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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 A closer look, however, reveals some striking differences: the formal classes of today have largely been replaced by small groups, tutorials, and individual work at learning stations.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).

Mandel Institute

מכון מַנְדֶל

Tell: 972-2-662 296; 6|8 728

Fax: 972-2-619 951

Facsimile Transmission

TO:	Ms. Isa Aron	Date:	November 4, 1991
From:	Annette Hochstein	No. Pages:	
Fax Number:			

Dear Isa,

Thanks for you fax confirming tomorrow's telecom. We'd like to suggest that the following be part of the agenda:

1.   Review the interim Review the October 28th report of October 28th,1991.

2.   Review the major issues under consideration, particularly the question of what we need to know in order to recommend a strategy for change. (This relates to item 2 of your agenda.)

3.   Initial discussion of final report.

We'll try to have as many answers as possible ready to your questions.

Talk to you tomorrow.

Best-Regards Anette

c.c.: Shulamith Elster

Tel: 972-2-662 296; 618 728

Fax: 972-2-619 951

FAX SENT

Facsimile Transmission

TO:	Ms. Isa Aron	Date:	October 23, 1991
From:	Annette Hochstein	No. Pages:	
Fax Number:			

Dear Isa,

A quick response to your fax of October 21st:

1.   Could you please get in touch with Shulamith about the conference call -- Seymour and I think it should take place as soon as possible, probably at the end of this week or early on next week.

2.   Seymour will speak to Izzie Scheffler before the weekend to formally invite him to the advisory committee and we will let you know.

3.   About the Orthodox -- our recommendation is that both Sam Heilman and Abe Tannenbaum be invited to join.

4.   As regards January schedules, we still need a little bit of time to make that more specific.

Best regards,

Annette

P.S. seymour spoke to David Cohen about your project

Mandel Institute

מכון מַנדל

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Facsimile Transmission

To: __Ms. Isa Aron__   Date: __October 20, 1994__

From: __Annette Hochstein__   No. Pages: __2__

Fax Number: _____

Dear Isa,

First I would like to confirm that I have indeed received your
fax and that it has arrived whole. Second, I'd like to express
once more my appreciation for the rate and manner at which you
move ahead: it is indeed a pleasure to know that your project is
launched and moving. We here are eager to see it become a product
leading to implementation. Which brings me to more substantive
points.

Though the issue of the project's name may be academic, it is the
continuing dialogue between us on what is in the name that really
matters. It is of great importance that the project be really,
and substantively, prescriptive. That it address directly the
question of "what is likely to change the situation for research"
and that it provide practical options for the development of a
research capability in North America. Thus, I believe that your
interviews should reflect more strongly a concern with the means
likely to bring about change. (Means being substantive [content],
but also structural/institutional; related to personnel; finan-
cial.)

A clarification about the CIJE: In your questionnaire, the CIJE
appears as the agent that will implement recommendations, that
will adopt the programmatic research agenda, etc. In fact, the
CIJE is a mechanism that will encourage others -- foundations,
institutions, individuals to undertake the implementation. It may
adopt your recommendations and thereby encourage one or several
foundations to undertake part or the whole. It is not likely to

adopt a programmatic research agenda, nor to solicit proposals, nor to fund research. It might encourage others to do so. This is why the question of "what are the institutional, organizational, financial mechanisms that need to be developed" is of such importance. The rationale must be spelled out of why a fund, a professorship, the development of research centers, are the way to develop the research capability.

Many of these items are covered in your documents, but it is important for us to maintain the relative importance of the various items. The research agenda is but one of a whole set.

Perhaps a conference call might be useful to keep us all in sync as regards the project. If you agree, Jack, Shulamith, Steve, Seymour and I would participate. You may wish to suggest an agenda, including any questions that still need to be responded to.

I hope this is helpful. Again, best wishes for a very happy and fruitful project.

Best regards,

Annette

c.c.:   Shulamith Elster

Dear Annette and Seymour,
        I haven't yet received your reply regarding the final
report (draft 1) of the research capability project. I will
be in Chicago next week (speaking on research at a UAHC
meeting), and will be mostly unavailable to work on revision
s. But if I could hear from you by the end of next week, then
I could get to wo rk the following week.

        I have received feedback from nearly all members of
the advisory commi ttee. All but Sam Heilman basically agree
with the proposals. A number suggested ways in which to: a)
shorten the report, and b) add more elements of the infras
tructure to phase one. Jack Ukeless, however, feels strongly
that 4-5 pages is too short for a report, and that several
things that I imagined to be included as appendices should be
included in the body of the report. I'll need your guidance
on this matter, since you know best the audience, and the
uses to which the report will be put.

    I have one additional question: I had a research assistant
collect information on various models for research centers,
but in the context of the final report, this information
doesn't seem particularly relevant. Jack thought that it
should be written up anyway -- what is your opinion?
        I look forward to hearing from you sometime next
  week.

                                    B'Shalom, Isa

BMAIL>

Looking forward to hearing from you ...

Shalom

Isa

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 for next 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 the 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, 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.

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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 withoutqualified 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. With 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 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 re-

searchers 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 expertis 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.

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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 responsive to the needs of the field, a range of stakeholders including practitioners and community

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 ?? 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 ...

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Also, could you ask Annette if she still considers Mike Inbar a member o
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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 ...

BUShalom

Isa

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 educa-
tional needs of t
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 prob-
lems.

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 supple-
mentary 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 dissat-
isfaction
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 teachersU knowledge and skills be assessed?
What
modes of pre=service training and in=service staff development

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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 t
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 re-
search 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 CommissionUs recommenda-
tions, one of
its first projects was the RResearch Capability Project.S 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 giv
a range of stakeholders the tools to understand and change the
current
situation.

This report offers a strategy for the establishment of a re-
search capability th

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,
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 capabil-
ity;
-- survey the current situation, in terms of the presence or absence of these
elements;
-- review the assumptions which lead to the final recommenda-
tions.
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 cur-
riculum,
understand the relevant characteristics of learners, teachers and educational
leaders, express concretely what success would mean, and shape the
environment to maximize oneUs chances of success.

Research in the field of education is sometimes seen as superflu-
ous -- an
academic indulgence that contributes little to the realm of practice. In the pas
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
Rquick fix,S 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?√■*p+1Xrtant though it may be for educational renew

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 robu
research capability:

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

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 in-
clude:
a) reliable sources of funding, disbursed through a process which would
allow for an open submission of proposals which would be re-
viewed 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 w

enter lengthy training programs if there is little hope of a
future position. Wi
an infrastructure, a position alone will not produce much re-
search. And without
dissemination there will be little interest in, and public sup-
port for, either t
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 elemen
are present in any but he most rudimentary fashion. Thus, it is
not surprising t
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 t
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 com-
missioning
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 exam-
ined in light of a
number of criteria, including cost, time needed for implementa-
tion, 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
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 fur-
loughs 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

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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 expertis
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 dissem-
ination 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 skepti-
cal as to the
utility of research. To maximize both visibility and quality, these studies ough
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 methodolo-
gies 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

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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
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, w
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 proposal

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 Insti-
tute.

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

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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 Rreflective 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 programma
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 InstituteUs staff might be limited to a director, an associate d
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 instituteUs administration.

Some of the staff of the InstituteUs programmatic research efforts would likely
researchers at various universities and central agencies, who would participate
on these projects on a part-time basis; graduate students and

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Summary of Meeting Re: Research Capability

(Isa Aron's meeting in San Francisco)

Participants: Profs. David K. Cohen, Lee S. Shulman, Haman Alexander, Isa Aron, Seymour Fox, Susan Shevitz; and Annette Hochstein.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Isa Aron's latest version of her report, to comment on the outline, discuss what the final report might look like, and deal with implementation.

The following were agreed upon:

1.   It is necessary to refocus the document in order to reflect an understanding of the clients. In this case, the clients are the members of the board of the CIJE or former members of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America.

2.   The sense of the meeting was that the paper should be completed with that focus in mind and that in parallel or separate from it, an implementation strategy should be developed. It was suggested that a meeting between people such as Jim Coleman, David Cohen, Lee Shulman and Mort, David Hirschorn and maybe one or two others might be a good place to begin.

3.   It was decided that Isa would now draft the final report and submit it as a draft.

4.   See later decisions on this project.

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JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein, Hotel Guest
     Charles Hotel

FAX NUMBER: 1 - 617 - 864 5715

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 1/22/92   **Page ___1___ of ___9___**
****

Dear Annette,

Welcome to the USA -- hope you're not too cold in Boston.

Enclosed is a slightly revised version of the outline I sent you on Monday. The revisions are based on my conversation with David Cohen.

Also enclosed is the cover memo I've sent out to the meeting participants.

Did you get the message from Sara about your next hotel? She is concerned about the quality of a fax from a fax. Hope you'll have a moment to call and let her know your next hotel. If you are only free to call early or late, you can leave a message (at any time) on my voice mail -(213) 939 9022 †.

L'hitraot,
Isa

Outline of the Final Report of the CIJE's Research Capability Project
January 20, 1992
(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 director of either a supplementary school or a day school 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 the regional office of one of the denominational movements change the programming it offers at camps, retreat centers and youth groups if had more information on the Jewish identities and special needs of high school students?

c) How might the allocation decisions of a Federation or central agency be informed by data on the long-term effects of a variety of family education programs?

QUESTIONS: DOES THIS APPROACH ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS WHICH WERE RAISED WITH REGARD TO THE PREVIOUS VIGNETTE? ARE THESE THE RIGHT EXAMPLES? 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. The following points will be made in this section:

-- Research will be defined as the systematic study of a subject over a sustained period of time, through a variety of modalities; these modalities include philosophical and historical methodologies and approaches, as well as those of sociology and anthropology.

