



'UNITE AND SERVE'

JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

# **SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT**

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**TO GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2017**

**THEME:**

**"Navigating the Education Landscape – Transforming, Engaging, Collaborating,  
Facilitating and Leading"**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A warm welcome is being extended to you all. As usual, we value and applaud your contribution, loyalty and commitment to the cause of the Jamaica Teachers' Association. We continue to do what we do because of your efforts and support.

The Association is being tested at this time by the government and some of our detractors as we continue the struggle to get a decent settlement to our Salaries and Conditions of Service Claim. Despite the challenges, we remain even more resolved as we echo the cry of *no retreat, no surrender* coming from our members.

We continue to be encouraged and re-energized from the energy that is felt as we travel across the island, conducting our Half Yearly Meetings. Today is the day when we must deliberate and come to a common position as we chart the way forward.

As we look to the future, let us never forget our past and the sacrifices of our forefathers. Again, welcome and we look forward to a rewarding meeting.

## **2.0 50% TUITION REFUND**

The Ministry of Education has reported that during October 2017, a total of \$21,973,423.80 was paid out to Ninety-six (96) applicants. They have also committed to pay by the end of November 2017, \$20,796,197.00 to forty-nine applicants.

We advise our members to keep us informed if they experience any difficulty in receiving this benefit.

## **3.0 NATIONAL STANDARDS CURRICULUM**

The Association fully endorses the new curriculum and is committed to its smooth implementation. Members continue to provide us with useful feedback on a regular basis and we readily bring these to the attention of the Ministry. The most recent report suggests that schools have difficulty accessing units 1 and 2 of the Grade 3 Integrated Studies. The Ministry has informed that this information is part of the Grades 2 and 3 portal. They have promised to inform the schools via a Bulletin how to access the various portals. The Ministry has also reported its intention to close the resources gap over time.

#### 4.0 PAYMENT OF MILEAGE FOR TRAVELLING OFFICERS

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information has given the following update:

- Region 1 - Payment up to August 2017
- Region 2 - Payment up to October 2017
- Region 3 - Payment up to October 2017
- Region 4 - Payment up to September 2017
- Region 5 - Payment up to September 2017
- Region 6 - Payment up to September 2017

#### 5.0 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INSTRUMENT

At our most recent meeting with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry's position was restated, which is essentially that this is a *Trial Instrument*. The data gleaned from the evaluation carried out cannot be used for sanctions or promotion. A Bulletin to this effect was sent to the schools. (*See appendix 1*)

#### 6.0 GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS AS SENIOR TEACHERS

We are pleased to report that the Ministry of Education has agreed to stop the discrimination against Guidance Counsellors being appointed to the Post of Special Responsibility (POSR). A bulletin to this effect was sent to schools. (*See appendix 2*)

#### 7.0 NEW TEACHERS' SEMINARS

This year, the buzz words seem to be "*well supported*". We are happy for this because, apart from the obvious benefit of improved membership, we believe that, as a responsible organization, we owe it to the profession to ensure that our new colleagues are appropriately inducted into the profession.

Date	Region	No. of Participants
October 5	West	110
October 6	North East	117
October 18	South East	132
October 25	South Central	156
	<b>Total</b>	515

## 8.0 LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

This very useful activity was carried out on September 30, 2017 and October 7<sup>th</sup> in all four regions.

Date	Region	No. of Participants
September 30	South Central	70
September 30	South East	68
October 7	North East	44
October 7	West	56
<b>Total</b>		<b>238</b>

The feedback suggests that participants viewed the activity as important and that the training will better equip them to carry out their roles and functions more effectively. We thank all those who made it possible.

## 9.0 CONTACT TEACHERS' WORKSHOP

Training for Contact Teachers with five (5) or less years of experience were held in the North East and West Regions on November 2, 2017.

Training for South East and South Central regions will be held on November 28, 2017.

## 10.0 MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Most members should have received their new Membership Card by now. We are aware of some issues that members might have and we are committed to clear up all of these by December 2017.

## 11.0 SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE 2017-2019

Colleagues, you all are aware of the lack of meaningful progress in this regard. To date, the government has not moved from their 6% over two years offer with no movement on allowances. This offer has been flatly refused by all public sector employees. We have used the Half Yearly Meetings to inform members as well as for members to provide feedback to the leadership on the way forward. This General Council will have to take a stance and outline strategies or a *plan of action* going forward.

There has been no progress in other negotiations for other entities such as HEART Trust/NTA that we bargain for.

## **12.0 HALF YEARLY MEETINGS**

As was stated earlier, the Half Yearly meetings were used to update members on the status of negotiations thus far. All the reports suggest that the attendance for most of the meetings were good. We have received much media coverage and the general mood of our colleagues have been one of *militancy*.

It was observed that one parish invited an Opposition Senator to be Guest Speaker. This was very unfortunate and should not be repeated. The Jamaica Teachers' Association does not invite politicians to address their members. This is even more unfortunate when one considers that we are in the middle of salary negotiations.

