



**JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION  
MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2017**

**SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT**

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

It gives me great pleasure in extending to you all a very warm and cordial welcome to our first regular General Council meeting for Conference Year 2017-2018. A special welcome to those who are attending General Council for the first time. This is part of the process of becoming an advocate for the teachers and education in general. Do not take lightly this great honour to serve your professional colleagues at such a time like this. We commend you very highly for embracing the spirit of volunteerism on which the Jamaica Teachers' Association was founded and frankly that has sustained this organization for the past fifty-three (53) years. As an activist, who knows where this involvement will take you.

We pause to acknowledge our President, Mrs. Georgia Waugh Richards, who has settled in very well and I believe is enjoying her tour of duty thus far. We welcome President Elect, Dr. Garth Anderson, to the Presidential Corp. From all indication, he is a fast learner and this will prepare him sufficiently for the year ahead. We acknowledge our Immediate Past President, Mr. Howard Isaacs. He played his part well last year and as such, much is expected as he supports and guides the rest of the Presidential Corp.

We wish our Presidents a productive year.

Colleagues, as I bid you welcome, I must remind you that much is expected of you as you carry the flag of the Jamaica Teachers' Association this year, whether at the District Association, Parish Association or National level. There is a huge weight of

responsibility resting on your shoulders as together we seek to represent the best interest of our members.

I cannot conclude these introductory comments without expressing deep regret and concerns for our Caribbean neighbours who have experienced tremendous loss and devastation as a result of hurricanes Irma and Maria. As a member of the Caribbean Union of Teachers, we will be responding positively to the cry for help. We are reminded in moments like these that we are our brothers' keeper. May you be found willing when called upon to assist.

Once again, a warm welcome and we trust that our participation and deliberations will prove worthwhile.

## **2.0 THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR**

The start-up of the school year 2017-2018 has been a relatively smooth one. Very few glitches have been reported. We note the shortage of textbooks in a number of high schools and hope that the issue will be resolved speedily.

We must commend all our principals and teachers for ensuring this smooth start up. Again, we must remind you that we depend on you to keep us informed as to the challenges on the ground.

## **3.0 SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR TEACHERS**

We have written to the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service to inform them of the unanimous rejection of the offer by delegates of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference and as such, they need to review the offer to us as a matter of urgency.

As you might recall, a number of the items in the claim were referred for local consultation between the JTA and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. A Working Group of our Presidents, Chairman of Salaries, the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General – Member Services and Industrial Relations have had two meetings with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information team led by the Minister. We have made meaningful progress in bringing closure to some items.

We await an early date for the continuation of negotiation with the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service.

#### **4.0 NEGOTIATION WITH HEART/NTA**

It should be noted that, to date, negotiation for Lecturers and Instructors of HEART/NTA has not commenced.

#### **5.0 MEETING WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND INFORMATION**

On Tuesday, September 12, 2017, we had our first meeting with the Minister and Ministry of Education. As usual, the relationship is cordial and much of the ongoing issues were discussed. These include:

- 50% Refund of Tuition
- Leave Allotment
- Contract Employment
- Processing of Retirement Documents
- Payment to Basic School Teachers
- Guidance Counsellors holding Posts of Special Responsibility
- Payment for Marking SBAs
- Performance Appraisal Instrument
- National Standards Curriculum
- J-TEC and CCCJ
- Issues related to Medical Boarding

#### **6.0 53<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Colleagues, the feedback are very positive. Generally, delegates were very pleased with the organization and tone of the conference. The number of participants was very encouraging. We should make every effort to improve on what we do, thus ensuring that, our conference will be seen as something not to miss.

We will have the Conference Report ready for the November Council.

## **7.0 MEMBERSHIP CARDS**

Members in Bursar-paid Institutions have not received their membership cards as yet. We are working on them and, all things being equal, they should be ready by the end of September with distribution following shortly thereafter.

Once this is out of the way, we will be treating with issues relative to the first set of cards. We plan to complete the exercise by October 31, 2017. We are asking members, preferably Contact Teachers, to rout all issues through their Regional Offices. The Secretaries in the offices will be prepared to deal with the issues.

Please note that once we have distributed the cards and correct all the issues, the replacement will be at a cost to the individual member.