-- Research is educative, both in its process and its results. It is a way in which we come to a better understanding of social situations. Some examples of the way in which research has shaped our view of the world: a) Research on the poor retention of Hebrew language after graduation from religious school or day school has forced educators to re-think the purpose, context, and methodologies of Hebrew language instruction.

b) Sociological studies have profoundly affected how the American Jewish community sees itself. The Shockwaves reverberating throughout the American Jewish community as a result of the intermarriage statistics in the most recent National Jewish Population Study are a case in point,

c) Research can sometimes make people re-think a situation they thought they understood. For example, Kenneth Clark's study of the effects of segregation on the attitudes of Black children surprised many educators, and were instrumental in the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision.

-- Research can be helpful to decision-makers, but it does not offer a "quick fix." Rather, research can lead us to look more closely at situations which we presumed to understand, perceive problems in a new light, and imagine and "try out" a range of possible solutions. We need both "decision-oriented" and "conclusion-oriented" research.

-- Research can bring new intellectual energy to a field. In Jewish education, research can be a vehicle for enlisting the help of some of the most creative and rigorous thinkers in American universities.

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) 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) 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 ASSESSMENT_S?..(I may ,not know until I start writing them)

Must be comparative [illegible]

e.g. will it ~~create~~ [illegible] curricula; and it will create a [illegible]

based on an understanding of the stumbling blocks & the needs

(e.g. [illegible])

How can this be brought about?

Why isn't there a [illegible]?

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

Although the components enumerated in section 2 might be varied and combined in any number of ways, an assessment of each variant in light of the seven criteria listed in section 4 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, though 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 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 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 55):
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 develop and implement a strategy for broadening the appeal of research among current and potential funders, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

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 (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

why would anyone?

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.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED:

1) IN WHAT WAYS CAN ISRAELI RESEARCHERS AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS BE BROUGHT IN TO COMPLEMENT THIS EFFORT?

2) WHAT MIGHT BE A MINIMAL BUDGET FOR THE INSTITUTE? (One member of the advisory committee has suggested that if the Institute did not have an annual budget of at least $1.5 million, it might not be worth establishing.)

3) WHAT KIND OF STAFFING WOULD ENABLE THE INSTITUTE TO ACCOMPLISH ITS AIMS? WOULD STAFF MEMBERS CONDUCT RESEARCH OR SIMPLY COORDINATE THE RESEARCH DONE BY OTHERS?

4) WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO BUILD THE RESEARCH CAPABILITIES AT UNIVERSITIES IN THIS PHASE? Different types of institutions would require different types of efforts:
—At research universities a strategy would have to be developed for the marketing and funding of positions specifically in *Jewish* education.
—Jewish training institutions would require additional faculty, and marketing of a different sort.
—Yet a third approach might have to be taken at those Jewish training institutions whose focus is more regional than national.

5) AT WHAT POINT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS IS IT APPROPRIATE TO AGREE UPON A RESEARCH AGENDA? SHOULD PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS BEGIN NOW, BOTH AS A WAY OF MAKING THE PLAN MORE APPEALING TO POTENTIAL FUNDERS, AND AS A WAY OF MAPPING OUT THE ISSUES? (This proposal assumes that the agenda should be set by the board of the Institute, once it is up and running; but several members of the advisory committee believe that discussions ought to be initiated sooner, before this planning process concludes).

Proposal for Phase Two (years 5-100):
The Creation of Professorships and Research Centers

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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.

QUESTION: SHOULD THIS PROPOSAL ADUMBRATE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT MODELS FOR RESEARCH CENTERS?

**Outline of the Final Report of the CIJE's
Research Capability Project
January 20, 1992**
(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 director of either a supplementary school or a day school 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 the regional office of one of the denominational movements change the programming it offers at camps, retreat centers and youth groups if had more information on the Jewish identities and special needs of high school students?

> c) How might the allocation decisions of a Federation or central agency be informed by data on the long-term effects of a variety of family education programs?

QUESTIONS: DOES THIS APPROACH ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS WHICH WERE RAISED WITH REGARD TO THE PREVIOUS VIGNETTE? ARE THESE THE RIGHT EXAMPLES? 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. The following points will be made in this section:

> -- Research will be defined as the systematic study of a subject over a sustained period of time, through a variety of modalities; these modalities include philosophical and historical methodologies and approaches, as well as those of sociology and anthropology.

> -- Research is educative, both in its process and its results. It is a way in which we come to a better understanding of social situations. Some examples of the way in which research has shaped our view of the world:
> a) Research on the poor retention of Hebrew language after graduation from religious school or day school has forced educators to rethink the purpose, context, and methodologies of Hebrew language instruction.

b) Sociological studies have profoundly affected how the American Jewish community sees itself. The Shockwaves reverberating throughout the American Jewish community as a result of the intermarriage statistics in the most recent National Jewish Population Study are a case in point.

c) Research can sometimes make people re-think a situation they thought they understood. For example, Kenneth Clark's study of the effects of segregation on the attitudes of Black children surprised many educators, and were instrumental in the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision.

—Research can be helpful to decision-makers, but it does not offer a "quick fix." Rather, research can lead us to look more closely at situations which we presumed to understand, perceive problems in a new light, and imagine and "try out" a range of possible solutions. We need both "decision-oriented" and "conclusion-oriented" research.

-- Research can bring new intellectual energy to a field. In Jewish education, research can be a vehicle for enlisting the help of some of the most creative and rigorous thinkers in American universities.

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) 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) 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 2 might be varied and combined in any number of ways, an assessment of each variant in light of the seven criteria listed in section 4 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, though 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 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 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 develop and implement a strategy for broadening the appeal of research among current and potential funders, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

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 (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.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED:

1) IN WHAT WAYS CAN ISRAELI RESEARCHERS AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS BE BROUGHT IN TO COMPLEMENT THIS EFFORT?

2) WHAT MIGHT BE A MINIMAL BUDGET FOR THE INSTITUTE? (One member of the advisory committee has suggested that if the Institute did not have an annual budget of at least $1.5 million, it might not be worth establishing.)

3) WHAT KIND OF STAFFING WOULD ENABLE THE INSTITUTE TO ACCOMPLISH ITS AIMS? WOULD STAFF MEMBERS CONDUCT RESEARCH OR SIMPLY COORDINATE THE RESEARCH DONE BY OTHERS?

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<div align="center">

Proposal for Phase Two (years 5 10):
The Creation of Professorships and Research Centers

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As the projects initiated in Phase One 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 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 allocations for research

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QUESTION: SHOULD THIS PROPOSAL ADUMBRATE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT MODELS FOR RESEARCH CENTERS?

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 1/20/92   Page____1____ off ____8__

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Dear Annette,

It was nice talking to you yesterday. I'm glad we got all the details for our meetings squared away.

Enclosed are the documents in preparation for the Research Capability Project meeting. I tried to check with David Cohen before writing up the agenda, but he won't have time to talk with me until Wednesday morning. If he has any substantive changes to suggest, I'll fax them to you in Cambridge.

If you yourself have something to change or add to the agenda, please let me know. I'll hold off sending this out to everyone else until Thursday or Friday.

I am assuming that you'll give a copy of everything to Seymour. If you would like me to send him a copy directly, let me know the address.

B'Shalom,
Isa

Memo to: Participants in the 1/31 meeting of the advisory committee for the CIJE's Research Capability Project *

From: Isa Aron

Our meeting will be held on Friday morning January 31st, at the conference room of the Far West Laboratory in San Francisco. We will begin at 9:00 a.m., and go until 11:30 or 12:00. The Far West Lab is located on Harrison, between 3rd and 4th; their phone number is (415) 929 4647.

Enclosed is an outline for the preliminary draft of the final report, including, in the final section, a proposal for the establishment of a national research institute.

I propose the following agenda for our meeting:

1) a review of the outline, with special attention to the proposal in section 5, and its attendant questions;

2) a discussion of the format of the final document;

3) a discussion of steps to be taken after the document is completed.

Please let me know if you have anything you would like to see added to the agenda.

I look forward to seeing all of you on the 31st. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (213) 939 -9021.

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* Hanan Alexander
  David Cohen
  Seymour Fox
  Annette Hochstein
  Susan Shevitz
  Lee Shulman

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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."

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4) WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO STRENGTHEN THE RESEARCH CAPABILITIES AT UNIVERSITIES IN THIS PHASE? (One member of the advisory committee has suggested that, in addition to attending separately to the needs of Jewish institutions and research universities, the Jewish institutions themselves need to be subdivided into those with a national focus

and those with a more regional one, and that each of these would have different strengths and different needs)

5) AT WHAT POINT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS IS IT APPROPRIATE TO AGREE UPON A RESEARCH AGENDA? (This proposal assumes that the agenda should be set by the board of the Institute, once it is up and running; but at least one member of the advisory committee believes that discussions ought to be initiated sooner, before this planning process concludes).

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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.

QUESTION: SHOULD THIS PROPOSAL ADUMBRATE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT MODELS FOR RESEARCH CENTERS?

JUST THE FAX...

Dear Annette,

Our faxes must have crossed, somehow, because I haven't yet gotten a response to my fax of 1/15. I need answers to the following questions as soon as possible: (before you leave)

1) How early can we have the meeting on Friday 1/3? (1/31?) It turns out that everyone will be in San Francisco the night before, and it would make Hanan's life much easier if he could take a 2 p.m. flight home from Oakland. Can we move the meeting up to 10 a.m., or, better yet, 9 a.m.?

2) Can we change the location of the Thursday evening meeting with Michael and Sara to San Francisco, somewhere near the airport? I gather from Lee Sulman that your 5 p.m. appointment had to be changed, and that you'll be free to leave Stanford at 5, which means we could have dinner at 6. If this is OK, Sara will find a suitable place and make reservations.

3) The document which Sara would like to send you won't be finished before your departure from Isael. Where can she send a fax or federal express letter at the end of this week or early next week?

My own document should be ready by the end of the day tomorrow, and I'll fax it to you then.

Hope to have an answer to my questions before you leave town on Tuesday!