## **13.0 WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

I am very pleased to report that the Association staged a very successful and classy Women's Leadership Conference on Tuesday, November 21, 2017. Over two hundred (200) women were *Inspired and Empowered to Overcome and Lead*. We commend President Waugh Richards for the vision and the team for translating the vision into a practical and effective reality.

We look forward to the Association seeing much fruits being borne from this significant initiative. Congratulation to Dr. Gooden Monteith and her team of planners and workers for a job well done.

## **14.0 REPORT OF NETBALL AND SIX-A-SIDE FOOTBALL COMPETITIONS**

The inaugural JTA Six-a-Side Football Competition, along with the Netball Rally were held at the Manchester High School on Saturday, November 18, 2017.

Ten (10) parishes participated in the events. Absent were St. Mary, St. Thomas, Westmoreland and Hanover.

The defending champion, Manchester, lost to St. James in the finals of the Netball Competition. Third place went to Kingston and fourth to Portland.

Trelawny created history when they defeated Clarendon in the JTA Six-a-Side Football Competition. Third place went to St. James.

Former JTA President and Liaison Officer and Patron for the Netball Rally, Mrs. Ena Barclay, was present to make the presentation of the '*Ena Barclay Trophy*' to the St. James Team.

The Secretary General, Mr. Byron Farquharson; President Elect, Dr. Garth Anderson and the Immediate Past President, Mr. Howard Isaacs made presentations to the footballers. The winners received a cash prize of \$10,000.00, the runners-up received \$5,000.00 and the Dress Parade winner \$5,000.00. St. Andrew was judged Best Dressed.

Thanks must be extended to Schools' SMS for its monetary contribution.

The Netball and Football Leagues will begin on December 1, 2017.

We commend Miss McLean and her team for a great job. High commendation to the Public Relations Team and Brawta Sports for live stream via Facebook.

#### **15.0 COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

I am pleased to report that all committees are up and running. It is anticipated that they would have tabled their report. We will focus on recommendations/resolutions from Policy and Membership Committees.

#### **16.0 JTA ROLL OF HONOUR**

A report on this activity will be presented by Dr. Charmaine Gooden Monteith.

#### **17.0 CARIBBEAN UNION OF TEACHERS HURRICANE APPEAL**

The Association launched an appeal during October/November. The response has not been very encouraging. We will hand over the amount to the CUT in early December.

#### **18.0 PRESIDENT'S OVERSEAS TRAVEL**

The President travelled to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, US, November 16 – 18 to participate in a Diaspora Planning Session for their upcoming Summit in Florida in March 2018. You will be informed of developments in this regard as soon as the information is available.

#### **19.0 IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

Congratulations to Immediate Past President Howard Isaacs who has been selected to participate in the 2017 Executive Leadership Institute in Chandler, Arizona, USA, December 10 – 14, on behalf of Community Colleges.

**20.0 JTA/BITU NEGOTIATIONS 2016 – 2018**

The Association is yet to conclude negotiations with the BITU on behalf of Clerical, Accounting, Ancillary and Security Staffs. A meeting is set for November 28, 2017 where it is hoped that both parties will reach an agreement.

**21.0 ANNUAL STAFF MEETING**

This activity is scheduled to take place on Friday, December 1, 2017 at the Courtleigh Hotel. This means that our offices will be closed on that day.

**22.0 ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**

The Annual Staff Christmas Party is scheduled to be held at the Spanish Court Hotel on Tuesday, December 19, 2017.

**23.0 CLOSURE OF JTA OFFICES**

The offices of the Jamaica Teachers' Association will be closed as of mid-day Tuesday, December 19, 2017 and will reopen on Tuesday, January 2, 2018.

**24.0 CONCLUSION**

The year 2017 has rushed by so swiftly. This must cause us to ponder on how quickly time seems to rush by. This reality should cause us to reflect and assess how we use the time and opportunities at our disposal. This is a necessary part of our reflection in order to set new goals and targets personally and professionally. Whatever conclusions you have arrived at, I hope you can truly say that my living was not in vain and in fact, I made a positive impact to even one life during 2017.

I wish to express thanks to all of you for your continued support for the activities of the Association. Your contribution did make a difference to our impact on our members.

We continue to feel proud of our President who continues to represent us well. You, along with our President Elect and the Immediate Past President, have bonded into a formidable team.

We acknowledge and applaud the contributions of the Administrative and support staffs. Colleagues, the Association is always under pressure. They have stood up well.

As we approach the Christmas season, I pray that the peace and blessedness of the season will be with you and yours.

Let us, however, remember that amidst the celebrations, that the struggle continues. May we be guided by the thought that:

***“Sometimes it is better to find the courage to fight than the strength to run” (Kushand Wizdom)***

Let us continue to ***unite and serve***.