



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**  
A DIVISION OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

**MS-831: Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980-2011.**

Series F: CIJE Accrual, 1981-2011, undated.  
Subseries 2: Dan Pekarsky, 1981-2011, undated.

---

Box  
77

Folder  
12

Lead Communities Project. Atlanta, 1993-1995.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the  
[American Jewish Archives](http://AmericanJewishArchives.org) website.

**NEW JEWISH DAY HIGH SCHOOL**  
**Sunday, Feb. 12, 1995**  
**Greenfield Hebrew Academy**

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>8:30-9:00 A.M.</b>    | <b>Welcome and Refreshments</b>  |
| <b>9:00-9:30 A.M.</b>    | <b>Introduction of the Program and Leaders<br/>(whole group)</b>   |
| <b>9:30-9:45 A.M.</b>    | <b>Goals and Practices: Identifying the Challenge<br/>(whole group) Writing exercise</b>   |
| <b>9:50-10:20 A.M.</b>   | <b>First Break-Out Session (small groups)</b><br>Anchoring goals in a vision of the kind of graduates<br>and community we are hoping to develop  |
| <b>10:25-10:40 A.M.</b>  | <b>Coffee Break</b>  |
| <b>10:45 -12:00 noon</b> | <b>The Power of Guiding Visions (whole group)</b>  |
| <b>12:00-12:45 P.M.</b>  | <b>Lunch</b>   |
| <b>12:45-1:00 P.M.</b>   | <b>Orientation to the Afternoon's Work<br/>(whole group)</b>   |
| <b>1:05-2:00 P.M.</b>    | <b>Second Break-Out Session (small groups)</b><br>Five themes will be explored: (a) Prayer and religious<br>practices; (b) Jewish texts; (c) Hebrew; (d) Jewish<br>history; (e) Israel |
| <b>2:00-2:15 P.M.</b>    | <b>Coffee Break</b>  |
| <b>2:15-3:00 P.M.</b>    | <b>Reviewing the Findings of the Small Groups<br/>(whole group)</b>  |
| <b>3:00-3:45 P.M.</b>    | <b>Concluding the Day (whole group)</b><br>Identification of areas of agreement and disagreement,<br>areas for further exploration, and discussion of next<br>steps                    |
| <b>3:45-4:00 P.M.</b>    | <b>Evaluation of the Day</b>   |

## DEFINING FEATURES OF VISION-DRIVEN INSTITUTIONS

1. There is a clear, shared, and compelling vision of the kind of individual and community toward which one believes one should educate.
2. Anchored in this vision are clear educational goals which guide the enterprise.
3. Curriculum, pedagogy, physical organization, social organization, ethos all in various ways reflect the goals and the vision that the institution is committed to. The vision suffuses the life of the institution.
4. The educators are whole-heartedly identified with the vision and goals the institution represents; they embody it in their own lives and it guides their efforts at education.
5. Because the vision is genuinely compelling to the key stakeholders, because they genuinely care about its actualization, gaps between the vision and actual outcomes are deeply troubling and serious efforts are made to close these gaps.

ATLANTA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL SEMINAR, Feb. 1995

It would be very helpful to have your candid reactions to the various framing-statements offered by the different sub-groups. Are you comfortable with the statement? Enthusiastic about the formulation? Uncomfortable - if so why? Any suggestions? Please formulate your thoughts below - with or without your name. Continue on back if necessary.

HEBREW

ISRAEL

PRAYER AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE (I)

PRAYER AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE (II)

JEWISH HISTORY

TEXT STUDY (please use other side)

MEMO TO: Community High School Group  
FROM: Daniel Pekarsky  
RE: The two matters we discussed  
DATE: Feb.8, 1995

In our conversation earlier today, you requested specifics concerning two matters: 1) Themes/issues/categories that might be helpful in stimulating thoughtful discussion in the afternoon discussion-groups; 2) Greater clarity concerning the morning's small group discussion so as to better prepare the facilitators. I hope the following proves helpful.

#### THEMES/QUESTIONS/ISSUES FOR THE GROUPS MEETING IN THE AFTERNOON

Note that the questions, issues we are identifying are suggestions only, and they certainly don't represent an exhaustive list of the kinds that might be helpful. On the contrary, a facilitator may find some but not all of them of use; and there might be others not represented below that could turn out to be more helpful. Note that a number of the questions in each category are over-lapping; they represent different ways of getting at some central issues. Facilitators should use their judgment in deciding which to draw on (based in part on what they personally feel comfortable with); it would be a mistake for them to feel that they need to or should address all of them! They should keep in mind that the important thing is to stimulate some thoughtful deliberation concerning the kinds of aims that should animate the institution in the particular domain their group is looking at. Moreover, they should be reminded that this is a first effort at the task at hand, and that it need not at this stage be either a comprehensive treatment of the domain in question or more than a first draft of what they do take up. Finally, although they should be aiming for some general framing principles, they should also keep track of the issues that come up--especially those that might prove difficult for the participants.