B'Shalom,

Isa

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 1/15/92   **Page___1___ of __1___**
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Dear Annette,

I just got off the phone with Lee Shulman, and am more confused than ever about the times and places for our meetings at the end of the month:

1) Re: the 30th:
Lee tells me that your Stanford schedule has been rearranged, that you are free at 5 p.m., and that you and Seymour are staying in San Fancisco. If so, the arrangements I proposed in my previous fax should be revised: Since Sara, Michael and I won't arrive until 5 or 5:30, and since Sara and Michael have to leave at 10, we should probably meet in San Francisco, in or near the airport.

2) Lee is under the impression that the research meeting will be on Friday morning, 9 -12, perhaps in San Francisco, since everyone but he will be there. This would be better for everyone, but Hanan would have to change his current flight plans -- so he needs to know within a day or two.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW, SO EVERYONE CAN MAKE APPROPRIATE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS.

Also -- when and where would you like me to send preliminary documents for the meeting? They are ready now.

B'Shalom,
Isa

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 1/13/92   **Page___1___ of ___1__**

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Dear Annette,

This fax is to review various details regarding our upcoming meetings in the Bay area:

1) Sara Lee has asked me to confirm that she, Michael Zeldin and I will be joining you and Seymour for a dinner meeting on Thursday 1/30. We understand from Lee that you'll be meeting with Mike Smith at 5 p.m. Can we have dinner in Palo Alto (perhaps even on campus) at 6 p.m.? Sara and Michael have a 10 p.m. flight back to L.A., so the meeting would have to end by 8:45. If this is OK, we'll find a place to have dinner.

Sara would also like to know where you will be around Jan. 20 2lt, so we can fax you a memo in advance of the meeting.

2) Regarding the research project meeting on the 31st -- will it be held in L.A. or in Palo Alto? Please let me know as soon as possible, so that Susan and Hanan (and I) can make appropriate arrangements. Should I inform Lee and David as well?

I will also have a 4 - 5 page document to send you. It may be ready as soon as Wednesday the 15th, if you have time to read it. I imagine that you're pretty busy right now, so it might be better to send it to you in the States. Please let me know when and where to send it.

I look forward to hearing from you soon, and to seeing you on the 30th!

B'Shalom,
Isa

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 1/5/92 .... **Page ___1___ of ___3__**

Dear Annette,

FYI -- a copy of my latest interim report.

I doubt you'll need to contact me, but you should know that I'll be away on a small vacation from 1/6 -1/100 (my "last hurrah" of the sabbatical -- I go back to teaching on 1/14).

Hope all is well.

As soon as you have more specifics as to the location of the meeting on 1/31 I'd appreciate them.

B'Shalom,
Isa

"Building a Research Capability for Jewish Education"
Interim Report to the CIJE staff, January 5, 1991
Isa Aron, Ph. D.

My work during the month of December consisted of reviewing my most recent discussion draft (#6) with a variety of stakeholders, including communal leaders (both lay and professional), foundation directors, additional practitioners and academics. I interviewed two members of the CIJE board, Mort Mandell and David Arnow, to solicit their opinions on my work thus far, and on the planning process as a whole. I also consulted at length with nearly all the members of the advisory committee; I sought from them, in addition to their general reactions, specific responses to particular sections, and, in some cases, alternative proposals.

I now have the materials with which to create yet another draft; at the suggestion of Jack Ukeles this one will no longer be called a "discussion draft," but a "preliminary draft of the final report." Although I haven't yet completed this version, the following are among the changes and additions it will contain:

1) The vignette will be changed to more closely reflect the relationship between research and innovation.

The general consensus among the readers of this document was that the vignette was a good idea, in that it made the document more accessible and appealing. But several of my readers pointed out that the connection between the policies of the imaginary institution and the research on which these policies were supposedly based was never spelled out.

For the next version, I will attempt to sketch not an institution, but the type of research which would enable institutions to function more effectively.

For example, I will ask readers to imagine ...

a) what a supplementary school director could do if he or she had an inventory of teacher knowledge and skills, an instrument for assessing the capabilities and deficiencies of his or her teachers, and a series of learning materials and/or learning opportunities through which teachers could improve in specific areas of deficiency.

b) how a day school director could utilize research on the impact of day school education on families (research which suggested which types of activities affected parents the most).

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

2) The section on research will be expanded a bit, and the different ways in which research and practice interface outlined. The point will be to demonstrate the need for both "pure" and "applied" research.

3) A seventh element of a research capability will be added -- funding.

4) Prior to the section in which the seven elements are discussed, the criteria by which these elements are to be assessed will be set forth. My tentative list of criteria includes: cost, time-frame, feasibility (given institutional constraints, availability of personnel, and other factors), potential impact on the field, the probability of producing research of high quality, responsiveness to communal needs, and opportunity for individual initiative on the part of researchers. I'm sure this list will undergo a number of revisions.

5) The section in which the seven elements are discussed in full will be organized around the criteria suggested in #4, in a more systematic way than in the current version. The challenge will be to make this presentation both thorough and concise.

6) Finally, the proposals of the last section will be organized into three clusters: short - term (2 - 4 years), medium range (4 - 7 years), and long term (7 - 10 years).

At the end of January (1/31), a meeting of six key members of the advisory committee (Alexander, Cohen, Fox, Hochstein, Shevitz and Shulman) will be held in Northern California. The agenda for the meeting (which is yet to be finalized), includes:
   == a general review of the document
   == a discussion of next steps, in terms of both process and content
   == the format of the final report

It is unclear to me, at the moment, whether or not the first draft of the preliminary version of the final report will be completed in time for the meeting of January 31stt. In part, this will depend on what additional feedback I will receive from several members of the advisory committee; it will also depend on how time-consuming it will be to complete the revisions enumerated above. In any case, large chunks of the next document will certainly be available for comment on the 31st.

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 education 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).

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 12/29/ 91   **Page___1___ of ___2___**
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Dear Annette,

When we spoke on the phone last week I was under the impression that I would be ready today to fax you a tentative agenda for our meeting of January 31st. Having looked over my notes, and having tried, unsuccessfully, to reach several members of my advisory committee, I find that I am unable to do so as yet. I will be speaking with Jack this Tuesday, but it will be two weeks before I'll be able to touch base with all the relevant players. I myself will be on vacation between 1/6 and 1/9, so you probably won't receive a first draft of the agenda until 1/13 or 1/15. Will this pose a problem for you? If so, I can send you a rough set of questions earlier --- but I'd much rather wait. In the meantime, I have lots to do, collating my notes from my various meetings, and revising my document yet again.

When we spoke on the phone, I forgot to get the answers to two important questions from you:

1) Did you have an opportunity to speak with James Coleman, and is there, in fact, any relevant literature about building a research capability from the ground up in other fields? This would be an excellent week for me to get some library work done, so I'd appreciate receiving an answer from you as soon as possible. If I don't hear from you, I'll assume that Coleman, like everyone else I've talked to, didn't know of any comparable activity in other fields.

2) I want to make sure that the research capability project gets put on the agenda for your and Seymour's meeting with Scheffler. As I probably mentioned to you, Scheffler said very complimentary things about the draft he read; he also voiced his opinions (backed up by considerable experience) regarding which options would be productive and which would not. In particular, he feels that the funding of professorships would not yield very much in the absence of a research center apparatus, nor would its addition to that apparatus be cost-effective. I took notes at our meeting, but he and I agreed that this point merited a fuller discussion, which might be possible when he meets with you

and Seymour, if he is reminded of it. So consider this a formal request to devote a small part of your agenda to a discussion of this point, and of some of his other reactions to my document. I don't think it needs to take much time, but I assume that the reason you wanted Scheffler to be involved in the project in the first place is that we could all benefit from his experience and expertise. Please let me know if this will be feasible.

I want to take this opportunity to wish you a happy end of '91 and an auspicious beginning of '92. In my own case, with my back so much improved, I know that '92 will have to be a better year!

B"Shalom,
Ilsa

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-6199511

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 12/17/91   **Page___1___oöf_1_1___**

****

Dear Annette,

Since it's now 1:30 p.m., and I have to leave in 15 minutes, I assume that we won't be talking on the phone today. I don't think it's crucial that we talk this week, but I do need to get some feedback from you and from Seymour very soon.

I will not be available any other morning this week, though Sunday the 22nd may be a possibility. I can probably arrange to be home some morning between the 24th and 26th, especially if you can give me some choice. Also, I have found someone to help me out with Bit-net, and I should be up and running in a matter of days +- we could try corresponding through Bit-net.

All of my meetings last week were very good, and the ones with Mandel and Scheffler especially so. Scheffler seems to like what I've done so far. He has a wealth of experience and examples related to the relative merit of programmatic research (which he favors) over professorships (which he sees as having limited value). I took notes on our conversation, but I think that his ideas are best conveyed in person. He told me that he will be meeting with Seymour (and you?) in mid or early January, and asked that you put the "research capability " project on the agenda for that meeting.

Hope to hear from you soon.

B"Shalom,
Isa

****

TO: Annette Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 12/6/91   /   Page___1___ off ___19___

****

Dear Annette,

I am devastated (truly) that my attempt to send a file through bit-net is temporarily stymied. I don't know exactly what went wrong, but after spending two days on the phone with the USC computer consultants, I decided that in the interest of getting out of town in one piece (I leave for Cleveland, NY and Boston on Sunday morning), I had better resort to the older, more expensive, but still more reliable (for me, at least at this point) methods.

Enclosed is the entire packet sent to members of the advisory committee, minus Scheffler and Tanenbaum, with whom I have yet to meet (I sent them the draft, and a more subdued letter). I also have not sent anything to Mike Inbar. Would you please make copies of this and pass them along to Seymour and Mike?

It's hard to have any distance from this draft at this point, but I think that it moves the process forward significantly. Please let me know what you think. I hope that you and Seymour (and Mike, as well?) will take up my invitation to propose alternative models to the ones I dreamed up in section 5.