## **8.0 TRAINING FOR CENTRAL EXECUTIVE**

There was a two-day residential training session for members of Central Executive. This was held at the RIU, Ocho Rios, September 15 and 16, 2017. The attendance and participation was very good. Participants gave the training high marks while, at the same time, made useful suggestions for consideration going forward. It should be noted that all the presenters were members of the Administrative Staff.

## **9.0 NEW TEACHERS' SEMINARS**

The process has commenced for these important seminars to take place during October 2017. We encourage you to encourage the new teachers to attend and get the *'right start'* to their professional experience.

## **10.0 LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS**

These workshops will be held in the regions as follows:

- South East and South Central - September 30, 2017
- North East and West - October 7, 2017

Much effort has been made to ensure that these sessions prove useful as you seek to navigate your way as a leader within the District Association or Parish. Your ability to plan effectively for your members will, to a large extent, determine the

impact you will make during this year. Let us aim to *transform, engage, collaborate, facilitate and lead* as informed and competent professionals.

### **11.0 CONTACT TEACHERS' SEMINARS**

These are scheduled to be held in November. Training will be done on a regional basis. The focus will be on the less experienced Contact Teachers.

### **12.0 TRAVEL AND WELLNESS GETAWAY**

The Travel and Wellness Club are planning for an exciting and relaxing wellness getaway. The activity will take place at Iberostar Hotel, Rose Hall, Montego Bay, October 12-14, 2017. The cost will be \$36,300.00 for double occupancy and \$46,860.00 for single occupancy. You should have already booked and began payment. We hope that the event will be a success.

### **13.0 EDUCATIONAL TOURS**

Our Educational Tours continue to attract much interest among our members. The Summer Tour to the United Kingdom and Ireland was a success. The plans for this year include a tour to Cuba – December 20-24, 2017, our usual Miami Tour to Disney World during the Easter break and very likely Summer Tour to Europe and possibly a Tour to Bermuda to coincide with the Caribbean Union of Teachers Games. We hope that more of us will find it possible to participate.

### **14.0 SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS**

We have invited our awardees to formally receive their award today. I have listed the awardees for this year.

#### **14.1 Presidents' Scholarship**

- Mrs. Sadie Harris-Mortley
- Mr. Wayne Mullings
- Ms. Treshana Weise
- Miss Sonja Robinson
- Miss Carol Blake

#### **14.2 Wesley Powell**

- Michael Dadzie
- Mrs. Tech-Ann Hewitt-Santon

### **14.3 Bursary**

- Mrs. Abimbola Haughton

### **14.4 Aubrey Phillips**

Reneica Reid, Porus Primary School

### **14.5 JTA Service Awards**

We are in the process of reviewing how we promote and process all our awards. The review comes against the background that, based on the criteria for awards, we are forced to withdraw the award given to two of this year's awardees. One for the RC Tavares and the other for the Edith Dalton James. The persons have been written to and asked to return the award. This is regretted but we must preserve the integrity of our awards.

## **15.0 JTA/BITU NEGOTIATIONS**

Negotiations are continuing between the JTA and the BITU on behalf of Clerical, Accounting, Ancillary and Security Staff for the 2015-2017 Contract Period. It is anticipated that we can conclude this activity in the not too distant future.

## **16.0 APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEE FOR STAFF PENSION PLAN**

General Council is being asked to appoint Dr. Charmaine Gooden Monteith as a Trustee for the Staff Pension Plan which is administered by Guardian Life. Dr. Gooden Monteith will replace Mrs. Judith Spencer-Jarrett who is now retired.

## **17.0 POSITION OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Dr. Margaret Chin has accepted the offer to fill this position. She has indicated that she will take up the position as of January 2, 2018.

## **18.0 WORLD TEACHERS' DAY**

We wish to remind you that October 5 each year is celebrated as World Teachers' Day. This year's theme is *'Teaching in Freedom, Empowering Teachers'*

## **19.0 CONCLUSION**

The indicators thus far suggest that this Conference Year will be characterized by much of the same but it will also have some new additions. The fact that you have a part to play in the outcome of this year's activities should be enough to cause you to stop, think and plan what part you will play. There is a space, a spot, an idea and an action that all of us must contribute. There is no place on the fence for anyone. Let us all put our shoulders to the wheel. Only your best will be good enough as we continue to *unite and serve*.

**Submitted by: Byron Farquharson  
Secretary General**