



**JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION  
97B CHURCH STREET  
KINGSTON**

## **VIRTUAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL**

**FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2020**

### **SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

It is always a pleasure for me to extend a warm and cordial welcome to all members of General Council. Due to the fact that our lives and total modus operandi have been altered by COVID-19, we are not able to meet and greet in our usual ways and that is a great loss, but the fact that we are still alive and well is something to celebrate and be thankful for.

Despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, the Association has been able to adjust and present some of our programmes and activities that we initially thought we would have to postpone or cancel. We are a resilient people and we have the spirit of a warrior and that has served us well.

We must salute our President for continuously and consistently keeping the issues in the public space. At times, he appeared to be the only voice but despite the odds, he persevered and caused changes to be made in particular with health and safety issues surrounding the re-opening of Secondary Schools in preparation for the sitting of CSEC/CAPE examinations.

We congratulate Dr. Garth Anderson, Immediate Past President, on his assumption to the Presidency of the Caribbean Union of Teachers. We note the appointment of Honourable Karl Samuda as Minister of Education, Youth and Information and hope this move will be of benefit to education.

We note the passing of Past President and Trustee Sherlock Allen and we thank God for his life and work and contribution to the Association.

Colleagues, this General Council meeting is an important one because we will, among other things, elect Trustees of the Association. It means therefore that your full and vibrant participation will be required.

## **2.0 PRIMARY EXIT PROFILE (PEP)**

By the end of today, the results of this year's PEP will be released to schools and parents. As you ought to be aware, due to the presence of COVID-19, the placement this year was based on:

- Grade 4 2018 Literacy and Numeracy results
- Grade 5 2019 performance in Language Arts, Social Studies and Science
- Grade 6 2020 Mental Ability Test

## **3.0 MEMBERS INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS RALLY**

On Thursday, May 28, 2020 a Members Industrial Relations Rally was held virtually. It proved to be a tremendous success. We had over fifteen hundred (1500) members participating. We also had colleagues from the Caribbean Union of Teachers and members from the Diaspora participating. The presentations were good and engaging. We say thanks to Past President and Trustee, Patrick Smith who gave the keynote address. We had presentations from Mr. Oneil Grant, President of the Jamaica Civil Service Association, Mr. Andre Earle, Attorney-at-Law and Mrs. Donna Parchment-Brown, the Political Ombudsman. We wish to thank Dr. Charmaine Gooden Monteith, Dr. Mark Nicely and Mr. Leanon Nash and all the other persons who ensured the success of the activity.

## **4.0 TABLETS FOR TEACHERS**

The distribution of the Tablets commenced in earnest on Monday, June 22, when distribution started in St. Thomas. Based on a schedule for distribution that I had seen, these Tablets will be distributed up to the end of August 2020.

I wish to assure all of us that in the end, all teachers who were engaged in May 2018, irrespective of status, will receive a Tablet.

## **5.0 TEACHERS' DAY TOKENS**

The distribution of Teachers' Day Tokens is now going on. I wish to express thanks to our Regional Officers, Parish and District Association Presidents and Contact Teachers who have made it possible.

## **6.0 RE-OPENING OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Our Secondary Schools have re-opened since June 8, 2020 and will remain open until July 3, 2020. This brave initiative is to provide further preparation opportunities for our students who will be sitting CSEC and CAPE as of July 13, 2020.

We must commend our Principals and teachers and other school workers who have done extraordinary things to ensure that the health and safety of all

stakeholders is not compromised. We have received positive reports from most of the schools visited by our Presidents, Regional Officers and other colleagues. The unfortunate encounter by our President at one of our schools is to be regretted.

#### **7.0 PAYMENT FOR SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT**

The information obtained from the Overseas Examination Commission reveals that most of our Secondary Schools have been paid. Those unpaid have issues with banking information. The total amount that our teachers benefitted from is \$48,255,900.00.

#### **8.0 RESEARCH GRANT FOR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS**

By now, all our Tertiary Institutions should have received the outstanding amounts and the terms and conditions surrounding this Grant going forward should have been worked out.

#### **9.0 CRITICAL ILLNESS TRUST FUND**

A meeting of the Trustees of the Critical Illness Trust Fund was on Wednesday, May 27, 2020. At this meeting, Dr. Garth Anderson was elected Chairman and Mr. Wilfred (Billy) Heaven, a member of the public, was elected Vice Chairman. The Trustees went through the Trust Deed with the Attorney. We are now awaiting the signing of the Trust Deed by all the Trustees for the submission to be made for registration. We will continue to update members as to the status of the Fund.