#### HEBREW

Is the learning of Hebrew important?

If so, why is it important?

What kind of Hebrew -- modern or classical?

What kind of facility in Hebrew would you hope to encourage - reading? writing? speaking? Praying?

How, if at all, do you envision Hebrew fitting into the life of graduates of your institution? For Example:

Communication with Israelis in Israel?

Reading of great literature? If so, what kind? Modern Israeli literature? Biblical literature? Israeli newspapers?

Prayer?

What attitude towards the Hebrew language, and its use, would you hope to encourage? Would it be different from the attitude you would hope to encourage towards English or French?

#### PRAYER/RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Your school is going to have to make decisions concerning a range of matters like the following:

Dress-codes, e.g. when, if ever, are boys to wear kippot?

What is the place (if any) of prayer in the life of the school? If prayer does have a place in the school, is it to be egalitarian?

How are various Kashrut issues to be handled?

Does the school care what its students do on Shabbat?  
Does the school care what its teachers do on Shabbat?

What religious practices should be studied as part of the curriculum - and with what purpose?

Your group should not try to answer such questions today. But the school's efforts to answer these and kindred questions effectively would be enhanced if you could articulate what you see as the school's fundamental mission in the area of religious practice and prayer. With this in mind, here are some basic kinds of questions you might want to consider:

What does the ideal graduate "do" in the domain of religious practice?

In the area of religious practice and prayer, should the school limit itself to "teaching about" such matters -- or should it also be trying to instill certain attitudes, practices, and skills? If the latter, which ones and why?

What things do you think it's not appropriate for your kind of school to try to nurture - and how should it handle those matters? e.g. ignoring them? teaching a range of views, and encouraging students to decide for themselves? etc.

Helpful as it is to ask what you would consider a "successful" outcome or range of outcomes in this domain, it may also be helpful to ask: what kinds of outcomes you would represent an educational failure on the part of the institution?

## ISRAEL

What attitudes towards Israel does the school hope to nurture in its graduates? What kinds of knowledge? What ways of relating to Israel?

How does the school understand the importance of Israel -- the fount of a flourishing national culture? a haven from persecution? the beginnings of our promised Redemption? the setting in which the spiritual, ethical, and religious life of the Jewish People can best be fulfilled? Is Israel the Spiritual Center of the Jewish People? a place in which many Jews live?

Is Aliya desirable, okay, or to be frowned on - and why?

Does the school wish to nurture beliefs, understandings, attitudes concerning such matters as a) the place of religion in Israeli life, b) Israel's relations with Palestinians, c) the role of non-Israelis in influencing the course of Israeli life?

How would you hope Atlanta-based graduates of your school would in practice express their relationship to Israel?

How does the successful graduate's relationship to Israel affect his or her relationship to America?

Does the school represent a perspective on the ideal relationship between Israel and the Diaspora?

## HISTORY

How will the graduate of this school define his/her relationship to the Jewish past? Is the past a source of our identity? Is it a way of understanding the challenges of the present? Is it something we have liberated ourselves from? Is it evidence of our special place in the cosmos? A way of reinforcing a commitment to diversity?

What parts of Jewish history -- what periods, what geographical regions, what cultures -- should receive the greatest emphasis, and how does this reflect the school's basic aims?

In looking at Jewish history, should the emphasis be on the way our ancestors lived, on their ideas, on their relationship to the

surrounding culture?

Should Jewish history be taught as a part of general history or separately - and what educational aims are at work in your answer to this question?

Should the school avoid studies of history which call into question traditionally accepted views of the Jewish past, e.g. the historicity of Biblical characters?

Most generally, why do you think you should be teaching Jewish history? What aims (understandings, attitudes, etc.) do you hope to accomplish through this teaching?

#### THE MORNING'S SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The morning session that will involve small groups will include the following elements:

a. Everyone present will be asked to write out some thoughts concerning each of the following questions:

1. If you were really serious about developing facility in Hebrew, what would you have the school doing?

2. If you were really serious about fostering a love of Israel founded on an appreciation of its importance, what would you have the school doing?

b. In small groups, guided by the facilitators, participants would be invited to share what they came up with in response to these questions.

c. The facilitator's job, in addition to steering this process of sharing, will be to note the range of responses and, equally important, to take note of questions, issues, concerns that arise in the process. The facilitator should be prepared to bring these back to the group as a whole.

d. When we reconvene as a large group, Pekarsky will try to get a sense of what the groups have come up with. Drawing, where relevant, on concerns raised by them, he will try to highlight what was adequate and inadequate in the initial formulation of the assignment, as well as in their response to the assignment. Through examination of this case, it is hoped that participants will develop a list of criteria than an adequate educational aim needs to satisfy. This should serve them as useful background for the

afternoon's small group activity.