Happy Hanukkah! I'll be back home on December 17th, and hope to hear from you then, with your reactions, (and with more details on your visit to the West Coast?)

B'Shalom,

Isa

"Research Agenda" Project
1227 South Hi Point Street
Los Angeles, CA 90035
(213) 939-9021   FAX: (213) 939-5526

Honorary Chair
Max M. Fisher

Chair
Morton L. Mandel

Acting Director
Scott 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

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.

7/

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 laboratoty, 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 IIIC, 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 eduuuiivnuii l'saoaran might be invited for exploratory discussions, as suggested in IIC.

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 needed 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).

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 12/6/91 _____ **Page___1___ off ___19__**
****

Dear Annette,

I am devastated (truly) that my attempt to send a file through bit-net is temporarily stymied. I don't know exactly what went wrong, but after spending two days on the phone with the USC computer consultants, I decided that in the interest of getting out of town in one piece (I leave for Cleveland, NY and Boston on Sunday morning), I had better resort to the older, more expensive, but still more reliable (for me, at least at this point) methods.

Enclosed is the entire packet sent to members of the advisory committee, minus Scheffler and Tanenbaum, with whom I have yet to meet (I sent them the draft, and a more subdued letter). I also have not sent anything to Mike Inbar. Would you please make copies of this and pass them along to Seymour and Mike?

It's hard to have any distance from this draft at this point, but I think that it moves the process forward significantly. Please let me know what you think. I hope that you and Seymour (and Mike, as well?) will take up my invitation to propose alternative models to the ones I dreamed up in section 5.

Happy Hanukkah! I'll be back home on December 17th, and hope to hear from you then, with your reactions, (and with more details on your visit to the West Coast?)

B'Shalom,

Isa

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 Agenda" Project
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(213) 939-9021 FAX: (213) 939-9526

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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.

Research Capability Project
C.I.J.E.

Advisory Committee Members

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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 education Koeai'ch 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).

TO: Seymour Fox

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 11/22/91   Page ___1___ of ___1___

Dear Seymour,

I've just come back from a wonderful week in the Mid-west. I got some really good feedback from the various researchers I met with at Madison and MSU, as well as a new approach to re-drafting my document, and beginning the decision-making process (the latter two from David Cohen, who was extraordinarily helpful). I also had a nice lunch with Danny Marom, whose visit to East Lansing overlapped with mine.

As soon as I've had a chance to make the revisions and emendations suggested to me by David Cohen, I'll send the latest version to you and Annette.

The immediate purpose of this FAX is to let you know that in two weeks I am planning to go to Cleveland (to meet with Mort on December 9th), and then to New York. I have held off making my plane reservations, because I didn't know if and when Scheffler would be able to meet with me (I was assuming that I would take one day that week to fly to Boston). But now I'm told by my travel agent that if I don't buy my ticket by Wednesday, the cost will go up by about $1,000.

If you have been able to reach Scheffler, and if he is willing to meet with me, please let me know by Monday or Tuesday, at the latest. (I'm leaving a day or two to connect with him). If I haven't heard from you by Tuesday, I'll assume that, for whatever reason, I won't be going to Boston.

On a related matter, I'd like to have a decision on my request to convene the advisory committee for the research capability project on January 27th in Boston, or at some other time (convenient for you and Annette) on the West Coast. I understand that Steve approved the additional expenditure. Can we talk about it on the phone, sometime-before December 7th?

Hoping to hear from you soon.
B'Shalom,

****

TO: Annette Hochstein and Seymour Fox

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 11/12/91   **Page___1___ of __7__**

****

Dear Annette and Seymour,

I am leaving on Friday morning for my trip to East Lansing and Madison, but I wanted to send you a copy of my latest "working draft" before I left. I tried to follow Jack's and your advice and categorize the options with variations, leaving the issues for the end. I am Faxing a copy to Jack as well, though he won't receive it until after I leave. Please let me know your reactions. I find that receiving feedback from you is very helpful.

David Cohen has agreed to serve on the advisory committee. By coincidence, I'll be meeting with him on the same day that Danny Marom is. If, by some chance, you make contact with Scheffler or Coleman before I leave on Friday morning, please let me know. Otherwise, you can leave a message on my answering machine (213) 939-9021 when you do make contact with either or both.

Pursuant to our conversation regarding a meeting of the advisory committee on 1/27/92, Shulamith tells me that you voiced some reservations. I would like to urge, again, that we have such a meeting; I don't see how we can make an informed and considered choice without it. Unfortunately, Lee Shulman will be unable to attend on the 27th, and David Cohen (who will be at Stanford by then) may not be able to go East either. Is there any chance of our having a meeting in California, some time during the month of January? Lee tells me that Seymour *promised* him a visit to Stanford before June -- could this be an opportunity to keep that promise? Let's discuss this soon -- perhaps on the phone sometime during the week of 11/25?

B'Shalom,

Isa

BUILDING A RESEARCH CAPABILITY FOR JEWISH EDUCATION
Discussion Draft #5
Prepared by Dr. Isa Aron
November, 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 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 potential components of a research capability, to explore the ideological underpinnings of each, and to raise certain empirical questions relating to their feasibility. In the second phase (January through March, 1992), the 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 components presented in Section B deal primarily with the institutional 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 components 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 an array of potential components for enhancing our current research capability;
  --Section C sets forth the underlying issues which will have to be discussed before a choice between the various components can be made.

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 advisers, or because it is recommended to them that a dissertation in general education would make them more "marketable."

B: Possible Components of a Research Capability

I. RESEARCH CENTERS

Rationale for organizing research in centers:
- -- encourages collaboration
- -- allows for continuity and long-term projects
- -- creates an "address" for certain types of research

Different Types of Centers --variation according to:

a) FUNDING
- -- endowment
- -- competition for grants
- -- individual fundraising
- -- some combination of these

b) AFFILIATION
- -- independent
- -- located within an existing institution (a Jewish or general university, Bureau, JESNA, denominational agency, etc.)
- -- composed of a consortium of institutions

c) RESEARCH AGENDAS
- -- a programmatic agenda set at the outset by some coordinating or governing body
- -- affiliated researchers select their own research topics
- -- field testing of curricula and/or programs
- -- reflective practice
- -- action research
- -- collection of data on enrollment, staffing patterns, finances, etc.

Empirical Questions
a) How many researchers does it take to have a well-functioning center?
b) What are ancillary costs, in terms of research assistants, support staff, equipment, other?
c) How many existing institutions have a critical mass of researchers willing and able to engage in research in Jewish education? Alternately, what would it take to attract researchers to these institutions?
d) What are the additional costs, in terms of both money, time and energy, of a consortium arrangement?

II. (rather than funding research centers) CREATING POSITIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS
- -- e.g., research professorships at Jewish or secular universities

III. FUNDING MECHANISMS

Possible Variations:

a) A centrally administered research endowment. Researchers submit proposals to a review panel, composed of some combination of the following:
   -- funding agencies and foundations
   -- researchers (in both Jewish and general education)
   -- other stakeholders
b) Special funds designated for certain groups, e.g.:
   -- doctoral students
   -- postdoctoral fellows
   -- established researchers not previously involved in Jewish education research
c) Research funds available from foundations and/or donors on a project by project basis

IV. ENLARGING THE POOL OF RESEARCHERS

Possible Variations:

a) Ph.D. programs specifically for researchers in Jewish education.
b) Post-doctoral programs
   -- in Jewish education, for researchers trained in research universities
   -- in research, for Ph.D.s in Jewish education
c) institutes and/or stipends for reflective practitioners

Empirical Questions:
a) What does it take to mount a high quality Ph.D. program in research? Are any of the Jewish universities able to offer programs of this caliber?
b) What is the feasibility of a Ph.D. program offered jointly by two institutions?
c) What are the costs of a post-doctoral program? What would Jewish universities/secular universities require in order to mount post-doctoral programs?
d) What kind of training and support would "reflective practitioners" require?

V. VENUES FOR DISSEMINATION

Possible variations:

a) scholarly
   -- journals
   -- book funds
   -- conferences
   -- sessions at conferences such as the AERA, AJS, etc.

b) popular
  -- a magazine
  -- articles in the Jewish press
  -- sessions at conferences such as the GA, CAJE, denominational groups,
    etc.
c) bibliographic resources
  -- creation of an annotated bibliography
  -- clearing-house modeled after ERIC   ...

VI. ONE OR MORE GOVERNING BODIES / COORDINATING COUNCILS

Possible Functions

a) to award and administer grants
b) to set priorities for programmatic research centers
c) to undertake joint dissemination projects
  -- publish a journal
  -- sponsor conferences
  -- schedule sessions at the conferences of other organizations, such as the
    GA, AJS, AERA, etc.
d) act as an advocate / spokes-person for research
e) seek new sources of funding for research

C: QUESTIONS AND ISSUES WHICH COME INTO PLAY IN DECIDING AMONG THE OPTIONS:

1) Some research topics may be deemed worthy of being assigned highest priority. These are likely to fall under the rubric of the social sciences, and to benefit from multi-site, multi-methodology research. These type of studies are best conceptualized and coordinated within a research center. On the other hand, some have argued that research of the high quality is best obtained when scholars are left to set their own agendas; this tends to be the view of those operating from a humanities perspective, though numerous social scientists also subscribe to this view. What is the optimal balance of programmatic and more individualized research?

2) Though research is important to the process of informed decision-making, and though it can make important contributions to the revitalization of an endeavor, it is important not to over-state this point. There is a good deal of evidence that policy-makers, for example, do not usually use research to inform their decision-making in a direct way. Instead, research serves to validate previously formed opinions, at best, and as political ammunition, at worst. Practitioners, as well, are not known for incorporating the findings of research into their work. Therefore, it is important to ask ourselves: To what

extent should the perceived needs of various stakeholders (be they foundations, donors, Federation executives, practitioners, or researchers themselves) determine the type of research which is funded? For example, how important is the collection of basic data on enrollment, personnel and finances? 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.

