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**JAMAICA TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION**

**97B CHURCH STREET, KINGSTON**

MEETING OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE

**Friday, February 19, 2016**

SECRETARY GENERAL’S REPORT

1. **INTRODUCTION**

A warm welcome to this meeting of Central Executive. As we gather today to deliberate as an association, we are conscious that we are in the midst of a political *“silly season”* as we prepare for another General Election. We listen to, with utmost disgust, the level of pettiness displayed by our political leaders and it forces one to wonder where have all the sense gone. Is the pursuit of power so empowering that we are prepared to give up some of the great traditions of keen political rivalry. Jamaica needs leaders who behave responsibly and respectfully. Despite these concerns, however, it is hoped that all of you are planning to exercise your democratic right and responsibility as a citizen to vote. We know that some of our colleagues will be working in various capacities on Election Day to ensure that our elections have credibility. In the end, we hope that ***Jamaica Land We Love*** will be the winner and that the country will ultimately move forward.

1. **JTA ROLL OF HONOUR AWARD**

We wish to again applaud our colleague, Mrs. Evelyn Tugwell, on being the 2015 recipient of this prestigious award. As you are aware, the award was presented on Thursday, February 4, 2016 in an impressive ceremony at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel. The attendance and general support for the function was good.

While we have much to celebrate and be thankful for, there are some concerns that we have and must address going forward. This is necessary to protect the good name and high standard of the Association.

We commend Mrs. Spencer-Jarrett and her team for co-ordinating the activity.

1. **STUDY CIRCLE TRAINING**

Training of 27 persons took place at Jewel Runaway Bay and Golf Resort, January 28 – 30, 2016. The feedback suggest that participants benefitted from the training. They are well enthused and so far they have been *“running circles”* at their schools. It is anticipated that further training activities will take place later in the year.

1. **TEACHERS’ FAMILY FUN DAY**

Our Annual Teachers’ Family Fun Day was held at James Bond Beach, Oracabessa, St. Mary on Thursday, February 11, 2016. The attendance and general atmosphere was good. We commend Miss Claudia McLean, the Sports Committee, Mr. Meek and all those who planned the activities for a good job. Again, there are some issues which must be addressed and these will be addressed during the evaluation of the activity.

1. **NETBALL AND FOOTBALL FINALS**

We commend St. James for winning this year’s Football Competition and applaud Clarendon for coming second. We note that, unfortunately, the Netball Final between St. Catherine and St. Andrew was not played. The report received suggest that the late arrival of one team was the main reason for the match not being played. The President took the decision not to declare any team the winner. It is hoped that we will ensure that this situation does not happen again.

1. **MIDDLE MANAGERS’ WORKSHOP**

The planning process is in full gear to host the first JTA/MoE/Diaspora Middle Managers’ Workshop. This will be held on March 21-22, 2016 at Jamaica College. The various institutions from which the participants will come have been contacted and we await their response. It must be noted that no accommodation or transportation will be provided. Schools must take responsibility for their representative.

The theme for the workshop is: ***Reconceptualising the Role of the Middle Managers – Creating a Paradigm Shift***.

1. **2016 EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

The 2016 Education Conference will be held March 29 - 31 at the Jewel Runaway Bay Beach and Golf Resort under the theme, ***Effective Teaching and Learning: Bridging the Achievement Gaps***. It is observed that the registration is slow in coming. To date, less than 100 persons have registered. This must be improved by the end of February. We hope that most of us will be participating because the content seems very attractive.

1. **TERTIARY GRANT FOR CHILDREN OF TEACHERS**

The deadline for the submission of applications was last Friday, February 12, 2016. To date, we have received 326 applications. We are now checking the applications in order that we can make our submission to the Ministry of Education for selection by the end of this month. As usual, some teachers whose applications were not accepted because of failure to submit by the deadline, are claiming poor communication or lack of compassion by the Association.

1. **PENSION REFORM**

The indication is that the proposed Pension Reform implementation date of April 1, 2016 will not be met as the Bill became a casualty of the dissolution of Parliament. This might be a blessing in disguise because there are still many unresolved issues surrounding the plan. We will continue to seek opportunities to gain more information as well as have some of our own issues resolved.

1. **2016 PRESIDENT ELECT ELECTION**

Five (5) persons were nominated as candidates for President-Elect Election 2016. However, three (3) persons have accepted. They are:

* Mrs. Georgia Waugh-Richards - Principal, Harmons Primary, Manchester
* Mr. Collington Powell - Principal, Friendship Primary School, St. Catherine
* Mr. Owen Speid - Principal, Rousseau Primary School,

St. Andrew

The Credentials Committee met with the candidates on Friday, February 12, 2016 to share the guidelines governing the campaign activities.

Central Executive is being asked to ratify the campaign guidelines as we would like this process to reflect the reality of the times in which we live while protecting the integrity of our Association.

1. **MEETING WITH THE JAMAICA TEACHING COUNCIL**

The leadership of the JTA met with a team led by the chairman of the JTC Advisory Committee, Rev. Dr. Maitland Evans, on Tuesday 16th February 2016. This meeting was to update the Association on the state of the JTC Bill and to solicit support for JTC initiatives going forward.

1. **THE CLARION**

We are in the process of collating materials for the March 2016 edition of *The Clarion* newspaper. Parish leaders and committee chairs are reminded of their responsibility and commitments to this activity.

1. **FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES**

We continue our legal effort to acquire properties owned by Marlon Francis and members of his family that we believe the Association’s resources were used to acquire. The process is slow, frustrating and expensive, but we have gone too far and lost too much to turn back now.

1. **MEMBERSHIP CARDS**

We remind all of us that the return of membership data and photographs for ID purposes are now due.

We note that the response so far is very low and we tend to hear persons expressing ignorance about the process.

1. **SECRETARIAT**

We say welcome to Mr. Doran Dixon, Past President, as the new Regional Officer, South Central. Mr. Dixon took up office as of February 1, 2016. From all indication, he is settling in quite smoothly.

Mrs. Annette Gordon is the new Secretary for Professional Services. She replaces Mrs. Pauline Wellington who is now the Office Manager.

Mrs. Donnett Shortridge has been assigned the Membership Clerk responsibilities. She replaces Mrs. Gordon. We hope that these changes will enhance the quality of service that we provide as we seek to better serve our members.

1. **CONCLUSION**

**As we await the outcome** of the General Election, let us resolve to continue to serve our Association in order to protect the legacy of our founding fathers as well as the sacrifices of those who have gone on before. There is no place for spectators and fence-sitting critics. All of us have a contribution to make and the opportunities are many. We are reminded to reflect on President John F. Kennedy’s statement at a time like this – ***“Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country”.***

As you ponder on these words, may we be inspired to continue to *Unite and Serve*.

**Prepared by: Byron Farquharson**

**Secretary General**