Please note that I am not at all sure that facilitators need to be aware of d); in fact, I'm a bit concerned that it might contaminate what they do in c).

That's it for now. Steve Chervin and I have a conversation scheduled for Friday at which time any last-minute concerns relating to this (or to anything else) can be addressed. I look forward to meeting all of you in person!

From: Dan Pekarsky (PEKARSKY)  
To: Barry  
Date: Tuesday, March 1, 1994 3:50 pm  
Subject: Atlanta-Part II

Participants in the Summer Seminar will also have the opportunity to examine the cluster of significant issues that must be addressed by an institution once it has made a preliminary decision that it wants to move in the direction of being vision-driven. Strategies for addressing these issues will also be discussed.

Among the outcomes anticipated from participation in the Summer Seminar are the following: a) a thoughtful, knowledge-based commitment to the idea that being vision-driven is very important; b) a richer understanding of the ways in which having a guiding vision can facilitate the development of a quality educational institution; c) an understanding of the issues that need to be addressed in trying to translate a vision into goals and goals into curriculum and educational structures (under real world conditions); d) an understanding of the critical importance of generating broad-based support for a proposed vision; e) Some ideas concerning how to enlist the interest of local educating institutions in struggling with issues of vision -- and, in particular, in signing up for the seminars to be held next year in local communities.

#### C. CIJE-SPONSORED SET OF SEMINARS CONCERNING VISION AND GOALS IN LEAD COMMUNITIES (and beyond):

The agenda for these seminars will be described in ways that parallel the Summer Seminar in Jerusalem. There will, however, be an emphasis on 1. encouraging participants from local educating institutions to begin the process of clarifying their animating vision, and 2. the possibility of participating (down the road) in the Coalition of Vision Driven Institutions.

Lay and professional leaders from all educating institutions in the Lead Communities will be invited to participate in these seminars. No special requirements, other than an agreement to participate on a regular basis, need be met in order to participate.

Two outcomes are foreseen: 1. that a climate will be created through these seminars that will encourage local institutions to become significantly more serious about issues relating to vision and goals; and 2. that one or more institutions participating in these seminars might prove interested in and appropriate for participation in the Coalition the following year.

Just as (a point I didn't make above) the summer seminar in Jerusalem will be open to participants from other than the Lead Communities, so too in the case of the local set of seminars. If one of the communities that participates in the summer seminar expresses an interest, we will try to find a way to accomodate

them -- possibly through an intensive week-long seminar, rather than through seminars spread out throughout the year.

#### D. THE COALITION OF VISION-DRIVEN INSTITUTIONS

In the spirit of Alan's caution about promising more than we can deliver, I will not say very much about the coalition, except that 1. it will probably start small; 2. that participating institutions will need to meet certain standards; 3. that among these standards is the availability of a person appointed by the institution or the community to guide the process and to work with CIJE; 4. that participation in the Coalition will be open to institutions outside of Lead Communities; 5. while institutions in Lead Communities cannot be guaranteed positions in the coalition, they can be assured that if choices need to be made between equally worthy institutions, Lead Community institutions will have priority; 6. that it is up to the lay and professional leadership of the community (especially participants in the Israel Seminar) to generate a clientele for next year's seminars. If there is not interest, there will be no seminars.

#### V. QUESTIONS/REACTIONS, ETC.

I just looked at my watch and realize that I have to go. I must apologize for not having a chance to review this document for spelling or content. But in the interests of getting feedback, I thought it best to send it on. There are certain points, I realize, that need to be clarified (even if the general substance seems ok): for example, who from within Lead communities should be encouraged to come to Jerusalem, given that the seminars will be held in local communities next year?

I'm assuming we'll be in touch Thursday 7 a.m. my time in my office. If there's anything I should be thinking about before then, let me know. All the best.

From: Dan Pekarsky (PEKARSKY)  
To: Barry  
Date: Tuesday, March 1, 1994 3:20 pm  
Subject: Atlanta Meeting

Below is a succinct summary of the main points to be made in connection with the Goals Project in Atlanta. The sequence followed in the summary is roughly the sequence of the actual presentation.