3) Existing institutions of higher learning in Jewish education ought to be form an integral part of the research effort. However, this research cannot be - allowed to detract from their other functions, such as training and outreach.

4) The institutions of higher learning in Jewish education have much to benefit from cooperation and the pooling of resources. The existence of funds for research ought not to serve as a divisive element.

5) Involving researchers from large research universities would enhance both the quantity and quality of research. What these researchers may lack in the way of first hand knowledge of Jewish educational institutions may be compensated for in a number of ways.

6) Competition for research funds is healthy, spurring individuals and institutions to marshall their creativity and effort. 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. The quality of the resultant research is of paramount importance. The question is: which is likely to yield research of the highest quality -- invitation or competition?

7) The world of Jewish educational research is small and insular -- inclusiveness and democracy ought to be guiding values, though not at the expense of quality.

8) Research efforts undertaken by practitioners (whether in the form of "reflections on practice" or, more elaborately, as action research) are worthy investments, for a number of reasons:
  -- they add a new dimension of knowledge and understanding
  -- they serve to enlarge the pool of researchers
  -- they allow for closer linkage between research and practice

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein and Seymour Fox

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 11/4/91 .... **Page___1___ of of 1 1**

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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

JUST THE FAX...

Dear Annette and Seymour,

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

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

(As I mentioned in my last fax to you, Jack will only be able to participate in the first 45 minutes.)

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

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

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TO: FAX NO. (RM) 972-2-619 951
ISRAEL
Name _Seymour Fox_
Company _____
Street Address _____
_____/____/____/____
City   State   Zip   Country

FROM: FAX NO. (216) 361-8982
Name _Ginny Levi_
Company _____
Tele. No. (   ) _____ Ext. ____

Seymour –

1. Here is the Isa from interim report, as promised.

2. Reminders per our telephone conversation:

   = You will let me know Lee Shulman's arrival + departure times in Baltimore, or how I can reach him to find out.

   — You will push Lipset to be ready with his analysis in time for the JN4 Board meeting.

   = You will talk with HEZ + MLM about my going to Baltimore Nov. 20-21.

3. Let me know what arrangements you want me to make for you for your next visit.

4. Mort is staying at the Hyatt Regency in Baltimore.

Ginny

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"Building a Research Capability for Jewish Education"
Interim Report to the CIJE staff, October 29, 1991
Isa Aron, Ph. D.

The Planning Process

As indicated in the proposal, the "research capability" project has two distinct phases, an intake phase, and a phase in which a limited number of options will be chosen and adumbrated. The intake phase is currently in full swing, with one focus group completed, and an additional eight or nine in the planning. Eleven of the projected 15 members of the advisory committee are on board, and I have had extensive conversations with many of them. At this point, a wide variety of options are being considered; while various "reality factors" such as feasibility, cost, and availability of personnel have been noted, they have not, as yet, been discussed in any detail. In January, with the beginning of phase 2, these concerns will come to the forefront.

Options Under Consideration

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 tests) would constitute research problems,
the collection of the data itself would not constitute research. Some have

4

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?

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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.

JUST THE FAX...

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TO: Annette Hochstein and Seymour Fox

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619 951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 10/28/91   Page ___1___ off ___8___
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Re: Times for a teleconference about the "research capability" project

Dear Seymour and Annette,

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    Time

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    Standard Time (Jack will only be available till 12:15)

I hope that one of these times is OK for both of you -- Please let me know within a day or two.

Enclosed are:
  -- my interim report for October
  --a memo with my questions for the teleconference. I'll prepare an agenda
     too, which you'll receive as soon as the time is confirmed.

Look forward to talking with you soon.

B'Shalom

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From: Ilsa
Re: Questions to be discussed at the teleconference

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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.

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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?

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"[Isa] will solicit opinions and direction through group and individual interviews -- from Board members, commissioners and Senior Policy advisors."
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That's it for major questions. Now for some little details:

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B'Shalom,

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'Building a Research Capability for Jewish Education"
Interim Report to the CUE staff, October 28,1991
Isa Aron,Ph. D.

The Planning Process

As indicated in the proposal, the "research capability" project has two distinct phases, an intake phase, and a phase in which a limited number of options will be chosen and adumbrated. The intake phase is currently in full swing, with one focus group completed, and an additional eight or nine in the planning. Eleven of the projected 15 members of the advisory committee are on board, and I have had extensive conversations with many of them. At this point, a wide variety of options are being considered; while various "reality factors" such as feasibility, cost, and availability of personnel have been noted, they have not, as yet, been discussed in any detail. In January, with the beginning of phase 2, these concerns will come to the forefront.

Options Under Consideration

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 CUE, 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.
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Questions to be answered:
a) Would these awards be governed by any pre-set criteria or conditions?
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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;
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  employment, qualifications);
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  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 tests) 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,

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-- This information is critical to policy-makers, and can serve as the baseline
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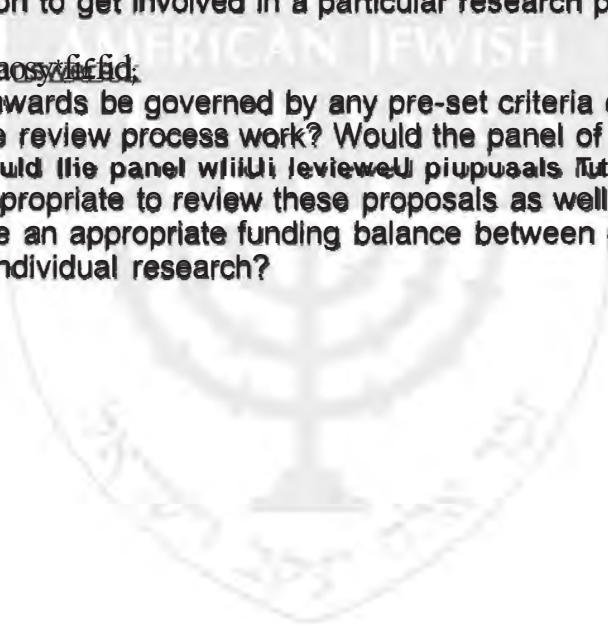
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FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619 951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

Date: 10/21/91   Page____1____of___11____

Dear Annette,

I think a conference call would be a good idea. I'll work on developing an agenda and set of questions for the conference, and will FAX it to you a.s.a.p. Given one or two days advance notice, I can be available to talk any morning after 8:30 a.m. (my time), with the exception of 10/25 and 11/4. After November 1st, I can probably be available as early as 7:30 a.m.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I'd like to repeat three requests which can't wait for the conference call, nor do they need to:

1) Could you and/or Seymour please call Scheffler to formally invite him to the advisory committee? I'll take if from there.

2) Please give me your reactions, a.s.a.p. to the Orthodox representative on the advisory committee. It would be embarrassing to get much further in the planning without having one of them on board. In case you need your memory refreshed, the possibilities I have suggested are:
- Sam Heilman
- Steve Bayme of the AJC
- Karen Bacon of Stern College
- Abe Tanenbaum, formerly of TC, now adjunct at YU

3) Please let me know (also a.s.a.p.) when in January you and Seymour will be in the States, and what cities you plan to be in. It is critical that either the whole advisory committee (if that budgetary option is approved) or a smaller group of advisors meet then to prioritize the options, and suggest the next steps. It also seems critical that you and/or Seymour be at that meeting. Lee Shulman has agreed to make himself available (as have others, if I can afford to bring them), but I must have a specific date, and Lee's calendar (and that of others) fills up quickly.

Annette, I know that you are extremely busy, and that this is hardly the only project you're involved with, but please take some time soon to address these three items. Without them (especially number 3) I feel ham-strung.

Isa

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Alk 242 Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: OU - 97X - 2 - 619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

DATE: 10/15

****

Annette — Did you receive
an 8 page Fax call from me
receive this evening. There was
a problems with my confirmation
slip, & I'm not sure the fax
arrived whole.

Please confirm!   Page "__A__ of __1__"

          Thanks, Isa

JUST THE FAX...

****

TO: Annette Hochstein

FAX NUMBER: 011-972-2-619951

FROM: Isa Aron

FAX NUMBER: 213/939-9526

DATE: 10/15/91

Page 1 of 2

****

Dear Annette,

I spoke with Shulamith this morning, and she shared with me some of your comments on the description of the research project that she is preparing. The changes you suggested sound fine, and I think that re-naming the project "research capability" instead of "research agenda" is probably a good idea. Unfortunately, I've already sent out a bunch of things with the name "research agenda" on them, and had labels printed as well, but such is life ...

I don't have time to write an extensive report, but I'd like to give you a quick run-down of what I've been doing:
   a) I've been to Stanford and met with Lee Shulman
   b) I've had extensive conversations with Hanan Alexander, Michael Zeldin, Susan Shevitz, Sharon Nemser and Adam Gamoran, and lined all of them up for the advisory committee.
   c) On the basis of these conversations I've prepared a "discussion draft," which has gone through several revisions, and will undoubtedly go through many more. This document will serve as the basis for the focus group discussions.
   d) I've already mailed a draft out to the board members of the AIHLJE, who will be meeting for three hours on Oct. 21 to discuss it. Susan Shevitz will facilitate that meeting; both Barry Holtz and Sara Lee will be in attendance.
   e) I've set up a second focus group for the Bureau Directors' Fellowship meeting at the GA, Shulamith will facilitate that meeting; invitations will go out shortly.
   f) I am in the process of arranging :
   --a focus group discussion of practitioners in LA.
   --meetings of various sorts in East Lansing and Madison The latter is pending a return call from David Cohen, to see whether he'll agree to serve on the advisory committee, and whether the dates we've picked are good for him.

Here's what I still need from you and/or Seymour:

a) a phone call to Israel Scheffler, asking if he'll serve on the committee; once he agrees, I'll call him myself and arrange a visit
b) your opinion on Orthodox representation. The choices, thus far, seem to be:
   --Sam Heilman
   --Steve Bayme of the AJC
   -- Karen Bacon of Stern College
   --Abe Tanenbaum, formerly of TC, now adjunct at YU
c) Suggestions on how to correspond with Mike Inbar, and what to ask him
d) your own feedback on the draft I am enclosing.

