely what success would mean, and shape the environment to maximize one's chances of success.

Research in the field of education is sometimes seen as superfluous -- an academic indulgence that contributes little to the realm of practice. In the past

two decades, however, educational research in North America has undergone a significant transformation. The problems of students, teachers, and school systems have become central; the result has been a series of wide-ranging studies that have focused on effective schools and school leadership, teacher knowledge and teacher assessment, the identification of and intervention with students at-risk, and a variety of curricular improvements.

A caveat, however, is in order: it is important that we not view research as a "quick fix," a means for finding sure-fire prescriptions. Research in education rarely provides unequivocal answers. Rather, it can provide something which is ultimately more important -- a thoughtful and insightful approach to the enterprise.

Research can teach us new things about institutions and situations which we may have taken for granted, or presumed to understand. It enables us to explore and assess a range of alternative actions, rather than the one or two which spring to mind immediately. Most importantly, research can bring new intellectual energy to a field, infusing activities that have become routine and unreflective with new ideas and new vision. In a field such as Jewish education, research can be a vehicle for bringing some of the most creative and rigorous thinkers in American universities into the orbit of the organized Jewish community.

## III: What are the elements of a Credible Research Capability?

Important though it may be for educational renewal, research is not an entity that can spring up overnight. Research traditions and paradigms take time to develop; often a number of inter-related studies is needed before the appropriate questions and methods come into focus. To understand an endeavor as complex as education, researchers require global statistical surveys and detailed observations in individual classrooms; they must bring to their work psychological insight, sociological perspective, and a knowledge of the subject matter. Today, the best educational research is likely to be a collaborative effort, combining a number of methodologies, and crossing the boundaries of several disciplines.

What institutions and institutional arrangements enable research to develop productively? The researchers interviewed in connection with this project agreed that the following five elements were essential to the creation of a robust research capability:

1) Scholars and researchers; people who understand the context of Jewish education, and possess expertise in a number of research methodologies.

2) Several universities in which these researchers are trained.

3) A number of settings (such as universities, research centers, and/or central agencies) in which these researchers can work. In addition to enabling researchers to support themselves, the available positions must offer them opportunities for career advancement and continued intellectual growth.

4) An infrastructure which supports research . This would include:
   a) reliable sources of funding, disbursed through a process which would allow for an open submission of proposals which would be  reviewed on their merits;
   b) venues for the publication of both findings and processes.
   c) opportunities for collegial networking through conferences and institutes.

5) Avenues for dissemination to the public in general, and to policy-makers and practitioners in particular.

Thus, the problem of improving the research capability of the field of Jewish education is quite complicated. It requires not one, but an interlocking set of institutions, agencies and funds in order to sustain itself. *No one of these elements can stand alone*. It makes no sense to create positions without qualified people to fill them. These people require rigorous training; but few will enter lengthy training programs if there is little hope of a future position. Without an infrastructure, a position alone will not produce much research. And without dissemination there will be little interest in, and public support for, either the positions or the infrastructure.

## IV: The Current Situation

Table 1 presents an overview of the current situation in research in Jewish education. Glancing at the table, it is easy to see that none of the five elements are present in any but he most rudimentary fashion. Thus, it is not surprising to find that we have little research in Jewish education, and that what we have consists of isolated studies which are rarely connected to a larger research program.

## V: Evaluating the options

In order to establish a credible research capability, each of the five elements enumerated above would have to be realized -- researchers would have to be recruited, positions created, an infrastructure established, etc. Complicating the matter considerably, however, is the fact that each element might be actualized in a number of different ways. For example, new researchers might be trained, and/or established researchers recruited from related fields. Positions for researchers might be created at existing institutions and/or newly established research centers. Funding for research might be awarded by commissioning projects and/or sponsoring competitions.

During the course of this project the possible ways in which each of the five elements enumerated in section III could be realized were examined in light of a number of criteria, including cost, time needed for implementation, feasibility, potential impact on the field, quality of resultant ant research, and responsiveness to communal needs. The results of this analysis are summarized in Tables 2a - 2e, which are included in Appendix A.

The major conclusions emerging from this analysis, which form the basis for the proposals in section VI, are the following:

1) A university is the most appropriate setting for researchers to both work and be trained, since research and teaching can reinforce one another synergistically. Research in Jewish education requires the combined resources of two kinds of universities -- research universities (because they house large numbers of accomplished researchers) and institutions of higher learning in Jewish education (because of their close linkages to the field, and familiarity with the specific contexts of Jewish education). Ideally, consortia between these two types of institutions would be developed, either project-by-project or on a more permanent basis.

