



**MEETING OF CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2020**

SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As usual, it gives me great pleasure in extending a warm and pleasant welcome to you all. Based on the demanding activities of this week, you must be commended for your continued support of and commitment to the activities of the Association.

We are meeting at such a time like this, when our schools and the education system are over run by violence and indiscipline. Violence directed towards teachers by both parents and students and violence against students by their peers, friends and families. All of these heightened negative activities, if not checked, will destroy the education system and the very core of society.

Our President must be commended for his stridency and advocacy to bring this monster to public attention and hopefully generate the kind of attention that would lead to both short- and long-term solutions.

Regrettably, the Ministry of Education and the Minister who is overseeing the activities of the Ministry, Honourable Karl Samuda, view as alarmist and over-blown the incidence of violence and indiscipline in our schools. It is so sad to observe the posture of the Minister and the Ministry, but nothing is more sad than to see someone with sight but lacking vision. We cannot and will not effectively tackle and conquer this monster unless we act as a united force. The country will continue to bleed and the exodus of our better teachers will continue as those who are charged with the responsibility to cauterize the problem are in denial.

We remind all of us that we are at boiling point and enough got to be enough. It is time to take a stance against the lawlessness and grave indiscipline in the system. If for nothing else, let us stand up as a united body and give our teachers the support needed as we continue to bat for good order and decency in society.

Today's meeting is yet another opportunity to examine the issues plaguing us as well as embrace the opportunity to resolve even more firmly that there is nothing so wrong with Jamaica that the good and committed people cannot fix and conquer.

We therefore anticipate a vibrant and productive meeting.

2.0 SPECIAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL

In response to a *call for action* from our members as it relates to *the issue of violence against teachers and students in our schools*, a special meeting of General Council was held on

Wednesday, February 5, 2020. This meeting proved to be a productive one, where ideas were discussed and a number of decisions arrived at. The decision was taken that a Press Conference should be held to highlight the Association's concerns. This was held on Monday, February 10, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. Most of the Media Houses were in attendance and the coverage in media land was very good. Our president did a great job in articulating the issues. These are the recommendations that were shared with the Press and later forwarded to the Ministry of Education:

- **Need for review of Minimum Standards for all schools with security receiving priority (perimeter fencing needed, cameras, trained security personnel). In volatile areas, need for the authorities to beef up security for students and teachers going to and leaving schools**
- **Conflict Resolution Mechanisms to support the school systems**
- **Legal sanctions for persons who commit breaches**
- **Time out facilitates**
- **Expand the appointment of Deans of Discipline to all Secondary Schools and extend this to the Grades 4 and 5 Primary Schools**
- **Compensation for school/personnel injured on the job and/or their family members**

The Ministry of Education was given an ultimatum demanding action within thirty (30) days.

3.0 TERTIARY GRANT

This activity, from the Association's perspective is behind us, except for a few residual cases still lingering. We note some of the challenges associated with this activity and concluded that communicating with our members is an area that needs improvement. As we gain more exposure with this activity, we believe we will become more proficient at it. We thank Dr. Nicely and the Regional Offices for the hard work.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

We acknowledge that the strength and indeed the future viability of our Association lies with our ability to recruit and retain members. The Membership Committee is fully cognizance of this reality and as such has been playing their part in a meaningful way. During February, four (4) Membership Drives were carried out as follows:

- ✓ February 11th - St. Elizabeth
- ✓ February 13th - Manchester
- ✓ February 15th - St. James
- ✓ February 19th - St. Mary
- ✓ February 25 - Kingston

We commend Mrs. Sheryl Barnaby West, Chairman, Dr. Nicely and the team, led by the Presidents, for a great job.

5.0 MEMBERSHIP CARDS

The distribution of the final batch of membership cards for the period ending August 31, 2020 is being carried out within the regions. We are in the process of planning to print the new set of Membership Cards internally.

6.0 SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE ISSUE

We continue to monitor the outstanding issues as they relate to Salaries and Conditions of Service, namely:

- **Tablets for Teachers**

The information we have suggest that things are on track for the Tablets to be ready for distribution for March 2020. A ceremony to hand over these Tablets is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at the Spanish Court Hotel, Kingston. Two (2) schools from each Educational Region will be invited to attend this ceremony. The Ministry of Finance and the Public Service is stating that the beneficiaries of these Tablets will be those who were in the system in 2017 when the agreement was signed.