Any suggestions as top how we can stay in touch?

Hope all is well with you.

B'Shalom,

Isa

SETTING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR JEWISH EDUCATION
Questions and Issues for Discussion
Working Draft #3

[Still to be written: a preamble that includes some vignettes of very compelling, innovative, futuristic 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.]

A: The Current Situation:

Research on Jewish educaton 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 secular educational research paradigms and methodologies, and have eluded work in history, philosohy, 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 18 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 secular journals of 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 inJewish 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 secular education dissertation would make them more "marketable."

B: In order to redress the situation, the CIJE should undertake some combination of the following:

1) The CIJE might adopt a programmatic research agenda, identifying a number of high priority research areas, and soliciting proposals for long-term (5 - 10 year), multi-disciplinary, coordinated studies in each of these areas. The National Research Centers might serve as a model for how this research would be carried out. Given the small number of researchers in Jewish education, the resultant research centers might have to function more as consortia of individuals from a number of different institutions than as self-contained centers in one location. In order to identify the high priority research areas the CIJE might convene a panel of experts, which might conduct its own research and/or hold its own hearings, and then go through a process whereby consensus was reached. Some areas which would most certainly come under consideration would include:

  -- evaluation and assessment will be needed in the local communities
  == in-depth study of the "best practices" identified by the project of that name
  == envisioning alternative models of Jewish education
  == teacher recruitment, preparation, and assessment
  -- leadership in Jewish educational institutions

Questions to be answered:
a) are the research projects best conceived of as competitive or invitational (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) The CIJE might encourage and/or facilitate the endowment of research professorships and/or research centers either at individual universities or shared by a consortium of universities; alternately, the center might be an independent entity, modeled after the Rand or Brookings institutes. These centers would differ from those outlined in #1 in that they would be free to establish their own research agendas.

3) The CIJE might establish one or more centers devoted to the field testing and evaluation of curricula and/or programs. These centers might be organized according to region, denomination, type of setting, etc.

4) The CIJE might create a mechanism for the encouragement and support of reflective practitioners and action research. Experience in secular education has shown that simply making funds available would not be sufficient; that practitioners would need to be coached and assisted in this process. Potential models for these might be the National Teaching and Leadership Academies currently being established by the Deaprtment of Education, or the NEH summer institutes for college faculty. Participating practitioners could be brought together for the summer to work with mentors or guides, who would also maintain contact with them during the course of the year.

Questions to be answered:
a) Would practitioners be interested in this type of project? What might serve as an incentive for them to participate?
b) Would these best be organized by setting (encouraging, or even requiring teams from a single institution), topic, location, denomination, or by some other means?

5) One or more funds might be established in support of individual research projects. Grants would be awarded on the basis of a competitive review process.

Questions to be answered:
a) Would these awards be goverened 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) The CIJE might encourage the creation of fellowship support for both doctoral candidates with an interest in Jewish education and beginning scholars in the field, enabling them to pursue research in Jewish education. These fellowships might be modeled after the Spencer Fellowships, which are reviewed by a panel of distinguished scholars.

Questions to be answered:
a) might different categories be established for applicants in secular and Jewish universities?
b) might researchers working in other settings, such as Federations or agencies be elligible as well?

7) The CIJE might establish one or more agencies for the collection of basic data regarding:

--enrollment in different types of educational 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 tests) 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.

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) The CIJE might establish a variety of dissemination venues for the research
generated by the mechanisms proposed above. 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.

9) The CIJE might conduct or coordinate a public relations campaign to
convince key stakeholders of the critical importance of research to the entire
enterprise of reform and renewal in Jewish education.

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 supported and 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 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.

C.2 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.3 An endeavor as complex as Jewish education can best be studied through a plurality of research paradigms and methodologies.

C.4 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.5 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.6 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,

SETTING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR JEWISH EDUCATION
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Transmittal Cover Sheet

Total Sheets (including cover sheet) _____

To:

Attention ___Awnette Hocksstein___

Company Name ___Morshew Mondel___

Fax Number ___972-2-619951___

on

From:

Name ___Isc— AJoA___

Company Name _____

Phone Number _____

Other Instructions

_____
_____
_____
_____
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1227 South Hi Point
Los Angeles, CA 90035
September 17, 1991

Dear Annette,

As I write this, you and your family are probably setting off for
shul; and as you read it, I'll probably still be in shul. So, once again,
G'mar hatima tova.

I've lost track of what number draft this is -- but it takes into
account your concerns when we last spoke (see especially item A2).
I took over $23,000 off of the budget. I still believe, however, that a
full meeting of the advisory committee (or as many as were able to
come) is critical to the project. As per Steve Hoffman's suggestion,
I have added options A and B to the budget, to accommodate two
potential additions to the advisory committee and to enable more
advisory commitee members to travel to the January meeting. In
addition, I would like to remind you that if, per chance, my phone
bills go over the total (and are not balanced out by lower xerox
bills), I will be coming back to you for more money.

Some suggestions for an Orthodox member of the committee: (from
Jack:) Karen Bacon, the Dean of Stern College, or (from my friend
David Ellenson:) Samuel Heilman. No leads, as yet, on informal
education. Given the budgetary constraints, we may decide that
Hanan Alexander is sufficient.

I hope this will do it, and that I'll get the green light during Hol
Hamoed Sukkot. One item I'd like to discuss with you, as soon as the
project officially begins, pertains to formal invitations to the
advisory committee for Scheffler, David Cohen, and Mike Inbar. I'd
like if you would formally invite them, and I'll follow up with Faxes
and phone calls outlining my questions.

As soon as the FAX and phone are in, I'll let you know.

B'Shalom, Isa

ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

A Proposal for a Planning Study
Submitted to the CIJE by Isa Aron
September 17, 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
-- experimental, descriptive and evaluative research

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) some advisory committee members will 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 review the preliminary report, and to weigh the options in
  light of agreed-upon criteria (see 3C, below).
The following is a list of proposed advisory committee members:
  Hanan Alexander
  David Cohen
  Seymour Fox
  Adam Gamoran
  Annette Hochstein
  Barry Holtz
  Mike Inbar
  Sharon Nemser
  Israel Scheffler
  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.

2) Conduct Individual Interviews and/or "Focus Group" to Discuss The Questions Posed Above
Answers to the questions and issues raised above will be solicited
from a number of different groups:
  a) a selected group of practitioners, including Bureau directors
    and JESNA staff;

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

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

d) leaders of the Association for Jewish studies, who will be asked to extrapolate what has been learned from the rapid growth of scholarly work in Judaic studies, to the field of Jewish education.

e) key individuals in national organizations that commission, fund, and/or conduct research, among them the OERI (the Office of Educational Research and Improvement), the NAE (National Academy of Education), the NSF (National Science Foundation), the NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health) and the RAND corporation. In particular, I will be looking for examples of areas in which a research capability was built rapidly from ground zero.

I will rely heavily on the advice of advisory committee members regarding the people to be interviewed, 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 convene one or more "focus groups;" 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.
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 cooperating 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
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C) Convening a Sub-committee of Advisory Board Members 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)

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ב"ה

1227 South Hi Point
Los Angeles, CA 90036
September 3, 1991

Dear Annette,

Here's the latest draft of my proposal, developed, as per your suggestion, in consultation with Jack. Let's hope it will be the final draft.

Since time is of the essence, I am hoping to hear from you very soon, even before Rosh Hashana. I'll be at home most days, but you can send a FAX at HUC (213) 747 8288, and someone will read it to me on the phone, or bring it home if it's long. If you let me know in advance of your phone call, I'll try to arrange to be home at the right time.

L'Shana Tova to you and your family!

B'Shalom,

Isa

① The People involved:
 — #80 Klausner (fields- outside Jewish Education)
 — too extensive (will be enormously redundant & expensive)
 — not quality enough

② Budget — too high
 — must reduce

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
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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:
Harlan Alexander
v Adam Gamoran
Mark Gurvis /
Alan Hoffman
... Barry Holtz
Sharon Niemser
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)

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L'Shana Tova -- to you and your family!

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Ian

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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 sand 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
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B) METHOD: What is the optimal mix of:
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C) INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS: To what extent do we invest in:
- training new researchers, while supporting existing researchers
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- 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
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PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR MONOGRAPH ON RESEARCH
IN JEWISH EDUCATION - DRAFT #2

I: What is research?

This section will present a conceptual overview of what constitutes research, and how research is differentiated from journalism, opinion pieces, and other genres of writing. Some points to be emphasized include:

1) that research is conducted according to widely accepted canons.

2) that the canons of research change over time, and, in the field of education, have undergone radical change over the past two decades.

3) one of the things which distinguishes research is the extent to which the data is presented in such a way as to allow readers to draw their own conclusions.

4) in secular education the significance of research does not inhere in individual studies, but rather in the cumulative effect of a group of inter-related studies.

II: What can practitioners, policy-makers and the general public expect from research?

Conventional wisdom holds that good educational practice ought to be "derived" from educational research, in the same way that principles of engineering are derived from the laws of physics. And, indeed, a number of research traditions in secular educate (for example, "process-product" research on teaching and "effective schools" research) operate under this assumption. In the past two decades, however, this "logistic" view of research has been increasingly called into question. Three alternative views will be presented:

1) the operational, which holds that research and practice are entirely different realms, and that research ought to be done only for its own sake.

2) the problematic, which holds that research ought to originate from practical problems, and be conducted, wherever possible, by practitioners themselves.

3) the dialectical, which sees research as a tool for critiquing and revolutionizing current educational practice.

Examples of studies conducted from within each of these perspectives will be given. I will not advocate for any one of these views, but argue that a rich and balanced research capability would draw on each of the four perspectives.