2) Professorships alone are not sufficient to encourage the growth of research. Research in the social sciences is labor intensive and expensive. Most large research universities conduct research under the aegis of endowed or independently funded research centers.

3) Critical though they might be in the long run, neither research universities nor institutions of higher learning in Jewish education are, at the present time, hospitable settings for research in Jewish education:
   a) The institutions of higher learning in Jewish education are not, as currently configured, able to sustain large research efforts. Faculty members at these institutions are few in number and have multiple demands on their time; there is no tradition, in these institutions, for research furloughs or frequent sabbaticals.
   b) Large research universities have the reverse problem. While accustomed to supporting research efforts, they are largely removed from the realities of Jewish education. Researchers at these universities might face two problems: i) they might not have sufficient contact with the field to appreciate the important differences between Jewish and public education; ii) the reward structure in the university setting would place a premium on research of a more universal bent, sacrificing, in the process, its potential impact on the field of Jewish education.

4) Over the long run, none of these problems is insurmountable: the Jewish institutions can be encouraged to recognize the centrality of research to their mission, and to make appropriate structural accommodations. And, if research in Jewish education were to achieve a high profile through important studies and serious publications, research universities would come to recognize and reward research efforts that might otherwise have seemed parochial.

5) A significant percentage of the educational researchers in American universities are identified and committed Jews. During the course of this planning project I spoke with over a dozen of these researchers, and received the names of many others. A few of these researchers expressed a strong interest in conducting research related to Jewish education, if funds were made available to release them from other commitments and/or support their graduate students. A much larger number indicated that they could imagine themselves participating in research projects related to Jewish education at some future date, if these projects dovetailed with their interests and expertise, and if a by-product of this work was an opportunity to grow Jewishly, in some way. Several of the people I interviewed suggested a series of institutes and seminars as a vehicle for involving researchers like themselves, and generating an interest in research efforts.

6) Without a supportive infrastructure, researchers, regardless of the positions they occupy, will not be able to undertake long-range, sophisticated studies. Thus, the creation of an infrastructure must precede both training and the creation of positions.

7) The most efficient mechanism for creating such an infrastructure would be the establishment of an independent research institute, which could serve as a central address for advocacy, the raising and disbursal of funds, brokering and overseeing research projects, and the publication and dissemination of findings.

8) While a free-standing research institute would serve as an excellent interim solution, the time and expense involved in its creation are problematic. What is needed in the beginning years are a number of highly visible studies which can attract immediate funding, and win over those who are skeptical as to the utility of research. To maximize both visibility and quality, these studies ought to involve researchers with national reputations.

9) An appropriate balance must be struck between research derived from the perceived needs of various stakeholders, on the one hand, and research initiated by researchers and stemming from their intellectual interests, on the other. Both types of research must be endorsed and supported, but the balance between them may shift over time. In the short-term, it will be crucial to undertake studies directly connected to the work of the CIJE. As research in Jewish education became more established and accepted, increased funding for scholar - initiated research efforts would be justified.

With these points in mind, we turn now to concrete proposals for the establishment of a research capability. Section VI contains three proposals, short-term (1 - 5 years), medium-range (3 - 7 years), and long - term (6 - 10 years). These proposals are designed to overlap, so that each prepares the ground for the next.

## Phase One (years 1 - 5)
## Initiation of Programmatic Research in Three Areas

Programmatic research is research initiated by a foundation or agency in response to a perceived need. The research design is ambitious -- a series of inter-related studies, combining a number of different methodologies and gathering data from as many as 10 - 20 sites. The principal investigator, in addition to doing research of his or her own, is responsible for coordinating the work of a number of researchers and research assistants, some of whom may be located in different institutions, and even in different regions. In an effort to be responsive to the needs of the field, a range of stakeholders including practitioners and community leaders may be invited to serve on an advisory or review board. Likewise, careful attention is paid to the various ways in which the study's findings can be disseminated widely.

In this first phase, the CIJE would seek funding for three programmatic research efforts, each under the leadership of a prominent researcher. Each study would be projected for 3 - 5 years, and have an annual budget of approximately $250,000. The particular studies would be chosen based on the perceive needs of the CIJE, the expertise and availability of particular researchers, and the priorities of the funders. The following three examples are included for illustrative purposes only:

1) evaluation of staff development programs in the lead communities
In each lead community, participating institutions will be required to develop plans for upgrading the knowledge and skills of teachers, principals, and other personnel. This research effort would aim to create a paradigm for assessing both the baseline abilities of these personnel and the changes which result from a variety of different staff development efforts.