- **Payment for School Based Assessment (SBA)**

The Ministry has informed that as of February 14, 2020, one hundred and forty-seven (147) schools have been paid. It was reported that twenty-two (22) schools have not provided banking information, hence this will impact payment.

- **Research Grant to Tertiary Institutions**

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information has committed to pay the outstanding amount of \$3M to each institution by March 31, 2020.

- **Study and Vacation Leave**

The issue of leave for Teachers continues to stir up much debate and persons are becoming concerned, if not confused, by some of the information been circulated. Colleagues, your Association has placed this issue on the table for open and frank discussion. The Ministry has stated that they will provide a fulsome response by April 30, 2020. The burden of our concerns is that the Ministry must move the percentage of persons getting Leave (Study and Vacation) close to or up to 10%.

- **Pre-Service Teachers' Forum**

The Professional Services Unit staged a very successful and impactful Pre-Service Teacher' Forum on Thursday, February 20, 2020. Representatives from all the colleges were in attendance. The keynote speaker was the 2019-2020 Lasco/MOE Teacher of the Year, Ms. Bhagya Malladi, Immaculate Conception High School.

We commend Dr. Chin and the Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Committee for this enriching activity.

- **Education Conference 2020**

Education Conference 2020 will be held April 14-16 at the Hilton Rose Hall Hotel and Spa Montego Bay. The theme will be *Navigating the Social and Emotional Challenges of the 21st Century Classroom: Practising the Art of Self-Care*. JN Bank will be joint sponsors of the activity. The registration so far is very low. We are therefore encouraging all of you to get on board and register. In addition, we are asking for your assistance in promoting the conference. The offering will be too good for you to miss out on. The rates for the conference were circulated at the January meeting of Central Executive

7.0 MEMBERS INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS RALLY (MIRR)

This rally is the idea of our President and is intended to cater to all categories of membership. The event will be held at the Jamaica Conference Centre on Thursday, March 12, 2020 beginning at 9:00 a.m. We are planning for one thousand (1,000) members. We observe that, to date, just under three hundred (300) persons have registered and we encourage all of you to register and encourage others so to do. The activity is free to members.

8.0 THE DIASPORA EDUCATION SUMMIT

We remind all of us that this activity will be held in California, USA, June 14-19, 2020. The Association has committed to provide Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00) to the first seventy (70) members who submit a registration slip and an airline ticket. Information relating to registration is in circulation.

9.0 INVESTMENT SEMINARS

Plans are progressing quite smoothly for the 2020 Annual Investment Seminars. JN Bank and the JTA Co-operative Credit Union Limited will be the sponsors of this activity. Please see the schedule listed below.

DATE	REGION	VENUE
Tuesday, March 31, 2020	Western Region	Grand-A-View Restaurant & Café Ltd., 7 Queens Drive, Montego Bay, St. James
Wednesday, April 1, 2020	North East Region	Casa Maria Hotel, Castle Gordon District, Port Maria, St. Mary
Thursday, April 2, 2020	South Central Region	Church Teachers' College, 40 Manchester Road, Mandeville, Manchester
Tuesday, April 7, 2020	South East Region	JTA Head Office, 97B Church Street, Kingston

10.0 PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS

Our Annual Pre-Retirement Seminars continue to be a feature of the Association's calendar. Please see relevant information below.

PARISH	DATE	VENUE
SOUTH EAST REGION		
Kingston	Tuesday, March 31	JTA Conference Room
St. Andrew	Tuesday, March 31	JTA Conference Room
St. Thomas	Tuesday, March 24	Village Green Restaurant, Morant Bay
St. Catherine	Thursday, April 2	Arian's Restaurant, Spanish Villa, Spanish Town
NORTH EAST REGION		
Portland	Tuesday, March 24	Hotel Tim Bamboo
St. Mary	Tuesday, March 17	Casa Maria Hotel, Port Maria
St. Ann	Tuesday, April 8	Almond Tree Restaurant, Ocho Rios