#### **10.0 PRESIDENT ELECT ELECTION**

Colleagues, based on the mandate given at the Special Meeting of General Council held on June 3, 2020, we have been doing what is required to stage this election by the second week in July. To date, we have had discussions with a team from the UWI. Coming out of that meeting, we have embarked on a comprehensive Members Data Collection Exercise. The success of this exercise is highly dependent on the ability of Parish and District Association Presidents and Contact Teachers to get the required information from members. Each member will be required to provide their TRN or Teachers Number, as well as their E-mail. The data, once gathered, will be verified and submitted to the UWI. Voting will be done electronically via E-mail. The UWI has informed that they can conduct a credible election within two weeks once they receive from the Association the required verified data. It should be noted that we have not entered into any contractual arrangement with the UWI. We have requested from them a project proposal which of necessity, must include cost.

I wish to state that the Administration will do all that it can to ensure that the election is held but there are constraints, chief of which is time that, as an Association, we will have to be conscious of.

In preparation for the election, efforts are being made to further expose the candidates to the electorate. The Parish meetings have provided one such platform for them. The Association is planning to stage two debates. They will be staged virtually on Tuesday, June 30, 2020 and Friday, July 3, 2020.

#### **11.0 PARISH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS**

A number of our Parishes have staged their Annual General Meetings and the rest will do so by the end of next week. We know that we are living in challenging times and as such, we have urged all parishes to have virtual meetings because the prohibition order against large gatherings is still in force. Most parishes have co-operated. We have had a challenge with one parish which insisted that they would be having a physical meeting. The Association has disassociated itself from this meeting and wishes to remind all parishes that they come under the jurisdiction of the parent body and that they are required to abide by the rules of engagement as pronounced by the Association.

#### **12.0 CLOSURE OF THE LIBRARY**

The activities of the Library came to an abrupt end, thanks to COVID-19. The truth is, however, that the Library was significantly under-utilized and its impact was not felt. We have therefore decided to make every effort to digitalize the Library and almost make it into a Virtual Library so that teachers can access it from their location. In addition, we are proposing that most of the space be converted into the office for the South East Region with effect from September 2020.

#### **13.0 MR. AND MISS JTA PAGEANT**

One of the activities that COVID-19 has not killed is the Mr. and Miss JTA Pageant. This activity will be staged virtually on Saturday, August 1, 2020. The streaming will take place from the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel. The Awards Committee is busy planning this event.

We thank TIP Friendly Society for their sponsorship but we are yet to find a major sponsor. We will be pressing on and we wish the activity every success.

#### **14.0 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

I am pleased to report that we have been given the green light to host our Annual Conference. This will be held at Ocean Coral Spring Hotel, Duncans, Trelawny. The Pre-conference Church Service will be held at the Mandeville New Testament Church on Sunday, August 16, 2020.

**The rates that will apply for conference are as follows:**

- **Delegates**
  - **Single occupancy: \$40,000.00**
  - **Double occupancy: \$23,000.00 (per person)**
  
- **Non-Delegates**
  - **Single occupancy: \$73,000.00**
  - **Double occupancy: \$56,000.00 (per person)**
  
- **Children**
  - **3-11 years: \$28,000.00**
  - **12 years and above \$56,000.00**

We are operating in a shorter time frame; therefore, persons are asked to register by paying down \$10,000.00 by July 10, 2020 with the remainder to be paid by the end of July.

We hope that all our plans will work well and Conference 2020 will be a memorable one.

## 15.0 **CONCLUSION**

The Conference Year 2019-2020 will be remembered as a challenging one, mainly because COVID-19 came right in the middle of the year and stymied some of our major activities. We however, give God thanks for His mercies and blessings.

We commend "*Hurricane Speid*" for his tenacity and boldness. A President who was not afraid to step into it even if he could walk around it. Yes, every now and then we need persons who are not afraid to ruffle feathers and even count cows. Sir Speid, thank you for being you and we wish you well as you complete your year of service.

We wish to thank Dr. Garth Anderson, Immediate Past President, for his three years of service. You too, in your own way, have etched your name in our hearts and impacted our Association. Best wishes in all your future endeavours.

President Elect, Mr. Jasford Gabriel, we have observed you over the past months. You come across as a cool and calculated person who seem sufficiently

focused and convinced you made the right choice to serve at a time like this. You while you gave solid support as part of the Presidential corps but you have now gained your wings and ready to fly. we wish you every success as you get closer to the hot seat of President and we are confident that you will do well.

I must express thanks to all of you who served as Parish and District Association Presidents, Committee Chair or just one of those reliable members. Your service would have served to advance the efforts of the Association.

Special thanks and commendation to all our paid staffs. Yes, the Senior Management staff were critical to the success of the year. But all of us had to rely on other staff members to achieve our tasks. I must single out the Security Staff who were forced to come out during those COVID-19 days when the office was closed.

I wish to say special thanks to one of our retiring Trustees, Mr. Woodburn Miller, A man who served as President, Secretary General and Trustee for many years. His contribution is gigantic yet for the most part, he has been a quiet yet effective player. I pray that his remaining years will be pleasant and happy.

Finally, I say thank your Lord for one more year. You have kept us going and you have prospered us with good health, clear minds and sound intellect.

I pray that we will remain true and faithful as we *Unite and Serve*.

**Submitted by: Byron Farquharson**  
**Secretary General**