III: The current state of research in Jewish education

1) the paucity of research in Jewish education will be documented through a review of journal articles, going back 10 - 15 years. Most research in Jewish education is conducted by doctoral students as part of their doctoral theses. These studies are, of necessity, of small scope.

2) aspiring researchers in Jewish education do not have any of the supporting infrastructure that enables research in secular education to flourish. There are no funds for research, no research centers, and only a limited number of venues for publication.

3) even the most basic data on enrollments, finances, salaries of teachers, etc. is not routinely collected. This section will summarize the data collected by Debra Markovic in the fall of 1989, and show how even these data are highly suspect because of the methods employed in their collection.

4) In contrast to secular education, in which large-scale replication of important studies is routine, Jewish educational research consists largely of isolated studies which are rarely replicated. An additional problem is that the audience for research in Jewish education is methodologically unsophisticated. Thus, isolated studies which may be methodologically problematic are widely disseminated and accepted without much critique; the Bock and Himmelfarb studies and the NYBJE study will be discussed as cases in point.

III: What type of research do we need in Jewish education?

1) data gathering
What types of data, and how best collected?

2) evaluation and assessment
Evaluation and assessment in secular education have advanced far beyond the simple checklists and multiple choice tests of previous decades. The extent to which these methodologies may be adapted to the field of Jewish education will be discussed. An important point to be made in this section is that both assessment and evaluation are predicated on agreement regarding the goals of particular forms of schooling. Before we can assess, we must reach consensus on our goals.

3) programmatic research addressing issues that are of priority

The most sophisticated research in secular education is conducted by teams of researchers, employing an eclectic combination of methodologies, comparing a number of different sites. This type of research, commonly known as programmatic research, is usually conducted by a research institute, or by several institutes working in tandem. Both the research agenda and the dissemination of the findings are likely to be overseen by a team which includes practitioners and policymakers, as well as researchers. In this section the virtues of programmatic research will be discussed, and examples will be given of areas of inquiry which would benefit from this type of concerted approach.

4) "basic" research
In addition to all of the above, there should still be room for "basic" research, conducted by independent scholars on questions whose implications for practice or policy might not be readily apparent. Not all research should be linked directly to policy and/or practice; there must be support for purely intellectual pursuits, such as historical studies.

5) research as a way of encouraging reflective practice
One way of linking research and practice is to encourage and enable practitioners to do their own research. Examples of this type of research will have been discussed in section II2. In this section the particular benefits which this type of research might have for Jewish education will be suggested.

IV: Creating an infrastructure which supports and encourages high quality research in Jewish education

1) How can we create a climate of opinion which values and supports research in Jewish education? How can researchers reach a broader audience of policymakers, practitioners and the interested public?

2) How can the quality of the research which is produced be raised?

3) What is the function of conferences, journals and other publications?

4) By what means can funds be disbursed fairly and equitably, while assuring high quality?

V: Concrete Proposals for Developing a Sophisticated Research Capability

Recognizing that research is a multi-faceted enterprise, I expect that I will end up proposing that a number of different support structures be set up. The following are some very preliminary and very sketchy proposals:

1) the institution of a mechanism for routine data collection, perhaps under the auspices of JESNA or the Bureau Directors' Fellowship.

2) the funding of a number of model evaluation/assessment studies, perhaps in conjunction with experiments in the various lead communities. These studies would be conceived of as models or prototypes which could be emulated by groups in a variety of settings.

3) the establishment of a fund for "basic research," which is not tied to any programmatic agenda. This fund might operate along the lines of the National Endowments, soliciting proposals at regular intervals and convening new panels of reviewers each year.

4) the establishment of a mechanism to encourage research by practitioners.

5) the adoption, by the CIJE. of a programmatic research agenda. This would constitute the most ambitious, and most costly, of the proposals. The following are some thoughts as to how to proceed:

a) In the fall, I would send out a mailing to members of the Jewish Education Research Network, AIHLJE, bureaus, and other interested parties, soliciting their ideas on high priority research items.

b) When the advisory board for this project meets, presumably in the fall of '91, one of its tasks should be to prioritize these research needs, and to delineate a mechanism whereby each would be carried out.

c) Working closely with members of the advisory committee, I would flesh out each of the 4 - 8 proposals which were assigned high priority. This would include developing a budget, assessing the availability of appropriate personnel, and establishing mechanisms for open competition, if that were deemed by the committee to be appropriate.

An important agenda item for me, when we meet in Jerusalem, is to create a diverse, but still manageable, advisory board. The following are the types of people that should be represented:
-- established researchers in secular education, with an interest in Jewish education
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-- representatives of policy-makes: federations, bureaus, organizations (?)

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HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
3077 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
LOS ANGELES,,CALIFORNIA 90007-3796

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: _Drs. Seymour Fox & Annette Hochstein_
Machon Mandel

FROM: _Asa Gron_

OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER) _2_

SENT BY: _78_   EXT.# _215_

From Fax # - 213-747-6128

Phone #   - 213-749-3424

If you do not receive the number of pages designated, please call
the above phone number and report it to the sender.

MESSAGE

June 26, 1991

Drs. Seymour Fox and Annette Hochstein
Machon Mandel

Dear Seymour and Annette,

Thanks for your call (Seymour) and note (Annette). My family is doing about as well as can be expected. During the shiva we had large crowds of visitors, which my mother found comforting but I found exhausting. Now my mother has many details and arrangements to attend to. Since my aunt Channie and Uncle Max are still in New York, I've returned to L.A.

With my mother's encouragement, I will be coming to Israel from July 12th to July 18th. I sent a separate FAX to Daniel Laufer regarding the hotel reservations.

If I remember our phone conversation correctly, we are now in agreement as to the scope and outcome of my project. I will bring to Israel a revised outline which will spell out the process by which the final priorities will be reached. I will also bring a potential list of advisors and a plan for covening the advisors in the Fall.

If at all possible, I would like to have the budget approved before I leave for Israel. The research assistant I have in mind needs to know how much he can expect to earn. And with both Sara and her secretary going away in July, sending and receiving FAXES via HUC will be more problematic. Do you need me to be more specific about certain categories?

I will be away from Thursday, June 27 through Sunday, June 30. You can reach me at home during the week of July 1, if you let me know in advance when to expect your call. On Tuesday, July 2 I'll be at HUC in the morning. I look forward to hearing from you.

B'shalom,

Isa

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3077 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007-3796

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FROM: *Isa Aron*

OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER)   *2*

SENT BY: *IA*   EXT.# *315*

From Fax # - 213-747-6128

Phone #   - 213-749-3424

If you do not receive the number of pages designated, please call
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MESSAGE _____
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HEBREW UNION COLLEGE –JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
Cincinnati • New York • Los Angeles • Jerusalem

RHEA HIRSCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

3077 UNIVERSITY AVENUE • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007-3796
(213) 749-3424

June 10, 1991

Ms. Annette Hochstein
Machon Mandel

Dear Annette,

My meetings with Shulamith, Steve, Adam and Barry in Cleveland were very
informative. I'm beginning to get the "big picture" of how the Council intends to
proceed. I also have a few ideas on how my original outline will need to be
modified to take into account the work that Barry and Adam may be doing.

I'm looking forward to our phone conversation. Please FAX me as soon as possible
the time that's convenient for you. Thursday, June 13 may not be convenient for
me, or, at least, I may need to speak with you from HUC before 11 AM.

Two other items we need to discuss:

a)   The first-class airfare to Israel is outrageous – $7630 round trip. My travel
agent is still checking on the availability of business class, which will be somewhat
cheaper. Do you really need me at this meeting if the cost is so high?

b)   In Cleveland I discovered that Harold Himmelfarb has done quite a bit of
work collecting and analyzing twenty years' worth of empirical research in Jewish
education. Could you and Seymour please give some thought to the kind of
financial arrangement which would allow Harold to share his data with us? It seems
senseless to reinvent the wheel.

As the summer is fast approaching, I'm feeling increased pressure to get started,
either on this project or on my teacher study. As you know, I'm concerned about
producing a finished manuscript by December. I hope we'll be able to talk soon and
get this issue settled. I hope we'll be able to finalize things during the coming week.

B'shalom,

Isa

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
3077 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007-3796

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: *Annette Hochstein / Seymour Fox*

FROM: *Sara Lee*

OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER) *2*

SENT BY: *79*   EXT. #

From Fax # - 213-747-6128

Phone #   - 213-749-3424

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Memorandum

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

3077 UNIVERSITY AVENUE ▪LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007-3796 · PHONE 749-3424

TO   Annette Hochstein
            Seymour Fox   DATE   5/30/91

FROM   Sara Lee

I wanted to let you know that I will be in Israel from July 11-31. I will be staying at Hebrew Union College and doing a number of things, including working with the class of education students we have just admitted. If possible, I would very much like to meet with you and chat about our forthcoming master planning process. The number at HUC is 203 333.

I look forward to seeing you in July.

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
3077 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007-3796

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: *Dr. Annette Hochstein*

FROM: *Dr. Lee Apron*

OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER) *2*

SENT BY: *JK*   EXT.#

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HEBREW UNION COLLEGE–JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
Cincinnati • New York • Los Angeles • Jerusalem

RHEA HIRSCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

3077 UNIVERSITY AVENUE • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007–3796
(213) 749-3424

May 31, 1991

Dr. Annette Hochstein
Machon Mandel

Dear Annette;

Seymour and I spoke on the phone last night. Pending approval from Israel Scheffler (and with the understanding that I will write a shorter, less academic report to accompany the monograph), my proposal seems to match Seymour's expectations. He approved the budget in principle, but would like me to discuss the details with you.

To move ahead with this project, two different telephone conversations need to take place:

1)   A conversation between the two of us about the budget;

2)   A 5-way conversation between myself, yourself, Seymour, Scheffler, and Lee Shulman regarding the proposal itself.