2) a study of the financing of Jewish educational institutions
How much money does the Jewish community spend on its various schools, camps, community centers and Israel programs? What percentage of the costs are borne by the participants, their sponsoring institutions, the community at large, and individual donors? Are certain institutional arrangements more cost effective than others? What would be the fiscal ramifications of increasing staff salaries, expanding some programs, and consolidating others? Is there any relationship between the quality of education and the costs involved? These are critical questions to be answered if the Commissions recommendations are to take root, but, at the present moment, the Jewish community has no mechanism for either collecting or analyzing these data.

3) a study of Jewish identity in a multi-cultural society, and the impact of education on this identity
Recent demographic studies indicate that the traditional bases for Jewish identity (such as religious affiliation or living in a Jewish neighborhood) are rapidly eroding. At the same time, America is moving towards a conception of itself as a multi-cultural society, in which people's primary identification is with a particular ethnic group. Do unaffiliated and marginally-affiliated Jews

identify themselves as part of a distinctive culture? If so, what aspects of the Jewish culture form the basis of their Jewish identity?

In keeping with the principle that field initiated research is also important, we recommend that in addition to the three major studies, a smaller fund be raised for the funding of smaller research projects. The fund might be administered on a competitive basis, with individuals, or teams of scholars, submitting proposals.

## Phase Two (years 3 - 7):
## A National Institute for Research in Jewish Education

While the studies undertaken in Phase One would be important in their own right, and would begin to develop an appreciation for research among a number of different stakeholders, they would not, in and of themselves, lead to the development of a research capability. This step would be undertaken in Phase Two, in which a skeletal infrastructure supporting research would be built, under the aegis of an independent National Research Institute.

The institute would have the following functions:
   a) to initiate and coordinate an additional number (two to four) of programmatic research efforts; these might be organized by either competition or invitation, as determined by the governing board (see below);
   b) to administer a competition for research grants to individuals and/or institutions;
   c) to develop and implement a strategy for broadening the appeal of research among current and potential funders, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

In addition, the Institute would sponsor the following projects:
   d) a competition for post-doctoral fellowships for either practising Jewish educators interested in strengthening their background in research or researchers interested in learning more about Jewish education;
   e) a seminar for "reflective practitioners;"
   f) seminars or retreats for Jewish researchers at research universities, whose purpose would be to interest them in becoming involved, in some way, with research in Jewish education;
   g) the dissemination of the findings of the research generated in Phase One, either in coordination with existing organizations or on its own;
   h) raising funds for additional research efforts.

The Institute would be governed by a board composed of prominent researchers, representatives of the CIJE board (including key funders), and other potential stakeholders. This board would meet regularly for extended periods of time, to set policies, including the appropriate topics for programmatic research, procedures by which the various competitions were organized, and budgetary parameters for other projects. Smaller committees would be responsible for overseeing individual projects.

Initially, the Institute's staff might be limited to a director, an associate director, and a secretary. The director would be a prominent researcher, who might serve a two-year term, on leave from another position; he or she would take an active role in conceptualizing the programmatic research efforts, and might serve as a team leader in one of the studies. The associate director, who would also have a research background, would have a more permanent position, and would be responsible for the institute's administration.

Some of the staff of the Institute's programmatic research efforts would likely be researchers at various universities and central agencies, who would participate on these projects on a part-time basis; graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at various universities might also be employed. Alternately, some staff members might be based in the Institute itself.

The proposed budget for the Institute would be $1.5 million annually.

## Phase Three (years 6 - 10):
## The Creation of Professorships and Research Centers

As the projects initiated in Phase One and Two proceeded, certain institutions would emerge as natural centers for research, by virtue of their faculty and staff, and by virtue of their interest in and support for research. In Phase Three, some number of these institutions would receive substantial endowments for research professorships and centers, which would enable them to either initiate new Ph.D. programs or enhance existing programs, and establish themselves as important centers for research in Jewish education. In keeping with the notion that positions alone are not sufficient, the endowments would include allocations for research centers at these locations. Such a center might be housed in a single institution or emerge from a consortium between several institutions.

In this phase the National Institute would continue to operate, hopefully expanding its budget and its funding capabilities. The extent of the Institute's involvement in the selection of sites for professorships and research centers would be determined at a later date.

The cost of such endowments would be between $1 and $2 million for each senior position, and perhaps half of that for each junior position. The annual budget for a research center could be range from $200,000 to $5 million.