## I. Introductory

In the introductory discussion, I will briefly articulate CIJE's view that Vision and Goals, properly understood and used, play an indispensable role in the educational process, and that the Goals Project is designed to encourage Jewish communities and educating institutions to become engaged with issues of vision and goals. The remainder of the presentation is intended to do three things: a. to explain what CIJE means by vision and goals, why it believes it crucial for educating institutions to attend to them in a serious way; b) to explain the ways in which the Goal Project will attempt to catalyze efforts in this area; and c) to map out and explain upcoming activities designed to move forward with this project, beginning with the Summer Seminar in Israel.

## II. What do we mean by visions and goals, and why are they important?

This discussion will begin by distinguishing between substantive educational goals and instrumental goals, and it will then focus on substantive goals. I will then note the importance of anchoring substantive educational goals in a vision of a meaningful Jewish existence.

The ways in which having such a vision can guide the educational process will be stressed (with emphasis on the contribution of vision to a) educational decision-making in the areas of goal-setting, curriculum design, personnel training, etc.; b) to assessment; and c) to the creation of a motivated and motivating social climate).

I will illustrate the way in which one's vision can guide educational decision-making using one or more concrete examples, possibly from general education, e.g. "the kitchen" and the "kitchen staff" in a traditional school, in Summerhill, and in a Dewey School.

I will contrast what education looks like in a vision-driven institution with what it looks like in a typical Jewish educational setting (hodge-podge informed by inadequate guiding principles like "Keep them interested; keep them coming; keep them quiet," or "They should feel at home in a synagogue.," etc.

I will stress that having a vision and goals in a meaningful

sense goes well beyond having a mission-statement, and I will explain this point by referring to the ways in which mission-statements tend to be very vague and/or not widely or strongly identified with (or even known) and/or not used as a real guide to practice.

I will go on to emphasize the difficulty of the enterprise: 1. the desire to come up with a vision, 2. the process of identifying a compelling vision, 3. generating broad-based support for the vision, 4. translating the vision into meaningful educational terms (goals and structures), and 5. actual implementation under real-world conditions ----all of these, 1-5, are difficult to accomplish. They take thought, commitment, energy and time. Only individuals and institutions that recognize the importance of vision to the enterprise will be expected to undertake this effort.

These points will round out the discussion of vision and goals. I am aware that I will not yet have distinguished between communal and institutional goals (and why we will be focusing on the institutional goals in the Goals Project). This could come either near the beginning (where I distinguish substantive from instrumental goals) or in the discussion of the Goals Project itself (which is the next item).

### III. What is the Goals Project?

A. Against the background of II., I will identify the Goals Project as a CIJE initiative designed to create a climate in Lead Communities (and elsewhere) that encourages and supports serious attention to the development and actualization of visions and goals.

B. CLARIFICATIONS The Goals Project is 1) not the Educated Jew Project; 2) primarily concerned with visions and goals at the level of institutions (and views communities as agencies of stimulating appropriate involvement at institutional levels); 3) concerned with substantive as distinct from instrumental goals.

C-E (below) go on to describe the key elements in the Goals Project.

C. The Goals Project will develop a body of materials that can be used to educate relevant individuals and organizations concerning the importance of educational visions and goals and concerning the ways in which institutions can begin articulating a vision and using it to guide educational practice.

D. The Goals Project will work to educate lay and professional leaders at both communal and institutional levels concerning the ways in which serious, sustained attention to vision and goals can contribute mightily to the practice and outcomes of Jewish education. The Goals Project will try to encourage them to launch initiatives in this area.

E. The Goals Project will launch and use its resources to support a Coalition of Vision-Driven Institutions. The Coalition will be made up of interested institutions that show evidence of being committed to becoming vision-driven and who meet other standards that are necessary if the effort has a chance of succeeding.

#### IV. ON THE HORIZON: FIRST STEPS

A. LIBRARY OF MATERIALS: Efforts to develop a library of materials are already beginning.

#### B. SUMMER SEMINAR IN ISRAEL.

The Summer Seminar in Israel is designed to educate lay and professional leaders in Lead Communities and in other interested communities concerning the vital importance of vision and goals to the development of effective educational institutions.

Participants will have the opportunity to wrestle with a number of powerful but very different visions of a meaningful Jewish existence and to examine how a commitment to one of them facilitates and guides educational decision-making at a variety of levels.

END OF PART I -- PART II FOLLOWS.

CC: GAIL, PEKARSKY

- Comment
- Critical Role of G
- ↳ Research - Smith

Focus  
Guide  
EVALUATE

Difficult - High-Pay-off - harder later

Arms Tools - Clarity

~ Two parts of Day

Starting- Pt: An exercise focused on one of several inadequacies

Typically: Curric - - Practice

What if serious?

- 1) Exercise
- 2) small grps

{ Responses }  
No resource  
constraints

{ converge }  
{ Issues }  
↳ Report

Break at 10<sup>25</sup>.

ATLANTA