WESTERN REGION		
Trelawny	Tuesday, March 17	Praise Temple Church Hall, 43 Georges Street, Falmouth
St. James	Thursday, March 26	JTA Regional Office Conference Room, Fairview, St. James
Hanover	Thursday, April 2	Lucea United Church Hall
Westmoreland	Thursday, March 19	The Source, Barracks Rd., Sav-la-mar
SOUTH CENTRAL		
St. Elizabeth	Tuesday, March 17	St. Matthews Anglican Church
Manchester	Tuesday, March 24	Mandeville Hotel
Clarendon	Thursday, March 19	Methodist Church Hall, Sevens Road, May Pen

11.0 NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT ELECT 2020-2021

Five nominations nominees were received for the following members:

- i. Miss Claudia McLean - Principal, Norwich Primary School, Portland
- ii. Mr. Godfrey Drummond - Teacher, Petersfield Primary School, Westmoreland
- iii. Mr. Rayon Simpson - Principal, Belmont Academy, Westmoreland
- iv. Mr. Winston Smith - Principal, Golden Spring Primary and Infant School, St. Andrew
- v. Mr. Jermaine Williams - Teacher, Mannings School, Westmoreland

The following have accepted nomination and therefore will be candidates for the election:

- Mr. Godfrey Drummond
- Mr. Winston Smith

We look forward to an exciting and professional uplifting campaign.

12.0 TEACHERS' FAMILY FUN DAY AND HEALTH FAIR

The Annual Family Fun Day and Health Fair was held on Thursday, February 27, 2020 at the James Bond Beach, Oracabessa, St. Mary. At this activity, the opportunity was seized to launch the inaugural national staging of the Mr. and Miss JTA Pageant. The day was enriched with an Outside Broadcast by the *Too Live Crew* on Radio Jamaica, Dahlia Harris and Wesley "Burgerman" Burger. It was an exciting and relaxing day. We acknowledge and applaud the effort of Mr. Colin Spence, Mr. Devon Meek and the National Sports Committee.

13.0 JTA/ERROL MILLER T20 CRICKET COMPETITION

This year's competition began on Friday, February 14, 2020 with President Speid bowling off the competition at a match between Kingston and St. Andrew held at Emmet Park, Kingston.

14.0 MR. AND MISS JTA PAGEANT

Plans are going reasonably well for the inaugural staging of the Mr. and Miss JTA National Pageant. This will take place on Saturday, May 30, 2020 at the Douglas Orane Auditorium, Wolmer's Boys' School, National Heroes Circle, Kingston, beginning at 7:00 p.m. We are yet to secure a major sponsor but we are hoping that JN Bank will fill the

slack. Eleven parishes are participating in the competition. Some parishes have already selected their contestants while others are planning to stage their local pageant. As was mentioned earlier, the launch of this activity took place on Thursday, February 27, 2020 at the Teachers' Family Fun Day and Health Fair. We wish the activity every success.

We must salute Mrs. Georgia Dodd and her team for their efforts thus far in promoting the Mr. and Miss JTA National Pageant.

15.0 JTA RADIO

Efforts to make JTA Radio a reality continues, perhaps at a pace slower than would be expected. The committee has received a submission and an invoice from a contractor who will undertake the responsibility to provide equipment and prepare the studio based on agreed terms and conditions. What is to be done now is the signing of the contract and the provision of the required funds of \$3,978,185.00.

16.0 SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE JTA AND JN BANK

We have completed the first year of the five-year agreement with JN Bank. The terms and conditions are subject to review annually. We hope that in short order we will sign a new agreement with specific deliverables for 2020-2021.

17.0 NATIONAL COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

Our two (2) representatives to the National Council on Education, Dr. Garth Anderson and Dr. Charmaine Gooden Monteith, received their *Instrument of Office* at a meeting of the Council on Thursday, February 20, 2020.

18.0 CONCLUSION

As we reflect on the state of the educational environment, we are tempted to feel a sense of frustration and even despair but we are emboldened by the spirit of our founding fathers which must resonate in our deeper beings that, as leaders and educators, we must be the ones to inspire hope and offer leadership at this time. In moments of challenges and despondency, we must see opportunities – opportunities of righting the wrongs within society.

Like Mandela, we must continue to believe that *Education is the most powerful weapon which can change the world.*

Let us keep our focus and continue to be that difference between hope and hopelessness. Let us press on regardless and, in all things, let us continue to *Unite and Serve* - Jamaica Land we Love.

**Submitted by: Byron Farquharson
Secretary General**