I will be in Cleveland until Tuesday night (6/4). Upon my return, I can be available to talk on the phone from 8:30 until 11:45 a.m. on the following days:

Wed., 6/5; Thurs., 6/6; Mon. through Thurs., 6/10*6/13. I can also be available in the evenings (until 9 or 9:30 p.m.) on 6/5, 6/6, 6/11, 6/12 and 6/13. (I can do it later on these days if you let me know in advance.)

Hopefully, two of these times will be good for everyone involved.

If you could FAX me the times you plan to call, I'd appreciate it. Also, could you please FAX me Israel Scheffler's telephone numbers?

I look forward to talking to you.

B'shalom,

Isa

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: *Annette Hochstein*

FROM: *Lea Gross*

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MESSAGE _____

May 24, 1991

Ms. Annette Hochstein
Machon Mandel

FAX #: 011 - 972 629-959-951

Dear Annette,

Thanks for your FAX of 5/17. I'm glad that your conception of this project and my proposal were on the same wavelength. I am in no rush to get started, having plenty of work with which to occupy myself in the interim; whenever you have an opportunity to get back to me will be fine.

I do, however, have one question which should be addressed immediately, lest an opportunity be lost. As you probably know, this year's Conference on Research in Jewish Education will be held in Cleveland, from June 2 4 4. Because of the limited number of flights between L.A. and Cleveland, I will have some free time in Cleveland on both Sunday morning, June 2nd and Tuesday afternoon, June 4th. Would there be anything gained by my meeting with either the CIJE staff or researchers who will be at the conference? If so, I should attempt to arrange such a meeting as soon as possible.

If you think it is premature to have any type of meeting, you needn't respond to this FAX.

I hope your Board meetings went well, and look forward to talking with you when time permits.

B'Shalom,

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: _Annette Hochstein_

FROM: _Asa Afron_

OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER) _5_

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1227 South Hi Point
Los Angeles, CA 90035
May 15, 1991

Ms. Annette Hochstein
Machon Mandel

FAX #: 011 - 972 629-659-951

Dear Annette,

I must say that it's a pleasure to be embarking on a new venture with you once again. As you know, the issue of research in Jewish education is very dear to my heart, and I relish the thought of being able to immerse myself in the question of how to establish a research agenda and scholarly capability for Jewish education. Enclosed is a first draft for an outline for the monograph I propose to write. I assume from our conversation that the monograph would be published under the auspices of the CIJE, but we should discuss this further.

As I mentioned on the phone, I am ready to begin the project at once, and would have to complete the final revisions by the middle of December, 1991.

Regarding the advisory committee, I propose that, in addition to Israel Scheffler, we include people from the following three categories:

   1) Prominent researchers in secular education who have some familiarity with research in Jewish education. Lee Shulman would be my first choice, both because of his experience, and because of the amount of thought he's given to this issue in creating the Stanford Ph.D. program. If others could be included, I would propose Adam Gamoran (from the University of Wisconsin, Madison) and Sharon Nemser, both of whom have been active in the Jewish education research network. If only one of these two could be invited, I would suggest Adam, since Sharon's research interests and Lee's are overlapping.

   2) Researchers in Jewish education. My choices, in order of priority, would be Susan Shevitz (Brandeis), Michael Zeldin (HUC), Hanan Alexander and Aryeh Davidson.

   3) Representatives of the "consumers" of research, including Federation executives and Bureau directors. Barry Schrage, of the Boston Federation, comes to mind, but I don't know him personally, and you may have others to suggest. I'm not sure about the BJE directors, but I think it would be good to find one -- perhaps Chaim Lauer from Washington, D.C.?

PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR MONOGRAPH ON RESEARCH
IN JEWISH EDUCATION --DRAFT#1

I : Introduction

a) What is research?
This section should present a conceptual overview of what constitutes research, and how research is differentiated from journalism, opinion pieces, and other genres of writing. Some points to be emphasized include:
1) that research is conducted according to widely accepted canons
2) that the canons of research change over time, and, in the field of education, have undergone radical change over the past two decades
3) one of the things which distinguishes research is the extent to which the data is presented in such a way as to allow readers to draw their own conclusions.

b) The role of research in education
This section will offer some examples of of seminal studies in secular education

c) The relationship of research to practice
This section will set forth a typology, based on the work of Richard McKeon, which distinguishes 4 conceptions of the relationship between research and practice: the logistic, the operational, the problematic and the dialectical. Traditionally, research in education has been perceived (by researcher and audience alike) as largely logistic. More recently, however, a growing number of researchers have been guided by one of the other three conceptions. In this section I will argue that there is a need for research operating under each of the four paradigms.

II: The Current State of Research in Jewish Education

a) the paucity of research in Jewish education will be documented through a review of journal articles, going back 10 - 15 years.

b) even the most basic data on enrollments, finances, salaries of teachers, etc. is not routinely collected. This section will summarize the data collected by Debra Markovic in the fall of 1989, and show how even these data are highly suspect because of the methods employed in their collection.

c) In contrast to secular education is which large-scale replication of important studies is routine, Jewish educational research consists largely of isolated studies which are rarely replicated. An additional problem is that the audience for research in Jewish education is methodologically unsophisticated. Thus, isolated studies which may be methodologically problematic are widely disseminated and accepted without much critique; the Bock and Himmelfarb studies and the NYBJE study are cases in point.

III: What type of research do we need?

a) data gathering
What types of data, and how best collected?

b) evaluation and assessment
Evaluation and assessment in secular education have advanced far beyond
the simple checklists and multiple choice tests of previous decades. The
extent to which these methodologies may be adapted to the field of Jewish
education will be discussed. An important point to be made in this section is
that both assessment and evaluation are predicated on agreement
regarding the goals of particular forms of schooling. Before we can assess,
we must reach consensus on our goals.

c) programmatic research addressing issues that are of priority
In the field of secular education the most sophisticated research is
conducted by teams of researchers, employing an eclectic combination of
methodologies, comparing a number of different sites. This type of research,
commonly known as programmatic research, is usually conducted by a
research institute, or by several institutes working in tandem. Both the
research agenda and the dissemination of the findings are likely to be
overseen by a team which includes practitioners and policymakers, as well
as researchers. In this section the virtues of programmatic research will be
discussed, and examples will be given of areas of inquiry which would
benefit from this type of concerted approach.

d) "basic" research
In addition to all of the above, there should still be room for "basic" research,
conducted by independent scholars on questions whose implications for
practice or policy might not be readily apparent. Not all research should be
linked directly to policy and/or practice; there must be support for purely
intellectual pursuits, such as historical studies.

IV: Creating an audience for research in Jewish education

a) the function of conferences, journals and other publications
b) reaching a broader audience of policymakers, practitioners and the
   interested public
c) creating a climate for valuing and supporting research in Jewish education

V: Concrete Proposals for Developing a Sophisticated Research
Capability

Tel: 972-2-662 296; 668 728

Fax: 972-2-699 951

Facsimilie Transmission

To: PROF Michael S'16NER Date: 28 11/91

From: PROF Seymour FOV No. Pages: 3

Fax Number: 001-213-747-6128

URGENT &

EBANFIDENTIAL

For the Advanced Study and Development of Jewish Education

January 28, 1991

Prof. Michael Signer, Chair
Faculty Development Committee
Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion
3077 University Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90007-3796

Dear Professor Signer,

I am pleased to recommend Dr. Isa Aron for tenure and promotion to the rank of full professor. I had previously read most of Dr. Aron's work -- however, I took advantage of the opportunity to re-read all of the material that you had sent me in addition to reading several additional articles.

It is clear that Dr. Aron is a very well trained philosopher of education who uses her academic skills to analyze important theoretical issues and to illuminate crucial practical problems. For example, her various articles on Kohlberg ("Moral Philosophy and Moral Education: A Critique of Kohlberg's Theory," "Moral Philosophy and Moral Education II: The Reconstructionist Tradition and Deweyan Alternative") and Dewey ("Dewey's Theory of Valuation: A Response to N.C. Bhattacharya," and Review of The Collected Works of John Dewey: The Middle Works, Volumes I and II) demonstrate superb analytical skills as well as erudition. In these articles she has made a significant contribution to the understanding of two thinkers who continue to play a central role in educational thought.

Even more important is her ability to carefully translate theoretical ideas from general education into Jewish education. This is particularly evident in "Deweyan Deliberation as a Model for Decision-Making in Jewish Education" and "To Create Liberal Philosophy of Jewish Education". On several occasions I had the opportunity to discuss these papers with her teacher, Prof. Joseph J. Schwab, and we both agreed that this kind of work was indispensable if Jewish education is to take full advantage of the thinking in general education. Jewish education has often suffered as a result of the indiscriminate use and application of ideas from general education.

1

When Dr. Aron turns her attention to practical issues ("Teaching as Sharing," "Dealing with the Shortage of Supplementary School Teachers," Contribution to a Symposium on "The Jewish School Teacher Today and Tomorrow," "Dealing with the Shortage of Teachers," "Instruction and Enculturation in Jewish Education," and "Dealing with the Shortage of Teachers: Has the Time for Concerted Action Finally Arrived"), it is clear that she has a thorough understanding of the realities of classrooms as well as the relationships between teachers, administrators, and parents. Needless to say, a philosopher who can deal with key policy issues is an important asset for any academic institution.

During the past year I had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Aron as she undertook research for the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. She wrote three papers ("Toward the Professionalization of Jewish Teaching," "Findings of the Los Angeles BJE Teacher Census," "Studies of Personnel in Jewish Education: A Summary Report Prepared for the Commission on Jewish Education in North America") that helped us develop the final Commission report. These papers, through produced under severe time constraints, were thorough and an important contributions to policy research.

For all of the above reasons I enthusiastically and unequivocally recommend that Dr. Isa Aron be promoted to the rank of full professor.

Sincerely,

Prof. Seymour Fox

P.S. I received your letter at the beginning of January and events in our part of the world had slowed me down a bit. Therefore, I am faxing this letter and simultaneously sending it by regular air mail.

2